

Short Heath Junior School

Pennine Way, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV12 4DS

Inspection dates 23–24 April 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' progress and achievement are not yet good throughout the school particularly in English.
- Teachers do not plan lessons at the right level of difficulty for all pupils. As a result, pupils' progress slows.
- In too many lessons, the pace of learning is not brisk enough to ensure good progress.
- There are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in other subjects.
- Teachers' and teaching assistants' subject knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is not strong enough. As a result, there is an inconsistent approach to the teaching of reading across the school and pupils are not taught the strategies to help them become good readers.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent across the school. Pupils are not involved enough in reflecting on how to improve their work or setting their next steps.
- Observations of teachers by school leaders are sometimes not focused enough on improving learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Over the past year, leaders have started to bring about rapid improvements to pupils' progress across the school, particularly in mathematics.
- Members of the governing body and the senior leadership team are increasingly effective in holding the school to account and are focused well on securing rapid improvements in pupils' achievement.
- Pupils are polite, behave well and feel safe. Strategies introduced to improve behaviour have been very successful and this is now good.
- The executive headteacher and head of school have begun to take effective steps to tackle weaker teaching.
- Clearly focused support programmes are rapidly improving the progress of some groups of pupils, including those who may be vulnerable.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, six of which were joint observations with the executive headteacher and head of school.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading and made short observations of reading sessions.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' books during lessons. They also held discussions with pupils, teachers, senior leaders including the executive headteacher, representatives of the governing body and a local authority officer.
- Inspectors took account of the 20 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), letters received from parents and the school's own survey of parent' views. They also took into account the six responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' progress, the school self-evaluation, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to pupils' behaviour, attendance and safeguarding and the performance management of staff.
- Short Heath Junior School is federated with Rosedale CE Infant School, which was inspected, by a different inspection team, at the same time. Some inspection activities, such as meetings with personnel involved in both schools, were combined.

Inspection team

Kerry Rochester, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Steve Nelson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Short Heath Junior School is an average-sized school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families) is average. Presently, there are no pupils who are from service families.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school provides a range of extended services, including a breakfast and after-school club, which is run by the governing body.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set out the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has been federated with nearby Rosedale CE Infant School and Lane Head Nursery School since April 2006 and they share the same governing body. Each school has its own head of school, with an executive headteacher who oversees the federation.
- Half of the current teaching staff are new to post since September 2012, following two years of high staff turnover.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by making sure that:
 - all lessons move with a brisk pace and introductions to lessons are not too long, so that pupils are all actively engaged in their learning
 - marking across the school is of consistently good quality so that all pupils know how they can improve their work
 - pupils are fully involved in reflecting on their work and setting targets for improvement
 - teachers use assessment information to set work at the right level of difficulty so all groups of pupils achieve well.
- Raise attainment and improve the rate at which pupils make progress in English by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing across a range of subjects
 - improving teachers' and teaching assistants' knowledge of phonics so that the teaching of reading across the school is more consistent.
- Make sure that observations of lessons by managers give a clear indication of the progress of different groups of pupils and give teachers clear guidance on how this can be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement is not yet good because too few pupils make good progress, particularly in English.
- Assessment information shows pupils enter Year 3 with skills typically expected for their age.
- Overall, attainment over the past three years, at the end of Year 6, has been broadly average. However, in 2012, pupils' attainment in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 2 was below the levels expected nationally.
- Pupils' progress has, historically, been below that expected nationally. However, senior leaders have rigorously addressed this through a range of support programmes for identified groups of pupils across the school. As a result, progress in reading and writing is now at expected levels in all year groups. However, rapid improvement is now evident in mathematics across the school. The rigorous focus on problem solving and developing teachers' mathematical skills and knowledge has improved the delivery of mathematics across the school. This has resulted in securing good progress for all groups of pupils.
- Most pupils now use punctuation correctly when writing and can talk confidently about what features to include in their report or story. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to independently apply these skills in extended writing across a range of different subjects. As a result, their progress in writing is not as rapid as it could be.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They talk confidently and enthusiastically about the range of authors they study and explore. However, the lack of a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics means pupils are not acquiring the skills needed to break down and read unfamiliar words. This hinders their fluency, understanding and comprehension. Too few pupils make good progress in reading.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium did not do as well as their peers in both English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 last year and were two terms behind. These gaps are similar to those found nationally. However, due to well-planned use of pupil premium money by the senior leadership team, these pupils now receive focused support and make good progress. Consequently, the gaps in achievement between these pupils and their peers are closing.
- The additional support given to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs by teaching assistants is now more tailored to their individual needs. As a result, the progress of these pupils is accelerating and they are making expected progress relative to their starting points.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- High staff turnover and instability in staffing over recent years have resulted in teaching that requires improvement, as it is not yet consistently good across the school. Inadequate teaching has been eliminated but the quality of teaching varies too much across the school.
- In too many lessons learning is held back as teachers talk for too long or tasks are undemanding and the pace of learning too slow.
- In some lessons assessment is not used effectively to ensure that work is set at the correct level of difficulty for all groups of pupils. This means that some pupils are given work which they easily achieve and complete. Therefore, progress in the majority of lessons is not rapid enough. Senior leaders are robustly addressing this as a matter of urgency through staff training.
- Marking is of variable quality. The policy for the marking of pupils' work is not consistently applied across the school and, as a result, pupils are not always involved in reflecting on their work and setting targets for improvement based on teachers' feedback.
- When teaching is good or better, pupils are lively and respond well to tasks that are interesting and fun. For example, in a Year 5 history lesson, good use was made of laptop computers to allow pupils to carry out research online. This activity promoted pupils' good engagement;

consequently, they were successful in quickly accessing key historical facts and made good progress by the end of the lesson. In other lessons adults encouraged pupils to work in pairs, successfully sharing and developing ideas.

- Teaching assistants give effective support to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs so that their progress is improving in line with that of their classmates.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are polite, friendly and willing to take on responsibility. They work well in groups and respect each other and the adults they work with. On occasions, when lessons do not provide enough challenge, pupils' attention can drift, although without pupils behaving badly or disrupting the learning taking place.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They know how to manage risks and stay safe on the internet.
- The new school behaviour policy is consistently applied across the school by all staff. Pupils talk confidently about how it helps them. As one pupil commented, 'It helps me know how to check on and improve my behaviour.' The school's behaviour tracking shows a rapid decline in instances of poor behaviour during break times. This now reflects the good behaviour seen in the majority of lessons. Behaviour has improved since the previous inspection and is now good.
- This good behaviour was also seen during the breakfast and after-school clubs. During these sessions, children socialised, worked well together and played safely with each other.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through lessons and other activities, such as assemblies. This fosters the good development of happy and harmonious relationships within the school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying and its different forms. They say that it is rare and are confident that if it does happen it is dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their above average attendance and good punctuality.
- The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View and the school questionnaire said their children were well cared for and happy at the school.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher and head of school work very well together and have strong ambition for the school. They are aware that pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching, although improving, are not yet as strong as they should be.
- They have led the school particularly well during difficult circumstances. Repeated staff changes have made it difficult to build on successes, but despite this they have managed to secure considerable improvements, particularly in pupils' progress in mathematics.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of the school's work. They have developed clear and effective school improvement plans which correctly identify the most important areas that need to be tackled and are taking the correct action to do so.
- There are secure systems in place for checking the quality of teaching and this is done regularly by the senior leaders. Feedback provides teachers with an understanding of their strengths and areas for development. However, in observations of lessons and feedback, there is not enough emphasis on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. Development areas tend to focus too much on teaching rather than considering how this links to learning.
- Leaders have implemented good and effective systems for tracking pupil progress. This is enabling the close monitoring of groups of pupils, including those who may be vulnerable. The school checks the progress of every pupil and of different groups carefully, reflecting the school's commitment to tackling equality of opportunity and discrimination.
- The topics pupils study are stimulating and clearly planned. There is a good variety of activities that appeal to pupils' interests.

■ The local authority provides good support for the school through regular visits from a school improvement adviser.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors understand the needs of the school and provide robust support and challenge to help the school secure rapid improvement. Governors know how well the school is performing compared to other schools; they ask the right questions, challenge the executive headteacher and head of school and visit the school regularly to monitor and evaluate its work. The governing body has a clear strategic overview of the school's strengths and areas to develop, including teaching and pupil progress. The executive headteacher provides good quality information so that governors have a secure understanding of how monitoring of teaching is linked to teachers progressing up the pay scale. They also have a good understanding of what is being done to reward good teachers and tackle weaknesses. Governors undergo regular training to improve their skills and this helps ensure they meet all statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding. They manage the budget well and ensure pupil premium money has been used effectively to support eligible pupils, for example by providing targeted support to ensure their rates of progress increase. This is monitored by members of the governing body's Strategic Improvement Committee.

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	104188
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	400693

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Lesley Foster
Headteacher	Mrs Cathy Draper (Executive Head) and Mrs Emily Kinsey (Head of School)
Date of previous school inspection	30 June–1 July 2010
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