

Shrewsbury Cathedral Catholic Primary School

New Park Road, Castlefields, Shrewsbury, SY1 2SP

Inspection dates 30–31 January 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

- Not all pupils make enough progress in writing and mathematics to reach their potential..
- The quality of teaching is too variable. There is not enough consistently good teaching.
- In lessons, teachers do not always set work at the right level so some pupils find tasks too easy or too difficult.
- Marking in mathematics does not show pupils clearly enough how they can improve their work.
- Governors and leaders are not doing enough to check how well teachers are performing and to link pay to pupil progress.
- Teachers are not given specific enough targets to improve pupil progress.
- The governing body is not doing enough to check that school leaders are quickly improving the school.

The school has the following strengths

- Progress in reading is good across the school.
- Children in the Reception class make good progress.
- Teachers plan work that pupils enjoy.
- Pupils behave well and are keen to learn. They feel very safe in school.
- The headteacher and her team have brought about some improvements in progress and teaching, for example in reading.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed the teaching in all classes. They visited 18 lessons taught by six teachers. The headteacher joined an inspector for one of these visits.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, the headteacher, teachers and two governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors heard pupils read and looked at a range of evidence, including records of pupils' progress, safeguarding documentation, behaviour logs and the results of the school's checks on the quality of teaching. They also examined the work in pupils' books.
- The views of 25 parents were analysed through the Parent View website. The inspectors took account of the views of several parents expressed in emails.

Inspection team

Gerald Griffin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Dennis Brittain

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- Nearly all pupils are White British. The others are from a variety of backgrounds and most of these pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from homes where a parent is in the armed forces) is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs, supported through school action, is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school does not make use of any off-site alternative provision.
- Last year the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is good and pupils' progress quickens, by making sure that:
 - activities are planned at the right level of difficulty for each member of the class, especially in writing and mathematics
 - marking in mathematics shows pupils clearly how they can improve their work.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - teachers agree targets for each child and the class, and progress towards them is carefully checked, so that action can be taken to remedy any underperformance
 - all teachers receive clear points for action about how to improve their teaching and that these are checked closely and frequently, so that teaching improves at a faster pace
 - teachers' information on pupils' progress is collected frequently, and checked by leaders, so that they have a clear picture of the pace of improvement and can take action quickly to tackle any shortcomings.
- Improve governance by giving governors more information and better training so that they:
 - are able to ask searching questions of leaders based on their knowledge of what progress and teaching is like across the school
 - make sure that judgements about teachers' salaries and promotion are clearly linked to the impact teachers are having on improving pupils' progress and attainment.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Some pupils do not make expected progress in writing in Years 3 to 6 and some are working below their expected levels, even though many left Year 2 with average attainment in this subject. Progress in mathematics is better but is still slower than it should be for some pupils in most years.
- Last year, pupils left school with average attainment. Progress for this group was too slow in mathematics and below the government's floor standards. Previously the school had met the floor standards and the current Year 6 pupils are on track to do so this year.
- In some lessons, pupils do not make expected progress because the work they get is either too easy or too hard.
- Last year, children started school with knowledge, skills and understanding at levels below those expected for their age. This summer, they reached attainment that was average at the end of their Reception Year. This represents good progress in all areas of learning.
- Progress in reading is good across the school. Pupils have well-developed skills in linking letters to the sounds they make. All pupils reached the expected level in the Year 1 reading check and the school's results were well above the national average. Attainment in reading is currently above average in Year 2. All pupils are keen to read and do so regularly and this is confirmed by their well-kept reading logs.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs concentrate well in lessons. Their progress is improving strongly, secured by effective teaching, often in small groups, by well-qualified adults who know their needs well.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers because adults who teach them ensure their needs are met.
- The gap in attainment between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and their classmates is closing quickly. Last year these pupils left school with levels of attainment above their peers nationally. This shows the school uses pupil premium funding well. For example, it has been used to train adults to support the needs of these pupils, who have emotional difficulties, so that they are able to concentrate well in lessons. It is used to provide these pupils with help to catch up with work when they have fallen behind.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teachers do not consistently use the progress information they have to plan work that stretches every member of the class. As a result, some pupils find tasks too easy while others struggle with work that is too hard. Often it is the more-able pupils who are not sufficiently challenged. For example in mathematics, they sometimes continue to practise calculations that they can complete correctly rather than move on to more demanding work.
- Furthermore, teachers do not consistently take account of the wide range of ability and experience in the mixed-age classes and set the same tasks for all pupils. This means some pupils repeat work they already know and others fail to understand new concepts introduced too quickly.

- Marking is too variable. In writing, this shows pupils clearly how they can improve their work and reach their targets. In mathematics, marking corrects mistakes but offers little guidance about how to improve. Additionally, marking is not linked closely to pupils' targets in the subject and this means pupils' knowledge of them is often vague.
- Relationships in lessons are positive. Teachers use resources well to engage pupils, who enjoy learning. They manage behaviour well.
- Teachers plan many opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. For example, in a good English lesson, pupils were reflecting deeply on their feelings about family life.
- Teaching assistants provide valuable support, especially for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium. For example, they keep notes on each pupil's progress, which are passed to the teacher to help plan the next lesson.
- Children make good progress in Reception because teaching is good. Adults plan work that meets the differing needs of children well. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-chosen activity. Work takes place both indoors and out. In a good numeracy session children were making good progress in recognising patterns and predicting how a pattern would continue.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Parents, school records and discussions with pupils confirm that the consistently good behaviour seen by inspectors in lessons and around the school is the norm.
- Pupils are polite, enthusiastic, enjoy school and are keen to learn. This is reflected in their above-average attendance. They cooperate and work well together in groups.
- They are keen to take responsibility. For example, older pupils enjoy serving water and encouraging younger ones to eat up all their food in the dining room at lunch time.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying. They are fully aware of its different forms, such as internet bullying. They say that bullying is very rare. Pupils are highly confident that any bullying would be quickly sorted out by the school.
- Pupils feel very safe and know precisely how to keep themselves safe, for example when crossing the road or on the internet.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The targets leaders agree with staff, for the progress of individual pupils and for classes, are not specific enough to show pupils and teachers precisely what good progress is and what is expected of them.
- The progress information recorded by teachers is not collated and checked regularly enough by leaders. Consequently, the groups that make slower progress are not spotted quickly enough so that remedial action can be swiftly taken.

- Leaders regularly check on the quality of teachers' work. The feedback teachers receive afterwards is not always detailed enough to show them how to improve their performance. The improvement points teachers are given are not closely followed up to check that teaching is improving.
- Leaders have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Their aim for good achievement is enthusiastically shared by the staff. Successful action has been taken to improve the teaching of phonics (linking sounds to letters). Plans to improve pupils' weaknesses in writing and mathematics are showing signs of success.
- Training has made teachers better skilled at showing pupils how to write longer pieces of work and use language well to express their ideas. In mathematics, training has helped teachers to plan work that engages pupils more successfully and to develop pupils' mental arithmetic skills. However, there has been too little training to improve teachers' use of progress information to plan work that is set at the right level for all pupils in their class.
- Teachers have an improving understanding of the learning needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They use this information to provide appropriate individual support. The help provided for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable is very effective.
- The local authority has made a valuable contribution to the school's understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. However, its role in staff improvement and training has been limited because the school has chosen to use independent advisers for this work. They have made a good contribution to staff training in reading.
- The way subjects are taught strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, the school provides many opportunities for pupils to reflect on what is right and wrong and to appreciate music. The school organises a wide range of clubs for its pupils.
- Parents expressed mostly positive views about the school. The school is working hard to expand its support of parents through a new website and family-learning classes.
- Leaders have a clear commitment to combating discrimination and promoting equal opportunities. This is shown in the improving progress made by all groups of pupils, from all backgrounds. The school fosters good relationships with outside agencies and other schools to improve pupils' life-chances even more.
- The school completes all statutory checks on the suitability of staff.. Child protection training for staff is thorough, and leaders implement child protection policies rigorously.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body does not ask searching enough questions of the school because governors are over-reliant on reports from school managers. Furthermore, they do not frequently check up-to-date progress information to judge the rate of improvements. Governors do not see that teachers' targets are specific and challenging and that pay rises and promotion are linked with performance. The governing body's understanding of the information published about the school is underdeveloped and governors find it difficult to judge how well the school is doing compared to similar schools. The governing body keeps a careful eye on the budget. It makes sure that the school is spending the pupil premium

funding on those eligible for it and to good effect. For example, governors are fully aware of the quality of the additional help these pupils receive and that pupils' attainment is rising to match that of other pupils. Governors fully support staff training and are keen to improve their own skills.

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	123554
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	402175

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	154
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Father Christopher Matthews
Headteacher	Mrs Frances Abela
Date of previous school inspection	11 January 2010
Telephone number	01743 351032
Fax number	01743 351032
Email address	admin.cathedral@shropshirelg.net

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