

St Oswald's CofE Primary School

Sion Avenue, Kidderminster, DY10 2YL

Inspection dates 17–18 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Despite recent improvements, not all pupils make good enough progress, including those aged 5 to 7, pupils who have high ability and those entitled to the new pupil premium funding.
- Teaching is improving but too many lessons involve work that is too easy, with teachers speaking for too long, limiting the time available for practical activities.
- Pupils are not always given enough guidance in what they need to do to improve their work, especially in writing.
- The contribution of the team of teaching assistants and other support staff has not led to improved learning.
- The new leadership team in school have made a good start but many of their initiatives are new and have not had time to make an impact. This is especially true at subject leader level.
- Many governors are new to their role. School plans are not fully developed as a result.
- There remains too much variation in performance between teachers, subjects and classes, with slower progress in some Year 1 classes. This is not being ironed out through monitoring by senior colleagues
- Attainment, although rising by age 11 is not yet good enough for younger pupils in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics. Too much is left for catching up in the older classes.

The school has the following strengths

- Children at age 4 get a good start with their reading, and learn to mix well together and develop good attitudes to learning.
- There is now greater engagement with parents and other community groups meaning these groups are better involved in the life of the school, especially through the newly established successful Parents Forum.
- There is an increased emphasis on teaching reading via letter sounds and a better emphasis on basic number.
- The school has good capacity to improve. This is being led by the new Headteacher who has secured the support of the school and wider community in a short period of time.
- New ways of measuring pupil progress through regular meetings to help teachers plan better lessons are leading to much higher standards in reading and for pupils age between 7 and 11
- Behaviour is good throughout school. This means very few lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour.

Information about this inspection

- Every teacher was observed teaching at least once and sometimes more often during 14 lesson observations.
- A meeting was held with the newly formed Parents Forum in addition to a review of the 31 responses available on Parent View.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, the local authority and the Local Leader in Education who had managed the school following the resignation of the previous headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils and other support staff.
- Inspectors looked at a large sample of pupils' work.
- Several meetings were held with the headteacher and senior teaching staff.
- Inspectors also considered a range of school documents.

Inspection team.

Ceri Morgan, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Marilyn Mottram

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- This school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very low.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and eligible for the pupil premium is twice the national average and the numbers of pupils who have disabilities or special educational needs are also high.
- In the last inspection of 2011 St Oswald's was given a Notice to Improve. Since then it has received the help of a Local Leader in Education who has given support at headteacher level. This support is now being reduced as the newly appointed headteacher settles into his role. This has led to a review of how senior leaders operate and many are learning new roles.
- Governance has been through significant change since 2011 with a new Chair and many new members.
- The school has recently completed a large-scale premises development which means that all classes now have suitable accommodation.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is a privately run nursery on site which is subject to separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress made by pupils aged 5 to 7, those known to be eligible for free school meals and more able pupils:
 - by allowing more time for pupils to work in a sustained way and at length
 - monitoring the transfer from the youngest classes into Year 1 more effectively
 - reviewing the way the intervention groups are used to support pupils.
- Iron out the variation in the standard of teaching between classes through better and more rigorous monitoring by subject leaders.
- Ensure teaching continues to improve through setting higher expectations in lessons of pupils and providing more time for pupils to get on with their work and not listen to teachers at length.
- Improve the contribution of support staff to improving standards of attainment by monitoring the way teachers deploy teaching assistants and the contribution made by the wider administrative support staff.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Attainment remains low at age 7 and is variable between classes. This means the older classes having to catch up in all subjects. At the same time, the proportion of pupils reaching the required levels in both English and mathematics rose at age 11 from just over half to 77% in 2011 representing considerable improvement. Too few pupils manage the higher levels at age 7 or 11. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection.
- There remains a gap in the performance of some groups that do not perform as well as their peers. These include those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, more able and pupils between ages 5 and 7. Although the gaps are narrowing, they are still too wide.
- The school does not yet have sufficient data on the performance of pupils who have disabilities and / or special educational needs to show their progress clearly enough. This is also gathering pace however and the data are emerging. However an analysis of the work shows that many pupils who have additional needs do not make progress as good as their peers.
- Reading remains problematic for many pupils. Although many pupils read fluently and sound out letters and words well as a result of the new phonics sessions, not all do. At age 7 too many still struggle to interpret texts and read complex but common words like 'didn't'. Unusually boys read slightly better than girls at this age. Despite this pupils have a good grasp of reading skills by age 11 and most show a love of books and reading that does them credit.
- Writing is poor and spelling is a weakness with few pupils able to offer spelling strategies. Key words often go misspelt during lessons. This includes for example the names of shapes and solids during mathematics lessons that are meant to be learning such names. Handwriting is improving but remains untidy and the amount of writing pupils produce is limited with few examples of extended texts.
- Many pupils are secure in basic number work by age 11 and able to add, subtract and multiply well but less effective in application of this in solving problems. This is not the case in the younger classes where many show some insecurity at age 7 in counting, number work and addition. They are not yet fluent or confident in number work.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching is improving rapidly and in most classes teachers show an enthusiasm and commitment to improve that is commendable. Despite this significant improvement there is a time lag between this and better achievement of pupils. It is mainly as a result of this why teaching is judged as requiring improvement. Teaching is variable in quality but none observed during the inspection was inadequate.
- There are some common strengths in the quality of teaching seen in most classes. These include good relationships with children, effective use of new technologies, such as interactive whiteboards, detailed planning and thoughtful inclusion of pupils with additional needs.
- Similarly, however, there are some common weaknesses evident in many classes across the school. Lessons do not have enough challenge – teachers accept pupils' answers too readily for example and do not offer greater challenge or tackle misunderstandings. This is especially true in mathematics where teachers do not respond well to pupil misconceptions but tend to gloss

over them whilst seeking the correct answer elsewhere. Teachers still talk for too long and on occasions make simple lessons overly complex by frequently interrupting to mention 'success criteria' and other lesson requirements. Although valuable in planning this has the effect of limiting learning time and breaking up the opportunity for pupils to show persistence or greater depth. As a consequence feedback to pupils remains variable. This is a key reason why writing skills lag behind those for reading.

- Marking is occasionally over generous and lacks genuine feedback but describes what pupils have done rather than how well they have done it. There is an increasing trend for pupils to mark each other's work. This can be a valuable exercise but it is used too frequently in some classes. Marking is up to date and usually accurate however.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils themselves say behaviour is usually good, especially in lessons. Pupils want to learn, are keen to make good progress and proud of their school. This positive attitude is maintained in all classes.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming and agree lessons are not disrupted apart from on rare occasions; indeed most pupils are keen to learn and want greater challenge. They work collaboratively and support each other well. This includes some examples of very patient support and understanding with pupils with additional needs.
- During discussions pupils say bullying is limited to name calling, is easily sorted out and there are few examples of anything frightening – and when it does occur they can always tell teachers who then help. The school maintains a clear log of behaviour that is of concern. There have been a small number of fixed term exclusions since the last inspection but these are related to the isolated examples of aggression.
- Safety gets a high priority. Pupils say they feel safe and secure. The school carries out all safeguarding checks diligently, and emphasises ways to develop good health and sensible lifestyle choices, including anti-smoking and water safety. This includes a recent initiative to help pupils become aware of the potential risks of internet use.
- Pupils show enthusiasm for their learning. They are very keen to have a wider offer of out of school clubs.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership is going through significant change. The most significant being the appointment of an experienced and ambitious headteacher. Within a short space of time he has secured the support of the school community and quickly identified areas of strength and weakness in school. He has established a programme of checking how well teachers and pupils are doing through careful monitoring. The findings however are not yet used to refine school planning or to set ambitious targets. He has reorganised the way the senior leadership team works and this, together with the improvements secured show a good capacity to improve.
- He has completed an analysis of how the school spends the additional funds it receives for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. This money is being used thoughtfully to provide additional resources including residential trips but also to provide some additional time for the Deputy Headteacher to work with smaller groups. However it is not yet securing the desired impact on their attainment or progress. As a consequence the school plans to review how the money is allocated and the contribution of the wider team of classroom support assistants.
- Within the wider leadership however, self-evaluation is over generous. Subject leaders have not

yet started to monitor pupil achievement in any meaningful way. The new management team is starting to show signs of impact but it is very early in their work to make judgements.

- The deputy headteacher has secured significant improvements in attendance which is now in line with national figures but is variable across classes and has some lingering persistent absentees. It is currently running at 94% which is a significant step up from 2011.
- The school benefitted from the good support of the local authority and a consultant Headteacher whilst it sought a new appointment. This support led to the improvements in the schools results in 2012.
- The curriculum does not yet fully develop pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. It offers strength in developing social awareness and a moral basis for behaviour but lessons seldom contain a spiritual element and there remains much work to be done to ensure pupils have a good understanding of wider cultural awareness. The lack of a planned programme of visits, clubs and wider activities prevents this. The new Chair, in her role as local Minister, is doing much to develop closer links to the church and grow a sense of spirituality outside of lessons.
- The governance of the school:
 - The governing body has been re-organised and now has full attendance with new committee structures established and training in place. There is a sharper awareness of what data the school holds and how the school's performance measures up when compared with others. This enables governors to know more about the school's work, ask more challenging questions of its leadership, hold the school to account more effectively for how it is improving the quality of teaching and how this, in turn, will drive up achievement.
 - Despite this, there remains a training need to enable new governors to be able to contribute to school improvement planning in detail. For example, combining the support plan and the school improvement plan has not linked the school's important targets to current pupil performance data in sufficient detail for groups of pupils.
 - The new Chair of the Governing Body and members are ambitious for the school; they offer challenge about how school performance data can be used to improve teachers' performance management arrangements. They are fully aware of the need for greater rigour in their monitoring.
 - Governors manage the budget well, including overseeing the planned changes to the ways in which pupil premium funding will be used in the future to better effect.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	135058
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	399729

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	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Mary Austin
Headteacher	Joel Marshall
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2011
Telephone number	01562 751056
Fax number	01562 751056
Email address	office@stoswalds.worcs.sch.uk

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