

Mary Howard CofE (VC) Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 124249 |
| Local Authority | Staffordshire |
| Inspection number | 359617 |
| Inspection dates | 15–16 June 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Clive Lewis |

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 | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 47 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Marilyn Davis |
| Headteacher | Julie Bullous |
| Date of previous school inspection | 21 February 2008 |
| School address | School Lane Tamworth B79 9JJ |
| Telephone number | 01827 383245 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector, who observed three teachers and four lessons and held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including a sample of pupils' books, teachers' planning documents, and tracking and assessment data. Questionnaires from 23 parents and carers, 23 pupils and four staff were analysed.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- To what degree do pupils make consistent progress across the school?
- What are the quality and rigour of the school's tracking and assessment system?
- What impact are subject leaders for English and mathematics having on teaching and learning?

Information about the school

Mary Howard CofE is a very small rural school that is federated with another neighbouring small school. The partnership was formed in 2007 and it became a 'hard' federation as of 1 September 2010. The headteacher and one governing body are responsible for both schools. Pupils are taught in two classes - a Reception/Year 1 and 2 class and a Year 3 to 6 class. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Mobility is high: more pupils than usual leave and join the school midway through their primary education. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Mary Howard CofE is a good school. It has improved significantly under the strong and purposeful leadership of the headteacher and now has a number of outstanding features. With the effective support of a very committed governing body, she has led the school skilfully through a turbulent period when the school roll fell significantly and it was threatened with closure, securing the future of the school by federating with another small school, which she also manages. Staff from both schools undertake training and monitoring activities together and pupils from both schools regularly meet and work together. The school is a warm community with an excellent family atmosphere that welcomes every pupil. Parents and carers are extremely supportive of it. One parent commented: 'School staff are very friendly and professional. My child has special needs and receives one-to-one support every day. This has worked out very well and he has made good progress.'

Children get off to a good start and make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The relatively small year groups mean that standards in Year 6 can vary significantly from year to year. However, school data and lesson observations confirm that progress is good throughout the school. Pupils' personal development is also good. A strong moral code is implicit in the school's ethos and this is reflected in pupils' good behaviour. This in turn has a very positive impact on the pupils' effective learning in lessons. Parents and carers say their children enjoy coming to school and pupils agree enthusiastically, as is reflected in their excellent levels of attendance. They feel extremely safe in their school and have a good understanding of the need for healthy lifestyles. They make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community.

Arrangements for the evaluation and monitoring of teaching and learning are good and the quality of teaching has improved as a result, although some inconsistencies remain in pace and expectations and, though targets are set, not all pupils are confident of what they personally should be aiming for in different subjects. Assessment is used particularly well to support learning. Lesson objectives are routinely made clear to pupils at the start of each lesson. Associated success criteria are regularly reviewed by teachers and pupils in lessons and in marking. The curriculum ensures that pupils receive a good variety of activities and experiences through visits, residential stays and visitors to school. Pupils particularly enjoy the wide range of activities and clubs, including physical activities. Pastoral care of pupils is outstanding. All pupils are known as individuals whose needs are discussed and valued and the school alters its arrangements to meet the needs of those who face challenging circumstances. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and assessment data analysed rigorously to ensure any pupil falling behind is identified quickly and provided with support.

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The school has very good links with groups and schools in the local area and is developing good links with schools further afield, in the United Kingdom and overseas in order to develop pupils' understanding of other cultures and lifestyles. Pupils' satisfactory and rapidly improving skills in literacy and numeracy, their good behaviour and good social skills, and their excellent attendance record prepare them well for secondary education and the future world of work. The school has an excellent understanding of how well it is doing and what needs to be done next and this underpins the school's excellent capacity to maintain and sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is good or better throughout the school, by ensuring that:
 - lesson activities demonstrate high expectations of the progress pupils will make
 - a brisk pace is maintained throughout all parts of each lesson.
- Involve pupils more fully in their own learning by ensuring that they know and understand their personal targets for improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year but is generally below national expectations. The small cohorts and varying levels of pupils with special educational needs in different year groups also affect overall attainment at Key Stage 2, as does the high mobility of pupils. For example, only two pupils in the current Year 6 cohort of six pupils and two pupils out of the cohort of five Year 5 pupils started in the Reception class. However, the school's internal data on pupils clearly demonstrates that all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress during their time in the school.

Pupils respect each others' needs and interests, and are curious about the world around them, embracing new experiences enthusiastically. They work hard and conscientiously, both independently and co-operatively, without the need for constant adult intervention. In a good Key Stage 2 literacy lesson focusing on writing a non-chronological report, pace was brisk. Pupils were motivated and inspired and behaviour was excellent throughout because of the teacher's high expectations of work and behaviour, and the way the lesson was related to previous learning.

Pupils say they really enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their excellent levels of attendance. Their good behaviour is an important contributing factor in the good progress they make in lessons and creates a very positive school ethos. They know and understand the important factors that affect their health, and respond well to the school's health promotion strategies, which have earned the school the Healthy Schools status. Pupils value their school community and willingly take on responsibilities. They participate constructively in school life, suggesting and taking actions to help improve the school and community. Pupils from Years 5 and 6 recently attended Tamworth Borough Council to discuss spending public money. They have taken part in a Young Enterprise scheme, delivered in conjunction with a volunteer from local business and have visited Tamworth Magistrates Court in order to investigate how societies function.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 2 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 2 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 1 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | 1 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which in the best lessons enthuses and challenges pupils and contributes to their good progress. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives and very effective success criteria that are routinely shared with pupils so that they can assess how well they have learnt. Good use is made of resources, including new technology, to illustrate key points and motivate pupils and thus enhance their learning. Good classroom management skills ensure that pupils work well together and there are no marked differences in the responses of boys or girls. In most lessons, carefully targeted questioning draws out pupils' ideas and develops their thinking and reasoning skills. Support by teaching assistants makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning across the school. In a small minority of lessons, however, progress is held back because teachers do not always move learning along at a fast enough pace and expectations of what more-able pupils should achieve are not always high enough. As a result they are not fully stretched by the work set even though it is based on a good analysis of what they can already do. The rigorous whole-school assessment and tracking system provides the school with secure data on pupils' progress as they move through the school. As a result of termly meetings to discuss individual pupils' progress, teachers have a good understanding of how well their pupils are doing and the action to be taken to support them effectively in order to reach their challenging longer term targets.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The curriculum provides carefully adapted activities to ensure all groups of pupils experience success. There is good emphasis on developing key literacy and numeracy and information and communication technology skills and on extending pupils' knowledge and skills in other subjects, particularly in music, French and physical education. Staff are making links with different subjects to make learning more meaningful. The school's excellent and well-organised arrangements for the care, guidance and support of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, contribute to their good development and well-being and support their learning very well. Pupils are safe and well looked after.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 1 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has consistently communicated to the staff her high expectations about continuing to improve provision. The result of this is evident in the significant improvements since the last inspection. With the support of the able deputy headteacher and enthusiastic, committed and well-motivated staff team she has identified and has rigorously and successfully tackled areas requiring improvement. Staff work very effectively together and regularly take advantage of professional opportunities to enhance their work. English and mathematics are led and managed extremely well. Self-evaluation has identified all the key priorities for development. As a result of regular monitoring and support, teaching is good and planning is founded on robust evidence and good quality data.

Governance is outstanding. The governing body has been very influential in determining the strategic direction of the school and, following 'hard' federation, continues to be fully and systematically involved in evaluating all its work. School leaders and governors have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and adopt recommended good practice for safeguarding pupils across all areas of its work. The school has a very positive relationship with parents and carers and the increase in the school roll over the past few years reflects increased confidence in the school in the community. The effective liaison with parents and carers and especially with other partners contributes significantly to improvements in pupils' achievement and well-being. The school promotes equality of opportunity in all its work and is constantly alert to any variation in achievement. It is pro-active in devising initiatives to overcome any weaknesses. The school promotes community cohesion within its own and the local community very effectively and in addition to very good links with schools in its local area, has developing links with schools in other parts of the U.K. and overseas. Although the school makes excellent use of all its

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resources, in particular the skilful deployment of staff from both schools where they are most needed, its value for money is judged good because its outcomes are good.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 1 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage clearly enjoy school and have settled into the routines well, playing happily together and individually. They undertake a variety of whole class and group activities and, in most cases, cooperate well when working with others. They delight in learning and seeing new things and make good progress in developing their skills and knowledge across a wide range of areas. Their overall achievement is good. Staff have good relationships with parents and carers through daily contact at the start and end of each day. Pastoral care and welfare arrangements are effective. Consequently, children are safe, well cared-for and aware of how to be healthy. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified quickly, are well supported and are integrated well into all activities. A strong emphasis is placed on developing children's language and communication skills at every opportunity. However, at times, Reception children are expected to spend too much time sitting quietly whilst older Year 1 and Year 2 pupils receive instructions. Provision for the outdoor curriculum is good. Children have free access to a secure outdoor area with a good range of free-choice and adult-led activities. This allows children to explore things with purpose and challenge and effectively fosters the development of their independent learning skills. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is effective and provides clear direction for the team. Adults have a good knowledge of the learning, development and welfare requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are good systems for the long-term assessment and tracking of children's progress and planning builds securely on regular assessments of children's needs. All staff monitor and record children's progress on a day-to-day basis effectively and observations and achievements are recorded in individual pupil profiles.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| Taking into account: | 2 |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers responding to the questionnaire was above average for a primary school. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded have positive views of the school and are extremely satisfied with it, reflecting the school's good links with them. In almost all responses they either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with all the statements including that their child enjoys school, the teaching is good, the school is led and managed effectively, and the school makes sure that their child is well prepared for the future. A very small minority, however, felt that the school does not help them support their child's learning or inform them about their child's progress. The inspector investigated these matters and did not find any evidence to support these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mary Howard CofE (VC) Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 47 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 16 | 70 | 7 | 30 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 17 | 74 | 5 | 22 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 15 | 65 | 5 | 22 | 3 | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 14 | 61 | 6 | 26 | 2 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 16 | 70 | 6 | 26 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 14 | 61 | 6 | 26 | 3 | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 15 | 65 | 7 | 30 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 17 | 74 | 5 | 22 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 14 | 61 | 8 | 35 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 8 | 35 | 12 | 52 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 8 | 35 | 10 | 43 | 2 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 14 | 61 | 6 | 26 | 2 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 16 | 70 | 6 | 26 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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 | 48 | 6 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 6 | 47 | 40 | 7 |
| Secondary schools | 12 | 39 | 38 | 11 |
| Sixth forms | 13 | 42 | 41 | 3 |
| Special schools | 28 | 49 | 19 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 14 | 45 | 31 | 10 |
| All schools | 10 | 46 | 37 | 7 |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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: | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| 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. |

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.



17 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mary Howard CofE (VC) Primary School, Tamworth, B79 9JJ

I would like to thank you for your help during the recent inspection of your school. I very much enjoyed my visit. I enjoyed watching lessons and talking with some of you. You attend a good school that is a happy and friendly place. It is like this because your headteacher and staff are leading the school very well. They give you excellent support to enable you to learn and enjoy your lessons. They make sure that you understand how to look after yourselves, keep healthy and stay safe. It was good to hear from the school councillors about how you are helping to improve the school. You told me that you really like your school - you show this by your exceptionally high levels of attendance - and that there are lots of things to do and enjoy. I agree with you. Your behaviour is good and you work hard and try to succeed in all that you do.

I have asked the staff and governors to do two things to improve your school:

- help you to work at a rapid pace and aim high in all lessons
- ensure that you all know your personal targets to help you improve your reading, writing and mathematics.

You can help with both of these.

I wish you well in your future education.

Yours sincerely

Clive Lewis

Lead Inspector

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