

The Martin Wilson School

New Park Road, Castlefields, Shrewsbury, SY1 2SP

Inspection dates 27–28 November 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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Not all pupils make consistently good progress, particularly in writing. This means that they do not all achieve as well as they could.
- The school does not build upon pupils' writing skills systematically or provide pupils with enough opportunities to write independently or at length.
- Teachers' expectations are sometimes not pitched at the right level. This means that teaching is not always challenging enough, particularly for more-able pupils.
- Teachers' marking does not always help pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils are not always given the opportunity to act on their teacher's advice.
- Leaders' checks on pupils' learning are not rigorous enough. Pupils' work is not always of high quality and teachers' assessments are not always accurate.
- Subject leaders are not involved enough in checking the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- This is a caring school which is valued by parents and the wider community. Pupils are safe and well cared for at school and are happy to be there.
- Children are given a good start to their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils develop positive attitudes to learning. They behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the curriculum, visits and school clubs. It fosters their good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. The wide range of activities includes an annual residential visit for Year 6 pupils.
- Leaders have identified the key areas for improvement and have put effective systems in place to accelerate pupils' progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 13 lessons, of which four were observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons. They looked at a range of pupils' work, sampled books, listened to pupils read and observed other aspects of the school's work.
- Meetings were held with senior and subject leaders and other teaching staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 19 responses to the Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors discussed lessons they had seen with teaching staff and examined a range of documents, including the school's own information about pupils' attainment and progress, the school's self-evaluation summary and school improvement plan, planning documentation, records of governors' meetings, records relating to behaviour, accidents and attendance, checks on teaching, policy documents and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

David Evans, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Dennis Brittan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Martin Wilson School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children from service families, is above the national average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school uses the services of a pupil referral unit to reintegrate pupils who have joined after being excluded from other schools.
- The school has experienced disruption to staffing since the previous inspection.
- The school shares its site with Bluebell Childcare. This is privately managed and subject to a separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that all teaching is good or better by ensuring that:
 - teachers have higher expectations of all pupils
 - teachers plan work that consistently matches the needs of each pupil and challenges all pupils sufficiently, particularly more-able pupils
 - marking provides pupils with the guidance they need to improve their work in all subjects
 - pupils are given more opportunities to apply their numeracy skills in other subjects and to solve real-life problems.
- Improve the teaching of writing so that pupils' achievement increases by ensuring that:
 - pupils are taught the skills they need to develop and extend their writing in literacy lessons
 - pupils have sufficient opportunities to apply their writing skills independently and at length in other subjects
 - teachers adopt a consistent approach to developing pupils' spelling, grammar, punctuation, handwriting and presentation skills.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - checks on learning are rigorous and ensure that the work pupils produce in their books is always of high quality and is accurately assessed
 - subject leaders are more involved in monitoring teaching and learning in their subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils do not make rapid enough progress through the school, especially in writing. More-able pupils are not always challenged with demanding enough work.
- Children start school with skills that are below those typical for their age. They settle quickly in the Nursery and make a good start to their learning. Early identification of children needing additional support helps them to make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils' progress is uneven throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 because teachers' planning does not always provide learning activities that are sufficiently challenging and which match individual pupils' abilities. This is because teachers' expectations are not always high enough. As a result, by the end of Key Stage 1, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are below average. Pupils' progress does not accelerate because teaching is not consistently good.
- In 2012, a broadly average proportion of pupils reached the expected level in English and mathematics and pupils made good progress from their starting points in Year 2. However, in 2013, the results dipped and progress slowed as a result of significant staff changes. School leaders have vigorously addressed these issues and pupils currently in Year 6 are back on track to achieve better.
- At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment remains below the national average, but inspection evidence shows that pupils are now making faster progress, especially in reading. Their progress is not as rapid in writing or in mathematics, where the school does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in the different subjects they study and to solve real-life problems.
- Pupils' levels in reading by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are broadly average. The school is successful in teaching phonics (the links between letters and sounds). Pupils in Year 1 have scored above the national average in the phonics screening check and the school uses results to target any pupils needing extra support. Reading skills have improved in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 because of the focus on systematic approaches to the teaching of phonics.
- Standards in writing are below average because writing skills are not developed and extended effectively through the school. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write at length and independently in literacy or other subjects. Inconsistency in the teaching of handwriting and spelling results in work that is often poorly presented. In addition, not enough emphasis is placed upon developing the basic skills of punctuation and grammar.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium make similar progress to their classmates. The school has been successful in ensuring that the gap between the achievements of these pupils compared with other pupils in this school is narrowing. As a result of staff disruption, however, the eligible pupils in Year 6 in 2013 were working four terms behind their classmates in English and mathematics. Currently, those for whom the school receives the pupil premium are now making good progress because of the effective individual support they receive.
- A strength of the school is that pupils who join the school at times other than in the Early Years Foundation Stage are integrated well, supported effectively and generally do as well as their classmates.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Their needs are clearly identified and they are given effective support by specialist teachers and assistants.
- The school uses the primary school sports funding appropriately to extend the opportunities pupils have to work with professional sports coaches, to establish sustainable partnerships with local community sports clubs and to provide additional activities such as outdoor and adventure activities. Pupils enjoy sports and understand well how to keep fit and healthy.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Not enough of the school's teaching is consistently good. There is too much variation in the way pupils' skills are developed and extended, and in the effectiveness of teachers' planning, assessment and marking.
- Teachers do not always set work which provides the right level of challenge for pupils of all abilities. Consequently, the more-able pupils sometimes have work which is too easy for them.
- In lessons that require improvement, pupils of all abilities often sit through long presentations and teachers do not provide them with enough opportunities to find things out for themselves or work independently. In some lessons, teaching does not make it clear what pupils are learning or what teachers expect from pupils when they work by themselves. As a result some pupils, while still behaving well, do not make as much progress as they could.
- Most lesson plans are detailed, but often focus on what pupils will do rather than what they will learn. This means that teachers often check that pupils have completed the task, rather than check carefully what pupils have actually learned in the lesson.
- Not all teachers question pupils well during lessons to check their understanding and use this information to provide new challenges. This means that the pace of learning for some pupils is slower than it could be.
- Although marking has improved and is frequent, it does not always help pupils to see the next steps they need to take in their learning to help them improve their work. Pupils have too few opportunities to respond to the teachers' comments.
- In classes where teaching is consistently good, the pupils, including lower-attaining pupils, make good progress because expectations are high. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding, use effective questioning and give clear instructions so that pupils understand what to do.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They provide good support in class and also when they take groups of pupils out of class for specific help. They work well to meet the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They always encourage pupils to do their best. When this is at its strongest, teaching assistants ask challenging questions and regularly remind learners of their targets, as was seen with a group of pupils in Year 6.
- Relationships are a particular strength of the school. The impact on pupils' learning was evident when pupils in Year 6 made good progress because of the respect they had for the teacher and the level of fun they experienced as they participated in role-play activity.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' good attitudes to learning are a key contributor to the positive atmosphere in lessons. On those occasions when challenging timescales are not given, pupils still persevere at work but at a steady rather than a rapid pace.
- Behaviour outside lessons is good. Pupils are polite and respectful to each other and to adults when moving around the school. They show consideration for one another and younger pupils speak highly of older ones.
- Inspectors analysed the school's records of behaviour and found them to be detailed and well managed. Any incidents are thoroughly recorded and procedures reviewed regularly to ensure their effectiveness and the consistency of their application.
- Pupils are very keen to take on extra responsibilities around the school and they develop a strong social conscience. They were particularly friendly and welcoming to the inspection team by engaging in conversation, opening doors and in helping the inspectors find their way around the school.
- Pupils feel safe in school and are aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They say that there is no bullying in school, yet know what to do should they have a concern.
- Pupils feel that they have a role in the school's decision-making process. They regularly raise money for a number of charities and show great empathy for other people's feelings and difficulties.
- Pupils know that their work is valued and their high-quality artwork is very well presented in classrooms and in corridors.
- Leaders make good use of external agencies to support the most vulnerable pupils and have detailed support packages in place.
- Pupils' behaviour is typically good. It is not outstanding because, in lessons that require improvement, pupils lose concentration and are not engaged fully in their learning.
- Pupils' attendance is below average, although there are signs of improvement. Despite the school's best efforts to tackle this, some parents still take their children on holidays during term time.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The leadership and management of the school require improvement because leaders have faced a difficult period of change, particularly with regard to changes in staffing, that has delayed planned improvements.
- Following careful analysis of the dip in results in 2013, leaders are taking action to raise achievement, particularly in writing. Collaboration with other schools has been valuable in supporting school improvement and providing good opportunities for staff training so that teachers can improve their performance and raise pupils' achievement. Where good teaching has been sustained, pupils are making good progress, but inconsistencies remain in a minority of lessons because improvements have not been in place long enough to have had full impact in all year groups.

- Staff changes have meant that the headteacher and deputy headteacher have taken on much of the responsibility for checking the quality of education and its impact on achievement. They are aware of the strengths and weaknesses and have managed to secure more focused support for pupils. As a result, much of the teaching is now good and progress improving. However, subject leaders are not involved enough in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.
- Leaders ensure that pupil premium funding is used well. Additional support is delivered by specialist teachers, assistants and other agencies. The funding also extends to clubs; in particular, a popular breakfast and after-school club, as well as support for residential trips.
- The school's sports funding is used to support the teaching of physical education and staff development. Many pupils participate in a wide range of sports, which contributes to their developing healthy lifestyles, better physical well-being and improved performance levels.
- The curriculum provides for learning in a full range of subjects and, in the best lessons, encourages enthusiasm for learning. However, teachers' planning is not consistent enough to ensure that skills are securely established and that a thirst for knowledge is generated throughout the school. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, pupils know that it is important to help others and to look after the environment for others to enjoy.
- The school successfully promotes equal opportunities for all pupils to ensure that no group is disadvantaged when compared with other pupils. It makes sure that there is no discrimination.
- The local authority has actively supported the school's drive for improvement. The School Improvement Partner is acutely aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and where further support is required. When standards dipped last year, the local authority provided and developed further a comprehensive programme of support tailored to improve the school's effectiveness.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The work of the governing body has improved since the previous inspection. As a result of training, governors have a greater understanding of the school's data about pupils' progress and its arrangements for safeguarding children. They are aware that recent results have dipped and that the focus on teaching must be maintained to raise pupils' achievement. The governing body works closely with the senior leadership team but it has not always challenged them well in the past. It is clear from records of recent meetings that they question performance with much greater challenge and precision than previously. They are regular visitors to lessons so that they are better placed to make well-informed decisions. The governing body makes sure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
 - Governors check the performance of the headteacher and are becoming more involved in checking that teachers' pay is aligned with their performance. They manage the school's finances effectively to make sure that resources, including the pupil premium, are spent in the best interests of the children.

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	123447
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	428824

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Wright
Headteacher	David Purslow
Date of previous school inspection	23 April, 2012
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