

Wistanstow CofE Primary School

Wistanstow, Craven Arms, SY7 8DQ

Inspection dates 7–8 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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

- There have been, until recently, weaknesses in teaching that have resulted in some pupils, especially those who are more able and pupils in Year 4, not doing well enough.
- There are gaps in the development of pupils' reading, writing and mathematics, for those entitled to extra resources, pupil premium.
- Although children in Reception tackle hard tasks very well, they do not have enough opportunities to choose their own activities and learn outside.
- Some teachers do not always set work at the right level for all pupils in the class. It is not always sufficiently demanding especially for more able and Year 4 pupils.
- Weaknesses in leadership and management have, until recently, resulted in a slow rate of improvement since the last inspection.
- Targets for teachers to improve their work are not well enough linked to accelerating pupils' progress.
- The school has not kept a close enough eye on the progress of the most vulnerable pupils.
- Although teachers check pupils' progress regularly, there is no whole school approach to help managers quickly spot those making slow progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils achieve standards that are the same as similar pupils in other schools in tests at the end of Year 6.
- Good teaching in two of the three classes and improving teaching in the other helps pupils to make good gains in their learning.
- Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe. They try hard in lessons because they enjoy learning and want to please their teachers.
- Good leadership by the acting headteacher has had a big impact on pupils' learning and teachers' morale is high.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good
- An experienced governing body under a knowledgeable chair ensures that statutory requirements are met.
- The school has good capacity to improve.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight parts of lessons taken by four teachers. Two of these were joint observations with the acting headteacher. Additionally six pupils were heard reading.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, members of staff, pupils, the chair of governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of 12 responses to the on-line questionnaire and six staff questionnaires.
- The inspector observed the school's work, looked at a number of documents including records and documents relating to tracking pupils' progress, monitoring and evaluation, behaviour, safety, safeguarding and attendance. The inspector carried out a work scrutiny with the acting headteacher.

Inspection team

Kathy Hooper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than average.
- Most of pupils are White British and the few pupils from minority ethnic families speak fluent English
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, additional funding for pupils who are in the care of the local authority, known to be eligible for free school meals, or having a parent in the armed services, is much lower than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action is low. The proportion supported by school action plus is broadly average. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- All pupils are educated on site. There is a centre for under-fives on the school's site which is not managed by the school's governors.
- The previous headteacher left the school at the beginning of this term and an acting headteacher has been in post since his departure. The governing body has changed this term and there is a new Chair of the Governing Body.
- There are three mixed-age classes. One class of more able Year 2 pupils and Year 3 and 4 pupils is taught by the headteacher for four days each week.
- One of the teachers supported a local school by acting as its headteacher for a term.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching, to accelerate progress and raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics, by making sure that teachers:
 - use information from previous learning to identify the skills and knowledge they want pupils with different abilities to gain
 - set activities that challenge and excite all pupils, especially the more-able and Year 4 pupils
 - check pupils' understanding promptly in lessons and clarify misunderstandings
- implement pupils' regular use of reading records in Years 5 and Improve the leadership and management and the governance by:
 - tracking each pupil's progress at least once each half term
 - ensuring clear focus on targets to improve the achievement of under-performing pupils in teachers' performance management targets
 - weighing up how well different groups of pupils, including those entitled to pupil premium, are doing to reduce any gaps in progress and report these to the governing body each term
 - ensuring teachers plan a whole-school learning programme to guarantee continuous development of pupils' reading, writing and mathematics.
 - providing more opportunities for children in the Reception class to choose their own activities and learn out of doors.6.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- When children join the school in Reception, their knowledge and skills are as expected for their age. Standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 are broadly average because of challenging teaching in Years 5 and 6 where pupils learn at a much faster rate than in Years 3 and 4.
- Pupils' progress in their reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school is uneven. The most able in Year 4 are less confident about sounding out words and letters when reading and writing and less able to solve mathematical problems.
- Although there was a dip in attainment in 2011, standards began to rise again last year. This year about a third of the pupils in Year 6 are on track to achieve higher than average levels, Level 5 or more, in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in Reception make sound progress because they try hard when working with older children in Year 1 and 2. They do not make good progress because activities are not always well matched to their individual interests. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have made the progress expected of them, but none of them achieve the higher level, Level 3.
- Overall, the school's use of pupil premium to support vulnerable pupils has not had sufficient impact on their attainment. As a result, the gap between these pupils and those who are more advantaged is not closing. These pupils are five terms behind their classmates. The progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is not as good as similar pupils in other schools. While those in Year 4 have not made enough progress, the progress of those in Reception and Year 6 is comparable with others.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is similar to that of others. Some pupils make better than expected progress and they are well supported by specialists from the local authority, such as the speech and language therapist. Pupils from ethnic backgrounds other than White British make similar progress to their classmates.
- Younger pupils sound out words and letters well when reading. Older pupils are generally fluent readers and enjoy books. Although the lower ability Year 2 pupils join up their writing, some higher attaining Year 6 pupils do not, even though they write spirited and imaginative accounts at length. Higher attaining Year 6 pupils solve problems about shapes without a grid where there are missing coordinates.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Over reliance on worksheets in the past has made Year 3 and 4 pupils less confident when reading and writing and less able to reason when solving mathematical problems. They are not confident when using dictionaries or a thesaurus. They do not readily use their initiative when working independently.
- Teaching in all classes is lively and enthusiastic. Teachers are knowledgeable and anxious to improve their work. All pupils are well engaged in lessons and work well together.
- The use of the interactive whiteboard and laptops supports learning well. In a lesson for the youngest pupils on place value, there were high levels of excitement when they manipulated

numbers on the interactive whiteboard and then played a number game on the laptops.

- The best lessons have a good range of activities that challenge the most and least able learners equally. Clear pointers for success help pupils to understand what is expected of them. In an English lesson for Years 5 and 6 they quickly understood different ways of developing tension in their stories. They thought about a time when they had been afraid and then shared their feelings with each other. Their ideas were extended when they watched a video clip of an author explaining the ways she builds tension into her stories. Pupils then worked very confidently and cooperatively in different groups discussing ways of improving their own writing.
- All pupils are now taught how to use sounds and letters in their reading and writing, but older pupils are not encouraged to keep reading records to help them continue to improve. Teaching assistants help some pupils, who have been identified as making slow progress, to remember how to blend sounds and letters when reading.
- Teachers regularly check the work in pupil's books and have a good understanding of pupils' progress. Comments in some pupils' books, however, are cursory and do not clearly show pupils' strengths and areas for development. Nevertheless, younger pupils check their own work and older pupils do corrections and know how to improve their work. Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs are promptly spotted and helped. Teachers do not all check what individual pupils have learned in lessons, missing opportunities to reinforce and extend learning and correct any misunderstandings.
- Teaching assistants work productively with individuals and small groups in lessons. They ask challenging questions, pick up those who get stuck and make sure disabled pupils and those with special educational needs understand.
- Pupils' learning is helped by their homework. Parents have raised concerns about homework because there have been too many worksheets in Years 2, 3 and 4. Different kinds of homework are now being set for this class.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are very cooperative and their behaviour is good. They report that their behaviour has improved since the acting headteacher arrived. There is no evidence of bullying and pupils are confident about the acting headteacher's ability to tackle any inappropriate or thoughtless behaviour.
 - Whole school assemblies, lessons to develop pupils' personal, social and cultural understanding and the care and attention staff give to pupils' safety and well-being combine to give a tangible feeling of belonging to a family. Pupils have well-developed social skills and very readily help and support their classmates in lessons and in the playground.
 - Pupils have recently made sensible and helpful suggestions for improving the school. Their request for music during assembly has been quickly implemented, such as in an assembly to celebrate book week. Their suggestions for making playtime better are taking longer to implement due to the resource implications.
 - Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted through strong links with the church. They reflect on the well-being of others and on their own behaviour and learning and have a good sense of fairness and right and wrong. They learn to appreciate
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literature, music and art and are curious about other cultures. Links with a school in Uganda help them to appreciate life in countries less fortunate than their own.

- Pupils' attendance has improved significantly this term and is now broadly average because the acting headteacher has written to parents explaining how pupils' absence from school affects their achievement.
- All parents believe that their children are safe in school and pupils report that they feel safer since the acting headteacher came into school. They learn how to keep themselves safe, for example in Safety Assemblies, and behave sensibly and considerately around the school.
- Although pupils' behaviour and safety are in many ways exemplary, some pupils in Year 4 are not always able to learn independently because they have been over-directed in lessons in the past.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- There has been slow progress in improving pupils' education due to past weaknesses in leadership and management. Teachers' targets for improving their work do not yet refer specifically to accelerating pupils' progress. There is not yet a whole school system for tracking the progress of all pupils. The gap in attainment between the pupils entitled to extra resources, pupil premium, and others is not closing.
 - Nevertheless, the local authority, working with the governors, has been influential in improving the leadership and management. The school no longer needs high levels of support from the local authority. Clear targets have been set for the acting headteacher relating to improvement in pupils' achievement and leadership and management. Relationships throughout the school are vastly improved.
 - The incoming acting headteacher has a proven record of successful headship. Achievement shows clear signs of improvement, throughout the school and teaching of pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 has improved. Attendance has improved significantly and this term it is average. Pupils, teachers, governors and representatives of the local authority all speak of tangible improvements in the quality of learning and the school environment.
 - In a very short time, the acting headteacher has identified the most important actions to improve pupils' education and has presented her plans to governors. She has checked the progress of each pupil to identify under-performance and is working with staff to help pupils to catch up. Standards in reading and writing are being addressed. A tracking system is being developed to give better oversight of pupils' progress.
 - There is an open-door policy for parents and well worked-out plans for improving communications with parents. Some of these are already in place, for example, through the 'Friday flyer'.
 - The programme for learning is relevant and holds pupils' interests well. The recent work with an author has been very successful in stimulating pupils' enthusiasm for writing. The youngest pupils contribute their ideas of what they would like to learn in lessons. Nevertheless, the lack of whole-school planning in the past has led to differences in the way some skills, such as writing, are taught.
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- Good links with other schools have been introduced to help staff to compare standards of pupils' work and other ways of teaching topics. Teachers have improved their teaching as a result of training. Teachers have observed each other's lessons and given well-considered and helpful feedback.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has acted firmly and strategically. It has brought about improved provision in a number of ways and in difficult circumstances. The new Chair of the Governing Body is very experienced and has already made a big impression on the school. Weaknesses in teaching in one class and in the leadership and management have been addressed. The acting headteacher provides informed and detailed reports to governors. Statutory requirements are met. Safeguarding procedures are in place and staff are appropriately trained. Governors have checked the progress of pupils and have a clear understanding of how good the teaching is in each class. A policy is in place for checking the teachers' work by assessing whether their targets are met. Salary increases are to depend on teachers' success in meeting their targets. Members of the governing body have set challenging targets for the acting headteacher. Having carried out a skills audit, the governors have used the expertise of a local employer in the community to help improve their management of the budget and ensure it is used appropriately. Members of the Governing Body attend training and have interpreted Ofsted's analysis of pupils' progress in comparison with that of similar schools. The governing body aims to make sure everyone has an equal chance to succeed. The use of the funds for pupil premium has been discussed by the governing body, and details of differences have been requested. The improvements have been rapid and appropriate and indicate that the school has good capacity to improve.
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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	123517
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	406170

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	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Nicholson
Headteacher	Rosemary Finney
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2011
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