

Apley Wood Primary School

Pool Farm Avenue, Apley, Telford, TF1 6FQ

Inspection dates 1–2 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Effective leadership has led to considerable improvements since the previous inspection, particularly in relation to teaching and achievement.
- Pupils make good progress across the school and standards have risen in reading, writing and mathematics. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils now reach standards which are above average.
- Teaching is typically good and some lessons are outstanding. Lessons are well planned and meet pupils' individual needs.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive additional adult support and help from specialist agencies. As a result, these pupils achieve well.
- Pupils feel safe, behave well and work hard in lessons. They enjoy school and this is shown in their above-average attendance.
- The headteacher has set a clear and ambitious direction for the school. This is shared and supported wholly by all staff and governors. As a result, staff morale is high and teamwork is highly effective.
- The rigorous checks done by leaders and managers and additional training provided have ensured that teaching has improved.
- Governors have a good knowledge and understanding of how well the school is doing. They provide appropriate levels of challenge and support to all leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes adults do not ask pupils questions that make them think hard enough.
- When teachers are working with particular groups, they do not always check on other groups to make sure they are doing as well.
- Pupils do not always get the chance to act on the advice given by teachers in their marking.
- Subject leaders do not make full use of information about pupils' progress to help develop their subjects further.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They saw 25 lessons or parts of lessons, five of which were jointly observed with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with pupils, teachers, the headteacher, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 98 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) together with other survey information collected by the school. They also spoke informally to parents as they brought their children to school, and parents who requested interviews with the inspection team to provide additional information.
- Questionnaires from 35 staff were received and their views taken into account.
- The inspection team listened to pupils read, spoke with them about their learning and looked at the work in their books.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school's checks on how well it is doing, the school improvement plan, data on pupils' current progress, leaders' reports following lesson observations, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Heather Simpson, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
David Westall	Additional inspector
Michael Fox	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Apley Wood Primary is larger than most other primary schools.
- Most pupils are White British and speak English fluently.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. At Apley Wood, this additional funding applies to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The school provides a breakfast club and after-school care, managed by the governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has become a Foundation school with charitable trust status. It is now part of the Beacon Co-operative Learning Trust and works closely with three other local primary schools, a secondary school and a small number of other educational partners.
- The school has received several awards recently including a Gold Primary Science Quality Mark, an International Schools award and a Basic Skills Quality Mark.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding and thereby accelerate pupils' progress by ensuring that:
 - questions are always used effectively to probe pupils' understanding and develop their thinking
 - when teachers focus on particular groups of pupils, they do not miss opportunities to assess and meet the needs of others effectively
 - areas identified for improvement in teachers' marking are always followed up and acted on by pupils in their subsequent work.
- Make the effectiveness of leadership and management outstanding by:
 - developing the skills of subject leaders to use information about pupils' progress to lead further improvements in their subjects with more confidence and precision.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The proportion of children joining Reception with limited language skills has increased in recent years. Children's overall skills and knowledge are now below expectations when they start at the school. Staff rapidly develop supportive relationships with children, and provide a wide and worthwhile range of learning activities. This helps them to achieve well. By the time they enter Year 1, children are working at the expected level for their age.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, especially in writing, and build on their early skills. This good progress continues across Years 3 to 6 and standards at the end of Year 6 have risen consistently since the previous inspection in all subjects. The provisional results for 2013 are above the 2012 average. All ability groups achieve well, particularly the most able pupils, and the proportion reaching the higher levels has increased and is above average.
- Writing is taught well and pupils make rapid progress in this area. While there have been fluctuations in the progress made by pupils in reading and mathematics, better teaching has helped to iron out these fluctuations and progress is now consistently good. The checks made on the school's own assessment information and the work sampled in pupils' books confirm this.
- Reading is taught well from the outset. Younger pupils use their knowledge of letters and sounds to break down tricky words. Older pupils develop good attitudes to reading and can read lengthy and difficult texts. Reading is strongly promoted across the school and pupil librarians run the library at lunchtime to provide even more opportunities for those pupils who love to read. Reading volunteers and additional individual support make sure that those who are struggling with reading have extra help to prevent them falling behind.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the support they receive in lessons and extra help to meet their individual needs. For example, those who have sight problems or other physical difficulties make good progress due to the highly skilled support of their adult helpers and advice from specialist teachers who visit the school. Staff use resources such as Braille typewriters effectively to ensure pupils are fully included in all lessons. This helps them to keep up with their classmates, demonstrating the school's suitable promotion of equality of opportunity.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium make good progress along with their classmates. This funding is used well to provide additional adult support in lessons, individual lessons with teachers and attendance at the breakfast club. School leaders carefully check and follow the progress of these pupils, and their findings show that the gap between their attainment and that of others in the school is closing. A greater proportion are now reaching the levels expected in both English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good and there are some examples where it is outstanding. Across the school teachers develop positive relationships with pupils. It is clear that pupils like and respect their teachers, and that their feelings are reciprocated. This has a beneficial impact on pupils' motivation and learning.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve have risen since the last inspection and this has helped to accelerate the pace of learning. Teachers plan their lessons well in order to meet

the needs of pupils of different capabilities. They know what they want pupils to learn and their explanations are clear. Consequently, pupils are able to start their tasks confidently, knowing what they are expected to achieve.

- The work of the teaching assistants is a strength across the school. They form a strong partnership with teachers, are well trained, and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
- In lessons where pupils benefit from outstanding teaching, tasks pinpoint pupils' learning needs and the teaching is lively and imaginative so all pupils strive very hard. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils produced some outstanding writing in a short space of time due to the excellent introduction to the lesson, high level of challenge presented, and effective support for all groups.
- In the main, teachers use questions well. However, in some lessons they miss opportunities to probe pupils' understanding and challenge their thinking through focused questions. Sometimes teachers accept brief responses when pupils would benefit from being expected to explain their answers more fully. In addition, when teachers concentrate for too long on supporting a particular group of pupils in lessons, they sometimes miss opportunities to check or accelerate the learning of others. This restricts the progress of these pupils.
- Marking is thorough and is usually effective. However, teachers do not always make sure that pupils respond to the areas for improvement identified in marking in their subsequent work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have good attitudes to their learning and this helps their progress in lessons. They want to do well and work hard as relationships in all classes are positive. All parents who expressed their views feel that pupils behave well and are kept safe. The pupils spoken to agree.
- Behaviour in and around school is good. School rules are prominently displayed and these reinforce respect and tolerance towards others. Pupils are polite, friendly and helpful. They readily take on additional responsibilities, for example as school council representatives, librarians, or buddies to help support other pupils.
- Pupils have a good knowledge about different types of bullying but are adamant that this is rare in their school. This is supported by behaviour records kept by the school. Where minor difficulties arise, swift action is taken to address them.
- Pupils feel safe and know how to stay safe as a result of being taught about potential dangers, such as fire, road, water and using the internet.
- The breakfast club provides a happy and safe environment for pupils who attend. They are well cared for by adults and have a good range of activities to capture their interest. They behave well and socialise with other age groups. Pupils get off to a positive start so they are ready for learning when lessons begin.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Periods of reflection are built in to lessons and assemblies, and pupils know the difference between right and wrong. Pupils from all backgrounds and cultures mix happily together at playtimes and appreciate each other's views. Links with schools in other countries, for example Ghana, ensure that pupils have a good understanding of other cultures and those who have different beliefs and practices.
- Pupils enjoy school and this is shown in their above-average attendance. A virulent virus caused

attendance to dip last year to average, but this is not the norm.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides dynamic and focused leadership. She is ably supported by governors and other leaders, and together they have successfully created a strong staff team who are very committed to improving their practice. Clear direction and resolute determination have led to improved achievement, teaching and behaviour since the last inspection.
- Senior leaders know their school well and their evaluations are accurate. Areas for development are identified with pinpoint accuracy and generate tightly focused action plans to drive areas identified forward.
- Regular and rigorous checks on the quality of teaching are used to improve the performance of every adult working in the school. Previously weak teaching has been tackled successfully and almost all teaching is now consistently good.
- Senior leaders keep track on how well pupils are doing and use this information to target extra support where needed. However, subject leaders are less experienced in using this information and as a result, they are missing some opportunities to make improvements in literacy and numeracy to raise standards even further.
- Annual targets are set for all staff who work with pupils. These are linked to whole-school priorities and staff pay. Only those who demonstrate that pupils make at least good progress receive pay awards.
- The mix of subjects and the wide range of clubs, visits and visitors provide rich and memorable experiences for pupils. The use of outdoor areas, such as the Forest School, makes a major contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school. Leaders are also using the additional sports funding received to extend outdoor physical education. Sports coaches provide specialist input which is helping to improve pupils' physical development and teach them how to stay healthy.
- The school has very positive relationships with parents, who are actively encouraged to support their children at home. Strong links with other schools also provide opportunities to share good practice and training. These have helped raise the quality of teaching.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the school, and rightly has full confidence in its leadership. The school buys in advice and support and has used this effectively to raise standards.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well and support and challenge leaders. They attend training to keep their skills and knowledge up-to-date and ensure that they fulfil their statutory duties effectively, for example in relation to finance and safeguarding. Governors visit the school and receive regular reports from senior staff, including on the progress made by all groups of pupils. As a result, they have a good knowledge of how well the staff and pupils are performing. For example, they know how the pupil premium is used and the impact this is having on the learning of eligible pupils. Appointed governors set targets for the headteacher and check that pay increases for teachers and leaders are linked to pupils making good progress.

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	123450
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	426977

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	416
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Derick Lee
Headteacher	Allyson Brown
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 January 2012
Telephone number	01952 386180
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