

Blue Coat Church of England Aided Junior School

Springhill Road, Walsall, WS1 2LP

Inspection dates 4–5 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 is not rapid enough in English and mathematics. Despite recent improvement, their achievement is not yet good.
- Pupils' oral skills are underdeveloped, and they do not always understand the real meaning of the text they read.
- Teaching requires improvement, because over time it has not helped pupils to make good progress and achieve well.
- In a few lessons, teachers set work that is not at the right level for all groups. As a result, pupils do not always learn at a brisk pace.
- Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to work independently in some lessons.
- Pupils do not always know how well they have done in lessons and what they could do to improve their work.
- Teachers do not give enough opportunities for pupils to write at length or to explain their working out of mathematical calculations.

The school has the following strengths:

- Leadership and management are now good. Leaders have successfully arrested the recent decline in the school's performance. Consequently, pupils' achievement is improving and standards are rising.
- More teaching is now better than it has been in the recent past and inadequate teaching has been eliminated.
- Behaviour is good in lessons, at play and around the school.
- A good range of interesting activities, such as sport, residential visits, music and art, extends and enriches pupils' learning.
- Parents and carers feel that the school keeps them well informed about their children's learning and progress at school.
- Attendance continues to improve and is currently above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons or parts of lessons, including two observed with the executive headteacher and the head of school.
- Meetings were held with one randomly selected group of pupils, the two vice-chairs of the governing body and a representative of the local authority, as well as senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including the school’s own data concerning pupils’ current and recent progress, self-evaluation summary, local authority monitoring reports, planning and monitoring documentation, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors took into account 13 responses to the online Parent View survey, together with a range of the school’s own evidence of parents’ views collected over time. Additionally, inspectors talked informally to 15 parents and carers in the playground before school on the second day of the inspection.
- Inspectors considered 56 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Krishan Sharma, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Allan Barfoot	Additional Inspector
Alison Lamputt	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is larger than the average-sized junior school.
- Three quarters of pupils come from minority ethnic groups, mainly from Pakistani, Caribbean, African, White and Black Caribbean and Any other White (mainly Eastern European) backgrounds.
- Just under half of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is just above average, and the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is above average. This is extra funding provided by the government to support certain groups of pupils. In this school, it applies only to pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children, as there are currently no pupils from service families.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A larger-than-average proportion of pupils joins or leaves the school during term time.
- The school is federated with an infant school nearby; both schools are led by an executive headteacher. There is a single governing body and it has a new Chair of the Governing Body.
- This school has experienced considerable changes in its staffing. In addition to the new executive headteacher, who took up his post in September 2012, a new head of school was appointed at the same time. Subject leaders for English and mathematics took up their posts in January 2013. Three newly qualified teachers have joined the school since September 2012. The senior leaders have created new roles for four year group leaders since October 2012. A federation senior leadership team is beginning to take shape.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to consistently good or better so that pupils achieve well by ensuring that teachers:
 - set tasks that provide suitable challenge for all groups
 - move pupils to the next stage of their learning at a brisker pace
 - help pupils to understand how well they are doing and what they can do to improve their work
 - give more opportunities for pupils to work on their own in lessons.
- Improve pupils' achievement in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that pupils read with greater understanding of the text
 - strengthening pupils' speaking skills so that they can express themselves with fluency and precision
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write on their own and at length in English and other subjects
 - ensuring that pupils are routinely expected to explain the method they use, as well as their understanding, when making calculations in their mathematical work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is not rapid enough across the school and requires improvement. It is improving, but it is not yet consistent and fast enough for them to achieve well and raise standards substantially.
- Standards have been declining recently and were significantly below average in English and mathematics in 2012. For the first time, standards fell below the national floor standards.
- Progress is now improving because of better teaching, and the decline has been checked. The proportion of pupils making and exceeding the expected progress from their starting points on entry to Year 3 is growing. Standards are rising in both English and mathematics, with an increasing proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels for their age. The school is on target to meet and possibly exceed the current national standards.
- Pupils' oral skills are undeveloped. Pupils are keen to talk and are confident in communicating with adults and their peers. However, some of them are not good at developing their ideas and expressing them fluently and precisely.
- Progress and achievement in reading are stronger than in writing and mathematics. The teaching of phonics (linking letters and the sounds they make), particularly for those pupils who speak English as an additional language and others who need extra support, ensures that pupils know how to tackle unfamiliar words. However, they are not always sure of the underlying meaning of some of the words and phrases they come across.
- Writing is improving but pupils' progress is inconsistent and slow. Pupils can organise their writing, and their written work shows a growing grasp of sentence structure and punctuation. The evidence from pupils' written work shows that opportunities to write independently and at length are insufficient in English and in other subjects.
- Progress in mathematics is not yet rapid enough. Pupils enjoy handling numbers and their calculation skills are improving. They are not always able to explain how they work out their calculations and whether they fully understand the mathematical idea behind their work.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make uneven progress. Many of them make the progress they should; a few do not, particularly in mathematics. The extra support provided is now better targeted to meet their varying individual needs.
- Most pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language make the progress expected of them, particularly in English. Pupils benefit from the extra help they receive from those teachers and adults who are skilled in teaching bilingual pupils.
- In 2012, pupils receiving support through the pupil premium attained lower standards at the end of Year 6 than other pupils in the school. The gap in the attainment of these two groups was wider than that found nationally. These pupils were the equivalent of three terms behind in English and a little over a year in mathematics. However, current data show that they are beginning to make faster progress because of the increasing extra help they get through a range of interventions, including one-to-one and small-group activities.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because pupils' progress is not consistently good and they have not achieved well over time. The quality of teaching has improved recently and it was good in a substantial number of lessons. There is not yet enough good teaching to ensure pupils achieve well.
- In some lessons, teachers do not always set work at the right level for all pupils and they do not move them on to the next stage quickly enough to speed up their learning. Teachers' introductions and explanations are often too long and do not leave enough time for pupils to work independently.

- In the more effective lessons, teachers expect pupils to work hard, their intentions are clear as to what they expect pupils to learn and they are good at asking searching questions. The teaching assistants are clearly briefed and they remain engaged with pupils.
- Teachers' checking of pupils' progress is precise. Skilful comments from teachers prepare pupils well for assessing their own progress and knowing what to do next to improve their work. However, this is not a strong feature of all lessons.
- Typically, teachers promote pupils' social skills well in lessons. They encourage pupils from different cultural background to work together. Consequently, relationships are invariably good.
- The teaching of reading is effective and contributes to pupils' attainment in reading which is close to the national average.
- Marking has improved. Teachers invest a great deal of time in checking and commenting constructively on pupils' written work. In the best examples, teachers make it clear what pupils have done well and what needs improving. However, some inconsistencies in practice remain.
- The teaching of disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is rightly aimed at improving their basic skills. As a result of the extra help they receive, the gap in the attainment of these pupils and other groups is beginning to narrow.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Typically, pupils' behaviour is good. They behave responsibly and pupils from all cultural backgrounds mix well in and out of lessons. Very occasionally, when unacceptable behaviour occurs, staff manage it well.
- Pupils' attitudes to their work are positive and most of them concentrate well in lessons. Their written work shows that they take pride in its presentation.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and if it occurs, adults deal with it promptly. They are aware of the different forms bullying can take, including that which is prejudice based, involves name-calling or misuse of the internet.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and their parents and carers are in full agreement with them. They know that if they have any concerns, adults in the school will listen to them and support them.
- Attendance is improving and is now above average. Senior leaders are meticulous in following up cases of erratic attendance and promoting good attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- Since their appointment in September 2012, the executive headteacher and the head of school have successfully brought about considerable change. This has enabled them to secure improvements in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching, and tackle the recent slump in the school's performance. Now, there is a strong trend of improvement.
- The current priorities are rightly aimed at areas of improvement that matter most. These are based on the school's accurate self-evaluation and reflect its current strong capacity to improve further. Senior leaders candidly acknowledge that the journey towards making the school good or better is not yet complete.
- Information on pupils' progress is systematically collected and analysed. This information is used well to make decisions about the allocation of extra help for pupils who have special educational needs and others who are supported by pupil premium funding. Senior leaders and the governing body are determined to use this information to ensure that vulnerable groups make speedier progress and get a fair deal and equality of opportunity in all that the school provides.
- The performance management of teaching, including decisions about teachers' progression through the salary scales, now takes into account the contribution teachers make to pupils'

achievement. Although the quality of teaching still requires improvement, senior leaders have ensured that recent staff training is geared to improving its quality.

- The range of subjects and activities taught contributes effectively to pupils' basic skills as well as promoting their personal development. Planning for the curriculum caters well for the varying needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language and frequently includes topics that deal with cultural diversity. Educational and residential visits, visitors to school, music, art and sport activities enrich pupils' learning and promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school works well with parents and carers and keeps them fully informed about their children's progress at school. Parents and carers found the recent workshops organised by the school informative.
- Recently, the local authority has provided worthwhile support in reviewing and confirming the accuracy of the school's own judgements on its performance. It has provided effective practical support to strengthen senior and middle leadership and the quality of teaching.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Under the leadership of the new Chair of the Governing Body, the governing body has begun to hold senior leaders to account for the school's performance. Governors now have a good understanding of the school's strengths and a growing awareness of the detail of its weaknesses. They understand how well the school is doing in comparison with other schools. The governing body ensures that arrangements to establish clear links between teachers' classroom performance and their progression through the salary scales are in place. It has a good grasp of the school's budget and how well pupil premium funds are being spent to boost the achievement of eligible pupils. The governing body ensures that the school's safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements.
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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	104230
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	412494

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	335
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dorothy Buchanan
Executive Headteacher	Anthony Orlik
Date of previous school inspection	21 September 2009
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