

# Mereside Church of England Primary School

Childrens Way, Shrewsbury, SY2 6LE

**Inspection dates** 11–12 December 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Leaders, governors and managers have failed to make the essential improvements identified at the time of the last inspection. The work of school leaders has had too little impact on improving the quality of teaching and in raising pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' achievement is inadequate because there is too much weak teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in mathematics because teachers are not confident in their skills to teach the subject and the pace of learning is too slow.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in writing because they do not have enough opportunities to write longer pieces in all subjects.
- Too often, teachers give pupils tasks which are too easy for them and they do not check whether pupils need new or harder work.
- Teachers' marking does not help pupils to improve their work or challenge them with more difficult tasks.
- Pupils are not set challenging targets for their learning which are shared with their parents and carers.

### The school has the following strengths

- Teaching in the Reception classes ensures that pupils make good progress because it is well thought out and engages the children's imagination.
- Some teaching is good in Key Stage 1.
- Attendance is above average and children generally enjoy being at school.
- Pupils are polite and courteous, and they feel safe at school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well catered for.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 21 lessons, of which three were jointly observed with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and observed teaching assistants and teachers working with small groups.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in their books and listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, school staff, including middle leaders and senior leaders, and with representatives of the governing body. Inspectors also met with parents and carers informally as they dropped their children off or collected their children from school. Inspectors met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 49 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and other communications with parents such as letters.
- Questionnaires were received from 16 staff and the inspection team considered the responses to these.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at planning documents, records relating to attendance, behaviour and the monitoring of the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings, documentation about how the school manages and improves teaching and decides on pay, and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Simon Blackburn, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Tracy Stone

Additional Inspector

Kathryn Raftery

Additional Inspector

## Full report

In accordance with 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 in the school.

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium is government funding for pupils who are eligible for free school meals or who are in local authority care.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school does not meet the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is a children's centre on the same site, which incorporates pre-school and nursery provision, but this is subject to a separate inspection.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2011.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, especially in Key Stage 2, to good or better by ensuring that:
  - teachers' subject knowledge of mathematics is improved rapidly through effective training
  - all teachers make use of information about what pupils already know and can do to plan work which challenges them and helps learning to move at a swift pace
  - teachers' marking not only recognises what pupils have done well but also gives them clear information about how to improve their work and challenges them with more difficult tasks.
- Improve pupils' achievement in writing by providing more opportunities for them to practise the skills of writing at length in subjects other than English.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that all school leaders are able to recognise and demonstrate best practice in teaching
  - putting in place a rigorous system of checks on leadership and teaching that are followed up with high-quality support for staff
  - improving the quality of action plans for the whole school so that they are more realistic and achievable, and so have greater impact on pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching
  - checking carefully on the success of actions taken and the consistency of how plans are acted upon so that what needs to be done next is identified quickly and accurately
  - setting challenging targets for pupils that are shared with their parents and carers
  - ensuring that the governing body uses its knowledge and understanding of the school's work to hold senior leaders to account.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- Pupils leave Year 6 with attainment that is around a year behind the national average in mathematics and a term behind in English. This represents inadequate progress from pupils' starting points. Progress in reading to the end of Year 6 is better than progress in writing, but the progress made in both is below national averages. The particularly poor standards in mathematics are because teachers are not confident in teaching mathematics and there are weaknesses in their subject knowledge. There is little sign of improving attainment for pupils currently in Year 6.
- Children join Reception with skills, knowledge and understanding that are typical for their age. They make good progress because of imaginative and well-paced teaching and start Year 1 with attainment which is above average.
- Progress slows markedly in Years 1 and 2. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is below average in writing and mathematics, and broadly average in reading. The letters and sounds (phonics) work in Key Stage 1 is taught well and a higher proportion of pupils than nationally achieved the expected standard in the phonic screening check.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make inadequate progress through Years 3 to 6. The work they are given is not well enough matched to their needs to make sure that they do not fall behind.
- Pupils who are eligible for additional support through the pupil premium make similar progress to other pupils in Years 1 and 2, and inadequate progress in Key Stage 2. School leaders use some of the additional money specifically to try to help these pupils catch up and some to support improvements that will benefit all pupils. For example, additional teaching time is paid for to support individual and group catch-up sessions in mathematics. This has not had sufficient impact on achievement in mathematics.
- There is some evidence of improving progress in classes in Years 2, 4 and 5 but continued weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics mean that pupils' mathematical skills are not being fully developed. Teaching seen in many English lessons across the school was also too slow-paced and repetitive, preventing pupils from making good progress.

### The quality of teaching

### is inadequate

- Although there is some good teaching and relationships in classrooms are good, the majority of teaching does not challenge or inspire pupils and, as a result, pupils make inadequate progress.
  - The school has recognised that teachers' mathematical teaching skills are weak and has introduced a programme of training to improve them. This work is still at an early stage and most teachers do not teach pupils to apply their mathematical skills or give them enough opportunities to develop them in other subjects.
  - While most teachers try to give tasks of varying difficulty to different ability groups, the level of challenge is not always very different and pupils are asked to complete too many questions at the same level before moving on to new work. This slows the pace of learning, particularly for the more-able pupils.
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- Teachers give pupils very few opportunities to write more lengthy pieces of work and there is too much use of worksheets where writing directly in books would be more appropriate. In subjects other than English, writing is limited to short descriptions or explanations so that pupils are not planning ahead or developing their own style.
- Pupils do not know the levels they are working at and do not have clear and challenging targets to work towards. Marking makes no reference to what pupils should be aiming to achieve and does not focus well enough on how pupils can improve their work.
- Teaching in the Reception classes is good. Teachers have high expectations and provide a rich learning environment for the children. Independence is fostered at all stages and the personal and social development of children is rapid. This is the result of excellent relationships and a calm purposeful approach that requires the children to think about what they are learning and listen to the views of others.
- In some classrooms, high quality displays stimulate the children's curiosity and interest.
- Pupils respond very well when the teachers' enthusiasm and good planning engages them and allows them to enjoy their learning fully. In a Year 5 English lesson, a group of pupils became very excited when combining different word types to make sentences and independently found extra resources so that they could explore their ideas more fully. The teacher enhanced their learning with challenging questions and they made good progress.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- Behaviour requires improvement because school records show that, although declining, the number of minor disruptions in classes remains too high. A small number of pupils, some with recognised behaviour problems, have been excluded from the school for short periods over the last two terms.
  - A minority of parents and carers who responded on Parent View disagreed that the school makes sure pupils are well behaved and this was emphasised by discussions with parents at the beginning and end of the school day. Many of the concerns centred around one class, where changes made by the headteacher have already ensured that behaviour has improved.
  - Pupils are friendly and polite. During the inspection, pupils demonstrated good social skills and behaved well as they played together and moved around the school site. The system of play leaders, where specially uniformed Year 5 pupils are on duty in the playground, works well to support pupils and encourage them to join in with games and activities.
  - Pupils understand the different forms of bullying and report that any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly if teachers are told about them. A number of pupils spoken to by inspectors had experienced bullying during their time at the school.
  - Attendance is above average. Pupils report that they enjoy coming to school but some feel that poor behaviour is not always dealt with fairly by school staff. They told inspectors that they feel safe at school and that they are taught how to stay safe.
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**The leadership and management are inadequate**

- Leaders, governors and managers have failed to secure the necessary improvements since the previous inspection. Consequently, weaknesses remain in the level of challenge in lessons, the use of information about pupils' attainment and progress to improve the standard of teaching and the involvement of subject coordinators in checking the work of the school. Leaders have not demonstrated the capacity to bring about the necessary improvements.
  - The headteacher is not well supported by other senior leaders. They are relatively inexperienced and some are unable to demonstrate the quality of teaching that is required to bring about the necessary improvements in the school. The headteacher is providing training and coaching to improve their teaching and leadership skills, but this action has not had a significant impact in the quality of their work.
  - Not all staff are held responsible for the progress of the pupils they teach or for achievement in areas they lead or manage, because some school leaders are not confident to hold their colleagues to account and have difficult conversations about their performance.
  - The headteacher has a realistic view of the weaknesses of the school and has drawn up a highly ambitious action plan. Some of the targets are unrealistic in the short term and require a greater level of leadership skill than the senior leadership team is currently able to demonstrate.
  - Checks on the quality of teaching carried out by the headteacher provide an accurate view of the support needed to help each teacher to improve their practice. However, the headteacher has taken on all of the performance management work because the other senior leaders were judged to be less effective in assessing quality and securing improvements. Teachers have not progressed on pay scales where they have been underperforming.
  - Systems for tracking pupils' progress are new and just beginning to provide useful information, but they are not being used well by all teachers to improve the quality of their lesson planning. Pupil premium funding has not been used effectively enough to secure adequate or better achievement for eligible pupils, but its use in the current academic year is better targeted.
  - The local authority and the headteacher agreed that the school is causing concern. The high level of support provided for school leadership and mathematics teaching has not been successful in dealing with the underachievement of pupils across the school.
  - The range of subjects taught fosters pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. However, because subjects are planned and taught separately, pupils do not have enough opportunity to explore relevant links that tie them together.
  - The school meets statutory requirements for pupils' safeguarding.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governors have not challenged leaders and staff enough about the school's performance or held leaders to account, particularly in relation to the attainment and progress of pupils. They are now more effective as a result of changes to the composition of the governing body. Governors know that achievement is poor and they have made this their central focus. Governors are now more active in checking the effectiveness of action plans and have a realistic view of the weaknesses and strengths of the school. However, they are still over-reliant on the information they are given by the headteacher to inform their views of the
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school's effectiveness and their decision making. Governors have a good understanding of the financial circumstances of the school, but are less well informed about the impact that the additional funding provided through the pupil premium is having on achievement. Governors understand how the performance management system is used to reward good teaching and the actions being taken by the headteacher and the local authority to improve teaching and leadership in the school. Governors now take every opportunity to undertake training to improve their practice.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135788
<b>Local authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	406632

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	255
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Debbie Sharp
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elizabeth Holmes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 January 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01743 356283
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