

St Alban's Church of England Primary School

St Albans Close, Ashmore Park, Wolverhampton, WV11 2PF

Inspection dates

6–7 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
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.

- The pupils' achievement is inadequate. Recent improvements in progress are not yet consistent. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics remains low at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Too much of the teaching is weak. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils.
- Teachers do not have accurate information on pupils' progress. They do not plan work that matches pupils' different abilities so the work is either too hard or too easy for some.
- Senior leaders have not provided clear leadership to bring about improvement. Other leaders are ineffective.
- The management of teachers' performance is inadequate and teachers have not been helped to improve their teaching.
- Until recently, the school's checks on how well it is doing have not been accurate enough to help leaders identify clearly where improvements are needed.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage classes, children do not make enough progress because activities are not organised well and they do not help children to learn as effectively as they should.

The school has the following strengths

- School leaders and the governing body have a clear and accurate picture of the school. They recognise where weaknesses exist and are better placed to bring about more rapid improvement.
- Attendance is low but rising rapidly and behaviour is improving.
- The executive headteacher has provided clear leadership and management in the very short time since her appointment.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 18 lessons taught by 10 teachers; six were joint observations with the executive headteacher.
- Inspectors observed and spoke to pupils during lessons and at lunch and break times. They met formally with a group of pupils.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and managers, and with members of the governing body. A meeting took place with representatives from the local authority. Discussions also took place with a number of parents.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding, the management of teachers' performance, attendance, pupils' attainment and progress, and pupils' work.
- Inspectors took into account the 22 responses to Parent View (the online questionnaire) and responses from staff who returned the inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Ronald Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Suha Ahmad

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

- St Alban's is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- In January 2013, the school federated with St Thomas' Church of England Primary School. The federation resulted in a new executive headteacher and governing body being appointed.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is average, but the proportion who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional government funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is above that found nationally.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A very few pupils are educated in alternative provision away from the school site at Wolverhampton's Kingston Pupil Referral Unit.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - providing training and modelling of good or better teaching so that teachers have high expectations and are clear about what needs to be improved
 - developing the support programme already in place in partnership with the local teaching school
 - ensuring that all teachers use assessment information and a range of checks on pupils' progress to plan work that matches pupils' different abilities and challenges them to do better
 - developing teachers' skills in providing both oral and written feedback to pupils so that pupils know how to improve their work and can improve their understanding .
- Raise attainment and progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that checks on pupils' progress are accurate and that teachers and leaders at all levels know exactly how much progress each pupil has made
 - making sure that teachers regularly check that the work set for more-able pupils is hard enough so helping them to achieve the higher levels
 - making sure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are provided with the necessary support and resources
 - improving the way in which activities are planned and presented in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that the rate at which children make progress is accelerated

- making sure the school gathers information on those pupils who are educated off site so that they know how much progress these pupils are making.

■ Improve pupils' behaviour and safety across the school by:

- making sure that pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe on the internet
- making sure that pupils are fully engaged in their learning and so do not lose concentration and become distracted in lessons.

■ Improve the quality of leadership and management to at least good by:

- making sure that all staff are fully trained in child protection and safeguarding procedures, and that all records are completed fully
 - enabling all leaders and managers to monitor the impact of teaching and learning more effectively and make rapid adjustments where necessary
 - implementing effective performance management procedures so that all staff are held to account and provided with opportunities to improve their skills and knowledge
 - making sure that the current good monitoring, challenge and support provided by the governing body is maintained
 - providing appropriate resources and more frequent opportunities for pupils to develop a better understanding of the multi-cultural society in which they live.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils do not make enough progress from their starting points because of weaknesses in teaching and in leadership and management. As a result, their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is too low and their achievement is inadequate.
- The majority of children start school with skills that are broadly typical for their age but some have skills a little lower than this. Children do not make enough progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, so their attainment across the areas of learning is below that expected nationally at the start of Year 1.
- Pupils across the school and especially those who are more able, do not make enough progress. This is because teachers do not have or use enough accurate information on the progress and previous attainment of their pupils. Consequently, they do not consistently provide work which matches pupils' existing skills and challenges them to do even better.
- Pupils are not learning to read well enough because some teachers and teaching assistants do not have the knowledge they need to teach reading effectively. In 2012, seventy per cent of Year 1 pupils met the expected standard in the government's phonics screening check, a greater proportion than seen nationally. However, standards in reading at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 remain below average.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make inadequate progress, as support and resources for these pupils are limited. A lack of training for the staff involved in supporting these pupils and weaknesses in checking how well they are doing have also contributed to poor progress. A very few pupils are educated on another site, but the school has no information on their progress; this is unacceptable.
- The achievement of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding, who are known to be eligible for free school meals, is below that of their peers both in school and nationally. However, the gaps between the performance of these pupils and others are narrowing rapidly in both English and mathematics because the funding is used well to provide extra help for individuals and small-groups.
- Pupils of minority ethnic heritage and those who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to their classmates.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 make better progress than those in other year groups due to the extra support the school provides in an effort to help them catch up.
- Those parents who responded to Parent View, the online inspection questionnaire, and the three parents spoken to during the inspection raised concerns about pupils' achievement.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Very little teaching is good enough. Teachers have had insufficient opportunity to extend their training and see what good teaching looks like in practice.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Teachers do not have

accurate information on the progress that pupils are currently making and as a consequence, work is not well matched to pupils' different abilities. Activities are often too easy, and especially so for more-able pupils.

- Pupils' progress in learning letters and sounds (phonics) is not checked and tracked across the school, which prevents teachers from planning work that builds securely on their previous skills. In Key Stage 1, staff mispronounce some letter sounds and this limits pupils' progress.
- The lack of a clear purpose in some lessons leads to pupils being unsure about what they are meant to learn and they lose concentration easily. Teachers do not consistently build pupils' skills within lessons and over time. This stems from weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge and in their ability to check pupils' progress to match work to their previous learning.
- The impact of other adults who support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs through individual and small-group support is uneven. Their contribution during class work is restricted by their lack of training and the uninspiring activities teachers often provide for their pupils.
- Teachers' oral feedback and written marking does not always help pupils to understand how to get better. As a result, pupils are not aware of how to improve their work or what they need to do to achieve higher levels.
- The recent federation and appointment of a new executive headteacher, together with good support from the local authority, has begun to strengthen teaching. Although teaching over time is inadequate, there are signs that it is improving.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Teachers have increasingly high expectations with regard to pupils' behaviour, which has resulted in improvement both in lessons and around the school. However, there are still too many occasions when pupils lose concentration and become distracted in lessons because the work is too easy and does not challenge or interest them.
- The majority of parents who shared their views felt that behaviour in school was not as good as it could be. Those parents spoken to by inspectors pointed out that they had seen clear improvements in general behaviour around the school. Pupils also believe that behaviour is improving and that they have a better understanding about the consequences of misbehaving.
- A few parents expressed concerns about bullying. Discussions with pupils suggest that there is a small amount of bullying but that when it occurs it is dealt with effectively. Pupils mostly have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including discrimination-based bullying, and say that there is no racism in the school.
- Pupils know how to stay healthy and safe in most situations, but have a limited understanding of how to keep safe when using the internet and communicating electronically. The executive headteacher has moved quickly to rectify this situation and teaching in this area has begun to give pupils a better understanding of the possible dangers they face when using the internet. However, these developments are very recent and have not yet had time to give the pupils a full understanding of how to stay safe in this area.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Until this term, there has been limited checking of teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement. As a result, underperformance has not been tackled effectively in the past and teachers have not received enough guidance on how they can improve.
 - Previous systems for checking teachers' performance and linking decisions about pay increases to their responsibilities and impact were inadequate. This significantly hindered the ability of the school and its staff to improve. The executive headteacher has recognised this and has created a challenging timetable for correcting these faults. However, these changes are still at an early stage.
 - The pace of improvement has quickened since the executive headteacher took over the leadership of the school. She has accurately identified the school's strengths and weaknesses, including the need to raise expectations of pupils' achievement and to improve teaching.
 - More rigorous systems for observing lessons, checking pupils' progress and for holding teachers to account have been introduced. However, not all staff with leadership responsibilities are fully involved in monitoring teaching and pupils' progress.
 - The subjects and topics the pupils are taught are broad but not organised well enough to help teachers to teach the basic skills systematically or make sure the more-able pupils are consistently challenged. Consequently, the school's commitment to equality is ineffective and pupils of different ability are not making enough progress.
 - School leaders have not successfully promoted pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development due to a lack of resources and planning for this area of learning. The pupils have very little understanding of other cultures and religions or of the multi-cultural society in which they live. Nevertheless, there is an atmosphere of kindness and respect for one another in the school, due to the positive relationships between adults and pupils.
 - The executive headteacher is ambitious to improve the school and all staff share this desire. They, and the governing body, now have a clear vision with a strong sense of urgency to change things for the better. This has already led to several positive developments to quicken the rate of improvement but it is too soon to see a clear impact.
 - Much of the improvement that is taking place is the result of good partnerships and support from the local authority, a local teaching school and the sister federated school. This is especially so in raising the quality of teaching through staff training. This process is in its initial stages and leaders and managers are, rightly, planning to continue this external support.
 - Safeguarding arrangements in the school did not fully meet requirements at the time of the inspection, but the executive headteacher acted quickly to correct issues. Training has been arranged for all staff and all required records and documents have been put into place.
 - Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are better equipped to secure the necessary changes required for the school to improve. Members challenged the school as to why standards were falling and the local authority was brought in to review the school's work. Consequently, the school became part of
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a federation to help it improve more rapidly and a new governing body was established. The executive headteacher has been appointed and is working to a set of challenging targets to secure rapid improvement. The local authority is working intensively with the school and coaching and training has been provided for all staff. Governors are clearly focused on school improvement and on ensuring the best provision for all pupils. They have commissioned extra training for themselves to sharpen this aspect of their work. The new Chair of the Governing Body is closely monitoring the process by which teachers' progression up the pay scales is linked to their performance. The governing body has set up effective systems to check carefully the effect of pupil premium funding to make sure that spending decisions continue to help close the gap in achievement between these pupils and their peers.

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	104364
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	404940

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	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicholas Watson
Headteacher	Helen Morris
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2010
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