

Hugo Meynell CofE School

Eccleshall Road, Loggerheads, Market Drayton, TF9 4NU

Inspection dates 4–5 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Good governance and school leadership have improved teaching and learning quickly, so that almost every pupil is now making good progress in lessons.
- Effective teacher training through partnership with Seabridge Primary School has raised the quality of teaching, particularly in making lessons interesting and engaging for pupils.
- The new headteacher has built effectively on this partnership, raising morale and bringing improvements to the learning environment.
- Excellent behaviour by pupils, including their very positive attitudes to learning and high levels of personal responsibility, is a key factor behind their good progress.
- Pupils enjoy learning, and rise with enthusiasm to the challenge of difficult work. They also enjoy finishing a task, and will go the extra mile with their teachers to understand how to solve problems.
- Pupils' academic attainment is above average and much better than in 2012, with a high proportion of pupils reaching high standards in reading and mathematics.
- Rich extra-curricular activities enhance the personal development of pupils well, and include music, sports, and art and drama.
- Parents have wholeheartedly welcomed the improvements in school and now feel fully included in the life of the school community.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Good teaching has not been in place for long enough to raise achievement well above national expectations.
- Writing is not yet as good as reading.
- More opportunities for pupils to work independently and raise questions of their own are needed in those lessons that still require improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons taught by the 11 teachers of the school, and also revisited some sessions including those teaching early reading skills (phonics).
- This visit was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school was made subject to special measures in February 2012.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, managers and teachers, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB), a representative of the local authority, a group of parents and two groups of pupils.
- They looked at pupils' work, records of meetings of the IEB, and of monitoring visits by the local authority.
- A full pupil questionnaire of 233 pupils was carried out and analysed. There were 14 responses to Parent View available to inspectors.

Inspection team

Brian Cartwright, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Karen Davies

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to most primary schools.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is lower than average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is lower than average. This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care, and for pupils with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of pupils who started in Reception and stay until Year 6 is lower than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.
- Since the last inspection, the local authority removed the governing body and appointed an interim executive board (IEB). A shadow governing body, with the same Chair as the IEB, has been functioning in the summer term 2013 and is being prepared to take over when the IEB is no longer needed.
- The executive headteacher and deputy headteacher from Seabridge Primary School led the school until December 2012. From January 2013, a new headteacher took up post.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve writing by ensuring that pupils' written work is coordinated across subjects systematically so that all written activities contribute to improving writing quality.
- Further strengthen teaching quality by ensuring that:
 - lesson introductions do not go on for too long, limiting opportunities for pupils to work independently and raise questions of their own
 - pupils are given even clearer written advice on what they should do to improve their work
 - all pupils respond to the advice they are given.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils start the in Reception Class with broadly average knowledge and development for their age. They make good progress so that, by Year 2, they are achieving above-average standards.
- Since January 2013, almost all pupils in all the classes have made better than expected progress. In Year 6, attainment is above average, with a welcome increase in the proportion of pupils working at the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics compared with 2012. Girls and boys attain virtually identical standards.
- The progress of all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, is good. Academic standards for pupils with special educational needs are lower than for their peers but their achievement is good, given their lower starting points.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium are also attaining standards well above the average for similar pupils nationally and in line with all pupils nationally, particularly in mathematics. The in-school gap between these pupils and others is actually higher than the national gap, but these pupils have made good progress from their starting points. There were not enough pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in 2012 to comment on their attainment without identifying them.
- Work scrutiny confirms good progress in English and mathematics since the start of the year. Writing is not as strong as reading or mathematics in Year 6. Teachers successfully focused on reading in 2013 to compensate for reading weaknesses in 2012. Although pupils have opportunities to write in subjects other than English, school leaders have identified that opportunities are missed to systematically link writing in all subjects to improving literacy.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved substantially over the past year. The large proportion of lessons seen at this visit were good or better, with no inadequacies evident in any class.
- Where teaching is good, pupils begin activities very quickly, and these activities are pitched at a level that stretches and challenges them individually, including more-able pupils.
- In the best lessons, pupils have considerable responsibility over their learning, so can choose tasks that they think will challenge them. For example, in a lesson on volcanoes, pupils had to plan and carry out a piece of drama, by self-organising their group, inventing their roles and writing the script. This led to a presentation in words and actions of how a volcano works, which pupils greatly enjoyed and will remember with pleasure.
- Teaching assistants are fully integrated into lesson activities in almost every lesson. They alternate between groups of pupils, so that all pupils receive support from teaching assistants and teaching from teachers, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- All teachers plan a range of different activities, with supporting resources, that are well matched to the different learning needs and starting points of their pupils. Occasionally, teachers still dwell too long on the whole-class discussion of 'what we are all going to do' start to the lesson. This delays learning, and the chance for more-able pupils, in particular, to have a go for

themselves. It limits the time available for pupils to work independently and pose questions of their own.

- The school marking policy is consistently applied by every teacher but not, as yet, by every pupil. Pink pens highlight good work, green comments give further developmental advice. Pupils are expected to respond by using a purple pen, in a special time on Friday morning, but not all do so. Sometimes the advice given by teachers is still too general, such as, 'Remember that the layout of a maths calculation is important.'

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- In lessons and around the school, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Their enthusiasm for learning and their willingness to take on responsibility for it are key factors in their good progress. When teachers exploit this, learning accelerates and pupil motivation increases even further. As one pupil put it in their mathematics work, 'This is really fun!'
- Assemblies play a regular, daily part in developing pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding. They are joyous affairs, led by the headteacher, and always involve celebration of achievement by pupils, both academically and socially. Pupils' work is now on display everywhere, including a bright and welcoming reception area that puts pupils first in the eyes of any visitor.
- Every pupil of the 233 surveyed by inspectors feels safe. Almost everyone enjoys school, and could explain why they did, 'Because learning is fun now'. They also appreciate how much nicer the display and decoration of the school is now in comparison with last year.
- Pupils have played a major part in writing the 'golden rules' for the behaviour around the school. Year 6 pupils were proud of their contributions to this and also very clear about how the school's behaviour system works. This was also the case for Year 2 pupils, who could not think of any concern in their own class.
- Attendance is high, punctuality very good and there have been no exclusions, no serious behaviour incidents and no racist incidents since the previous inspection.

The leadership and management are good

- The local authority acted quickly to address the failures identified by the previous inspection. They removed the previous governing body and appointed an interim executive board (IEB). They established excellent support from a local school (Seabridge Primary) and its headteacher, who initially acted as executive headteacher at Hugo Meynell. This partnership has provided good professional training for teachers, supplemented well by local authority consultants.
 - The IEB appointed a new, experienced headteacher from January 2013. He has built upon the partnership well, and brought new energy and vision that has energised staff, pupils and parents alike. Teaching is much better now, and securely so. Staff morale is high, as they experience expert training and encouragement, and see what good teaching looks like through the continuing partnership arrangement with Seabridge.
 - Governors, teachers and support staff promote equal opportunities for all groups, and use assemblies and lessons to teach pupils about other faiths and cultures. Teachers ensure that
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pupils are experiencing a broad, predominantly academic curriculum.

- Financial management is of high quality, allowing the new headteacher to target spending on immediate improvements to the learning environment. Pupil premium funding is effectively deployed in specific support and intervention for pupils that need to catch up.
- Arrangements for safeguarding children meet statutory requirements. Site security has been further enhanced and that has helped to contribute to both parents' and pupils' clearly expressed sense of safety in the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The IEB has monitored the progress of pupils closely, using reliable information from, initially, the executive headteacher, local authority consultants, and now from school subject coordinators and the new headteacher. Members of the IEB regularly visit the school, observe lessons, interview staff and pupils, and sample pupils' work. They have a secure knowledge of the school's performance.
 - The IEB took swift action to support underperforming staff soon after the previous inspection, resulting in improvement in teaching quality for those staff. Some staff have left the school.
 - Performance management arrangements have been put in place aimed at linking teachers' pay to the progress their pupils make, but these new arrangements have yet to run for a full year.

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	124232
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	420593

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	277
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Jill Cheadle
Headteacher	Steve Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	8 February 2012
Telephone number	01630672287
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