

Hugo Meynell CofE (VC) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	124232
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380841
Inspection dates	8–9 February 2012
Lead inspector	Lois Furness

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	300
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robin Bladen-Hovell
Headteacher	Mark Howden (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2007
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Lois Furness

Additional inspector

Verna Plummer

Additional inspector

Andrew Ridout

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 34 lessons taught by 11 teachers. Inspectors spent time observing sessions where pupils were learning letters and sounds. They heard pupils read, watched them being taught in small groups and individually, analysed their work, and discussed their learning with them. Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. The inspectors observed the school's work, and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' attainment and progress, as well as leadership and management. Responses to questionnaires returned by pupils, members of staff and 135 parents and carers were also considered.

Information about the school

In this larger than average-sized primary school most pupils come from White British backgrounds. There are very few pupils who have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is also below average, and those with a statement of special educational needs is well-below average. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is provided in a part-time Nursery class and two full-time Reception classes.

The school meets the current floor standard set by the government, which determines the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The former headteacher left the school in December 2011, and a new headteacher will assume responsibility in September 2012. To cover this transitional period, an acting headteacher, formerly the deputy headteacher, was appointed in January 2012, and a new senior leadership team was also appointed. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status and the Dyslexia-Friendly school award.

There are provisions for a pre-school and before- and after-school clubs on site. These are not managed by the governing body, but were inspected at the same time as the school. Separate reports about these provisions will be published.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	4
Achievement of pupils	4
Quality of teaching	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	4

Key findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

- Overall effectiveness is inadequate. Insufficient progress has been made in resolving the key areas for improvement identified during the previous inspection, attainment is declining, and leadership and management are inadequate.
- Although pupils' attainment was above average in the National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils in 2011, pupils' current work throughout the school does not reflect this attainment. The school's information about pupils' progress shows that too many do not make the progress of which they are capable especially in writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is variable and inadequate teaching is evident in all key stages. Assessment information is not used rigorously by teachers to plan activities that meet accurately pupils' learning needs. Expectations are not high enough of what pupils are able to do, and the curriculum lacks sufficient depth to ensure pupils develop their knowledge and skills in all subjects in a systematic way. The feedback pupils receive about the quality of their work and how to improve further is inadequate.
- Pupils mainly behave well in lessons and sensibly around school. They have a satisfactory understanding of how to keep safe. However, when lessons lack challenge and too long a time is given to complete their work, pupils lose concentration and interest in their learning.
- The new leadership team does not have the necessary skills to implement the rapid changes necessary to eradicate weaknesses in teaching and ensure the good progress of all pupils. Performance management is not well enough established and teachers do not have adequate opportunities for training. The

governing body has not challenged the school's performance closely enough and monitoring and evaluation systems are weak. For these reasons, leaders, managers and governors do not demonstrate the capacity to secure improvement. Although there is no evidence of pupils coming to harm, there are important areas where the school has failed to keep aspects of policy and procedures up to date. Safeguarding does not meet statutory requirements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure all pupils achieve good or better progress in their learning by:
 - eliminating any inadequate teaching by December 2012
 - ensuring teachers make effective use of assessment information, in order to provide work at the right level for pupils of all abilities
 - ensuring teachers use a variety of strategies to encourage all pupils' active engagement throughout the lesson
 - improving teachers' knowledge of teaching about the sounds letters make (phonics), guided reading and writing
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their writing and mathematical skills across different subjects
 - giving written feedback to pupils that provides them with clear guidance on what they need to improve their work.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - establishing a rigorous cycle of checking teachers' planning, work in pupils' books and the progress pupils make
 - improving tracking systems to determine the progress made by each pupil from the beginning of each key stage, the start of a school year and term by term
 - improving performance management processes and making staff accountable for meeting challenging performance targets in relation to the rate of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics
 - implementing a curriculum that supports the systematic development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in all National Curriculum subjects
 - developing the skills of all those with leadership responsibility, including the governing body, to support effective monitoring and evaluation of the school's work.

- Ensure the governing body meets all statutory requirements by agreeing and regularly reviewing all statutory policies and procedures, especially those for safeguarding.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Attainment on entry to the school's nursery is broadly in line with age-related expectations. Although there is evidence of some satisfactory and good progress in

both Nursery and Reception, especially in personal, social and emotional development, a minority of children make inadequate progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is as a result of inadequate teaching, and a lack of understanding of how young children learn. When children were working independently in one Reception class, inspectors observed too little good-quality dialogue between adults and children and so opportunities were missed to develop children's speaking and listening skills. This was in marked contrast to the other Reception class where good interactions took place between the teacher and children. As a result of teaching that is too variable, overall attainment declined and in 2011 children started Year 1 with standards that were below average.

Although the majority of parents and carers say their children's progress is good, inspection evidence shows that progress varies throughout the school from satisfactory to inadequate. In writing, in particular, teachers do not have the necessary subject knowledge to ensure that pupils' skills are developed systematically. Too often, pupils complete unconnected exercises and there are too few opportunities for them to write at length. This was seen in a Year 3 and 4 lesson when the work on sequencing did not link well to the previous days' writing activities. In science, for example, overuse of worksheets limits pupils' opportunities to record and extend their ideas. In other subjects, also, there are missed opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and technology skills. This was seen in a Year 5 and 6 geography lesson as pupils completed low-level tasks which did not develop independent writing skills. In mathematics, progress is uneven and more-able pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable, especially in Years 3 to 6. This is because assessment information is not used well to ensure that all pupils receive work that is sufficiently challenging for their needs. Attainment varies, and although broadly average in Years 2 and 6, it is below age-related expectations in other year groups in writing and in mathematics.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make inadequate progress as information about what they know already is not used carefully enough to plan their learning. At times, more-able pupils and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are expected to complete the same task such as to write a beginning, middle and end to a story. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals progress less well than this group nationally. White British pupils and girls progress significantly less well than these groups nationally.

Pupils' skills in reading develop satisfactorily. In Years 1 and 2, the more-able readers make good use of their knowledge of phonics to help decipher unfamiliar words, and read with fluency and good expression. Less-able readers, although capable of breaking down unfamiliar words into separate sounds, lack skills in blending the different sounds within words and have insecure understanding of the text. Records of pupils' reading show variation in the frequency with which pupils are heard to read. Also, guided reading sessions throughout the school do not enable pupils to develop their understanding of texts as teachers are unsure of how to manage these sessions effectively. Some teachers say they are insecure in the teaching of phonics and would appreciate training in this aspect of their work. Even so, at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 attainment in reading is broadly average.

Quality of teaching

Although there are satisfactory aspects of teaching, there is too much inadequate teaching and too little that good. The positive views of most parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaires were not fully borne out by inspection evidence, which shows that, although there are satisfactory aspects to teaching. The majority of teaching does not challenge or motivate pupils or secure satisfactory learning or progress. Teachers fail to take account of what the pupils already know and can do and, therefore, do not ensure that activities fully meet the needs of different abilities. Lesson planning often emphasises activities to be completed, rather than the knowledge, skills and understanding to be developed. Long-term planning, especially that for the wider curriculum, does not focus well enough on developing key skills or ensure that each unit of work places sufficient demands on pupils. Much of the school's assessment and tracking information is incomplete, confusing and difficult to follow. As a result, expectations are not high enough and the school lacks the systems to secure greater consistency in teaching and learning.

The marking of some pupils' work is up to date, includes clear guidance about how to improve and this advice is occasionally acted upon. At other times, marking is brief or work is not marked at all. In topic work, feedback is often given at the end of the unit. Pupils therefore are not learning from their mistakes. Also, they lose pride in their work and this is reflected in a deterioration in the quality of presentation. While behaviour is usually managed well, pupils sometimes spend too long without being actively involved in learning, so that they become restless because they want to get on with the tasks planned for them. Teachers do not use strategies to ensure that pupils are actively involved during all parts of lessons.

Opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. Children in Nursery and Reception Years are taught the importance of sharing resources and of helping each other to tidy away equipment. Pupils in other year groups are generally keen to please and despite weaknesses in teaching most pupils want to work hard. They listen carefully to each other and on the few occasions pupils are encouraged to share ideas, they do so willingly and enjoy helping each other.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour seen during the inspection was satisfactory. It is satisfactory rather than good as at times, pupils do not always listen to their teachers or follow instructions willingly. This happens mainly in lessons when teaching does not capture their interest, and when teachers spend too much time talking to the class. Despite, most pupils have positive attitudes in lessons and are keen to get on with their work. A small minority of pupils and parents and carers expressed concerns about behaviour and how bullying is managed in school. Inspectors investigated these concerns thoroughly and found that the school does not log incidents of bullying and the practice of recording incidents of inappropriate behaviour has only started recently. However, pupils say there is very little bullying, although there is some name-calling and falling out at playtimes. When this happens, they say it is sorted out by the acting headteacher.

Pupils say they feel safe in school and almost all parents and carers agree. Pupils understand how to deal with risk, for example, when crossing the road or when handling equipment safely, such as scissors. They are less secure in their understanding of the dangers of the internet and cyber-bullying. All said they would tell an adult if anything worried or upset them. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs said they felt safe and included. Attendance levels are broadly average and most pupils arrive punctually to begin the school day.

Leadership and management

The school's leaders have not maintained a sharp enough focus on pupils' achievement since the last inspection and leadership and management are inadequate. The key issues identified at the last inspection regarding outdoor provision for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in terms of increasing the proportion of good teaching continue to be weaknesses. The existing school improvement plan does not provide strategic direction and systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school's work are inadequate. There is no rigorous cycle of checking teachers' planning, pupils' work or their progress to inform priorities for improvement. The newly appointed leadership team is fully aware that rapid improvement is needed and self-evaluation is accurate. The team is eager to drive forward school improvement but currently, members do not have the skills to implement the necessary actions needed and lack the capacity to improve. Staff morale is low; returns from the staff questionnaires show that members of staff feel that they have been denied relevant professional development opportunities. They are aware they need training in the teaching of reading, for example. Performance management is not used to hold staff accountable for the progress of the pupils they teach. Challenging targets are not set for pupils.

While the governing body is supportive, its impact in challenging leaders and holding them to account for the school's effectiveness is inadequate. Too many procedures, including some statutory requirements, are not in place or applied rigorously enough. Safeguarding procedures do not meet statutory requirements. Although all pupils have the opportunity to take part in all activities on offer, the school's promotion of equality is inadequate. This is because there is no detailed analysis of pupils' performance to identify where improvements are needed in the achievement of particular groups of pupils.

The curriculum is heavily focused on English and mathematics but the planned activities do not consistently meet the needs of all pupils and provision is, therefore, inadequate. Insufficient emphasis is given to systematically developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across different subjects. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactorily promoted through assemblies and, for example, charitable work. Pupils are proud to sponsor the education and welfare of a young girl living in India.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



10 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hugo Meynell CofE (VC) Primary School, Market Drayton, TF9 4NU

Thank you for your welcome when inspectors visited the school recently. Thank you for sharing your thoughts in conversations with us and through the questionnaire.

We were pleased to hear you feel safe in school and you know how to keep yourselves safe. You attend school regularly and punctuality is good. Most of you behave well and work sensibly in lessons but some of you do not. Teachers do not always plan the right activities to make sure all of you are learning as well as you can and this means that sometimes you lose concentration and do not listen carefully to your teachers. So we have asked teachers to use information about what you know already to make sure work is not too easy or too hard and is interesting for you. We agree with those of you who told us you would like more information about how to improve your work and we have asked your teachers to provide you with clear advice about why your work is good and how it could be better. We also think that all your work should be marked regularly, so you know how well you are doing and can respond to your teachers' comments.

Although all the school's adults are working hard, your new leaders know that teaching and learning should be better. We have found that the school is not doing well enough and have judged that it requires 'special measures'. This means leaders and managers will receive help to improve your school. Other inspectors will visit regularly to check how well things are progressing. You can help to make the school better by behaving well at all times, working hard, and asking your teachers to give you time to respond to any comments made about how to improve your work.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Lois Furness
Lead inspector

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