

St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Poynton Road Campus, Dawsons Rough Campus, Shawbury, Shrewsbury, SY4 4JR

Inspection dates 20–21 March 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.

- Achievement is inadequate and has been for some time. This is especially so in mathematics, where pupils do not make enough progress and so do not reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are often not high enough. Teachers do not ask enough questions during lessons to check pupils' understanding and progress.
- In too many classes, teachers' marking does not tell pupils what they have done well, and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Behaviour requires improvement because pupils become less attentive in lessons where teachers talk for too long. This is especially so during lengthy introductions.
- Leadership and management, over a lengthy period of time, have been inadequate. Leaders and the governing body have not done enough to ensure pupils make at least the expected amount of progress.
- Subject leaders, especially in mathematics, are new to their roles and their contribution to raising standards is limited.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed headteacher is very clear as to what has to be done to make the school better. The school's action plans set out clearly the vision of the headteacher and governors, and there are sharp measures of success against which progress can be measured.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils enjoy school, are polite and courteous, and support one another. They say that they feel safe in school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons, five of which were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, subject and key stage leaders, groups of pupils, nine members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 27 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the school's own parent survey and other information received directly from parents. Inspectors also took note of completed staff questionnaires, and spoke with parents at the start of the day.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, action plans to raise attainment, minutes of governing body committees, pupils' work and information about their attainment and progress.

Inspection team

Keith Shannon, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christopher Webb

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

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has expanded to incorporate Shawbury Primary School and currently operates on two sites while building work is taking place. There is a large governing body.
- Until 2012, both schools were led by acting headteachers, who are now the permanent deputy headteachers. The school has a new headteacher who took up post as head of the expanded school in September 2012.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British. A very small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, but the number of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is high because many children have parents in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is at least good, especially in mathematics and English, by:
 - giving teachers opportunities to observe and learn from good and outstanding teaching
 - making sure that lessons stimulate pupils' interest and hold their attention
 - making sure that teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and the amount of work they should do
 - making sure that teachers' feedback and marking help pupils to improve their work and that they are given opportunities to respond to marking more regularly
 - making sure teachers allow pupils to get on more quickly with their work by reducing the amount of time they spend talking to the whole class
 - making sure teachers plan activities that are matched carefully to the needs of individual pupils, and that pupils know what it is they need to do to make progress in their learning
 - making sure teachers ask questions that help pupils to think about what they are learning and that they teach pupils the necessary skills to be able to find things out for themselves.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing the skills and increasing the effectiveness of senior leaders so that they successfully support the headteacher in improving standards
 - developing the skills of new subject leaders so that they are able to support teachers in improving the rate of pupils' progress

- ensuring that the way the pupil premium funding is spent is checked to assess its impact on the achievement of the pupils for whom it is intended
 - making sure leaders and governors evaluate the success of initiatives to secure improvement and the effectiveness of the school's work by focusing sharply on the impact on raising standards.
- Raise standards and increase the rate at which pupils make progress in mathematics by:
- planning more opportunities for them to develop and use their mathematical skills in a variety of subjects and real-life situations.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils' progress overall, and especially in mathematics, is inadequate because teachers' expectations are too low. The many changes that have taken place in bringing two schools into one have also limited pupils' progress, and senior leaders have been slow in the past to address the fall in standards.
- Children enter the Nursery or Reception class with attainment that is broadly in line with what is expected for their age and they make good progress. However, by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is well below average in mathematics, and pupils are not given adequate opportunities to use and develop their mathematical skills in different subjects. In reading and writing, attainment is broadly average, although outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2 vary from year to year.
- Although most pupils in different classes make at least the progress that is expected in writing, some do not make enough progress because teachers do not always provide guidance that extends pupils' skills in writing.
- There is only a small gap between the attainment of those pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium and the rest of the pupils. In some cases, those who receive support through additional funding make better progress. There are too few pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority to make any meaningful comparison between their achievement and that of their classmates.
- The additional support provided for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs ensures that they make better progress than their classmates and achieve in line with similar pupils nationally.
- There is, otherwise, little difference between the achievement of different groups of pupils, including the very small proportion who speak English as an additional language. Achievement, overall, particularly in mathematics, is too low for all groups of pupils.
- Pupils are more successful in their reading, and many pupils were able to talk to inspectors about their interest in reading and how they are helped. Good practice was observed where a teaching assistant worked with children on the sounds that letters make (phonics).

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- The impact of teaching over time on the achievement of pupils is inadequate.
- Although inspectors did see some good teaching, the majority of lessons were either inadequate or required improvement. There has not been enough good teaching to help pupils make up for past underachievement.
- Teachers often talk for too long in lessons and do not allow enough time for pupils to complete their work, or to explore the learning opportunities that are provided.
- The expectations of too many teachers are low. Teachers do not plan well enough by using the previous experiences and learning of pupils to set challenging targets, and neither do they ask

the type of questions that will make pupils think carefully about topics to extend their learning and deepen their understanding.

- In some lessons, the pace together with the targets that were set were not suitable for the needs of most pupils. The teachers did not make good enough use of information about what pupils could already do to set the work matched to the next steps in pupils' learning.
- The headteacher has introduced some good systems for assessing pupils' work and achievement. The information gathered helps teachers to set work in lessons that is better matched to their learning needs. However, not all teachers are using them. Some teachers are using these new assessment methods well to aid their planning and there is clear evidence in their classes of progress as pupils have work that enables them to make faster progress and be successful.
- In some classes, pupils' books show that teachers' marking clearly explains to pupils what has been done well and what they could do to make further progress. However, far too many pieces of pupils' work are not marked well enough, with no checks being made that pupils have understood or acted upon any advice given. The quality of marking and assessment in mathematics is much weaker than in English.
- Some teachers demonstrate little imagination in making mathematics both interesting and relevant to real-life situations. The newly appointed subject leaders in mathematics are challenging their colleagues with strong and enthusiastic ideas but it is too early for this to have had an effect on the teaching of mathematics.
- Most teaching assistants support pupils effectively in lessons. The help they give is making a positive difference to the achievement of pupils for whom the pupil premium is intended, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. In the best practice seen, teaching assistants work closely with individuals and small groups of pupils. They give practical, well-directed support to those identified by the teacher as needing additional help, and this support is effective in securing better learning.
- Pupils are not taught to use the internet for research in a structured way. In the best examples, pupils carry out research and adapt what they discover to show what they have understood. In other cases, they merely copy what they find. Not enough is done by teachers to check on the value of internet use.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- As a result of inconsistencies and weaknesses in the quality of teaching pupils are not encouraged to be self-motivated in their learning. When supervised in class, pupils give the impression of working but many take opportunities to avoid it. Inspectors saw some pupils who were too easily distracted by their classmates, talking about topics not related to the work and producing very little during the lesson.
- Responses to Parent View, together with two separate complaints from parents, indicate that some parents do not feel that behaviour is dealt with effectively by the school. Inspectors saw from school records that incidents of bullying and suspected bullying, and the way behaviour is managed, are followed up and investigations are carefully managed. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they know what types of behaviour are expected, and what is not acceptable.

- In good lessons, pupils concentrate on their work, support one another and are proud of what they are achieving. This is always because the topic is stimulating and presented well and with careful thought. This was seen in a Year 6 class where pupils were studying various forms of art.
- Many pupils are eager to learn and can be motivated to do so. Positive relationships between pupils as well as with staff make for a peaceful atmosphere. Pupils know how to behave around the school, and are conscious of the needs of others. They understand about bullying, and are clear about seeking help when necessary.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunities that are created for them through extra activities and trips, and are clear that there is an expectation of good behaviour. They enjoy the many extra opportunities that come through the school's links with a Royal Air Force base.
- Pupils are able to talk sensibly about safety, both in school and using the internet. They raise concerns about safety issues with any staff member, and also through the school council. Pupils show good manners as they move throughout the school, and are welcoming to visitors.
- The school promotes good relationships and tackles any discrimination effectively.
- Attendance is above average.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Over time, leaders have had an inaccurate view of the school's effectiveness and teachers have not been held to account enough for pupils' progress. During the time between the previous inspection and the appointment of the new headteacher, governors and leaders did not consistently check on and evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives set up to improve standards.
- The new headteacher and the governing body recognise these weaknesses and have clear plans to tackle them. The new subject leaders are fully supported by the headteacher as they seek to raise attainment in their areas of responsibility. However, not enough time has yet passed for them to have a clear impact on school improvement.
- The performance management targets set for teachers have recently been strengthened by the headteacher and governors. Targets are now more challenging and clearly linked to pupils' attainment and progress. There has not been enough time yet, though, to assess whether these targets will be met and that pupils' achievement will improve across the school.
- Subjects and topics taught make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. Visiting artists and authors enrich the experience of pupils, as do music tuition and trips out. Some teachers are making good use of the current building works to enhance pupils' learning experiences. For example, some pupils have carried out investigational work with the builders. However, this is a rare example. There are still too few opportunities where mathematics is taught in different subjects or through real-life experiences.
- Activities that promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are carefully organised. Celebrations of festivals from a wide variety of faiths, charity fundraising and tending the school's garden help pupils to develop thoughtful, caring and tolerant attitudes. There is an ethos of support and ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- The school is now providing well for pupils who need specialist equipment to support their learning. For example, some pupils for whom the school receives extra funding through the pupil

premium have been provided with personal computers to develop a programme for sending e-airmail letters. Royal Air Force personnel who are members of the governing body have been supporting this.

- There are now systems to check on how well teachers are performing. These checks are linked to teachers' pay progression. However, too much emphasis is placed on pupils making expected rather than good progress, which for many pupils is not enough to help them make up for previous lost ground. Senior leaders have not held teachers rigorously enough to account for the proportions of pupils making better than expected progress.
- The local authority has provided additional support to improve achievement and leadership over time, although governors say that this advice was not always used by senior leaders. The new headteacher now works effectively with governors and the local authority's school improvement adviser.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Appropriate training and policies to ensure pupils' safety are in place and reviewed correctly.
- The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The expanded governing body, which includes members from the two amalgamating schools, has created an opportunity to strengthen governors' skills base. Governors speak with understanding about finance and school improvement. Where their skills have been weaker in the past, they have undertaken further training. By visiting the school, including to observe lessons, they have gained a greater understanding of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. They have been aware for some time that standards have fallen, and appointed the headteacher to tackle this weakness. Between the end of the previous inspection and the appointment of the new headteacher, however, governors did not hold senior leaders to account well enough. The governing body now offers much greater challenge and holds leaders more to account. Governors are well versed in the importance of managing teachers' performance and setting targets for pupils' progress. They work closely with the headteacher to determine how pupil premium funding should be used. However, there is no clear method for checking the progress of pupils for whom this funding is intended.

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	123524
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	406171

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	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Humphreys
Headteacher	Sally Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2011
Telephone number	01939 250323
Fax number	01939 250944
Email address	admin.shawburystmary@shropshire.lg.net

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