

Dawley Church of England Primary School with Nursery

Doseley Road North, Dawley, Telford, TF4 3AL

Inspection dates 5–6 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Attendance is too low.
- As a result of weak teaching over time pupils have made inadequate progress in mathematics, especially in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' standards in reading, writing and particularly mathematics are below average at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support have been underachieving.
- Pupils do not have a good enough knowledge of letters and the sounds they make.
- Teaching is not consistently good enough to give current pupils the accelerated progress they need to catch up.
- Teachers do not all check well enough on how pupils are doing, so do not always move them on to new work when they are ready for it.
- Sometimes pupils are not encouraged to answer questions fully in lessons, and they seldom learn through discussing ideas with each other.
- Leaders have not always responded rapidly enough when actions they have taken have only shown limited success.
- Governors have not challenged the senior leaders effectively to ensure that teaching is good enough for pupils to achieve as well as they should.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders are showing they can improve the school; teaching is getting better and progress is accelerating more rapidly.
- Children settle well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are now making good progress through Nursery and Reception.
- Pupils feel safe and enjoy taking on responsibilities such as being playground buddies or members of the school council. This helps them to develop their independence.
- Teachers' marking of books is thorough and effective, particularly in literacy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed nine lessons, four of which were joint observations with the headteacher or the acting deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspection team looked at pupils' work in their books and listened to them read.
- There were meetings with groups of pupils, senior leaders, governors and representatives of the local authority.
- An inspector talked to parents at the start of the school day and considered the 14 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. Inspectors also considered the 13 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors visited the school's breakfast club and an after-school drama club.
- The inspection team examined a range of other evidence including: the school's own data on pupils' recent and current progress; planning and monitoring documentation; records relating to behaviour and attendance; documentation relating to governors' meetings; local authority reports; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Richard Boswell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Carolyn Wood

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium (which in this school provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- 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 well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection, the school has experienced a number of changes in staffing.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that all teachers:
 - check how well pupils are doing in the lesson, and move pupils on to challenging activities as soon as they have fully understood the initial work and are ready to do them
 - give pupils time to develop their answers to questions and allow them the opportunity to discuss their learning with each other
 - teach about letters and the sounds they make effectively.
- Raise pupils' achievement in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring pupils are presented with new ideas in the right order so they can build on their earlier learning
 - making sure that pupils record calculations where needed, and helping them learn from mistakes
 - providing teachers with training about different approaches and ways of explaining mathematics.
- Improve pupils' attendance by communicating well with parents.
- Improve the effectiveness of senior leadership and management by:
 - taking swift and effective action to ensure strategies for improvement succeed
 - using the funding from the pupil premium more effectively to close the gap in achievement between eligible pupils and other groups
 - making sure that governors use their recent training in understanding information about pupils' achievement to regularly and effectively hold school leaders to account.

Ofsted has made recommendations for action on governance to the authority responsible for the school. An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- The results of national tests at the end of Year 6 show that pupils' progress is inadequate in mathematics. The Year 1 and 2 checks show the pupils' learning of the links between sounds and letters has also been too slow.
- The progress that pupils make in Key Stage 2 requires improvement in English and is inadequate in mathematics. Progress in both English and mathematics was better in 2013 than in 2012 but pupils have left Year 6 for the last two school years having made overall progress in mathematics that was significantly slower than that typical of other schools. Very few pupils, including the most able, make progress in mathematics that is more rapid than that expected. Since the last inspection standards in reading, writing and mathematics have remained below the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. Many pupils currently in Key Stage 2 still have ground to make up to reach the standards they should.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium have been underachieving. Too often they have made slower progress than others in the school, particularly in mathematics and writing, and in Year 6 the gap between the results of these pupils and other groups has widened in the past two school years. In English, pupils eligible for the pupil premium in Year 6 were behind their classmates in both 2012 and 2013, particularly in writing where the gap widened in 2013 to 21 months. In mathematics, pupils were five months behind in 2012 but 20 months behind in 2013. However, data about the progress of eligible pupils currently in the school show that it has started to improve.
- Year 1 pupils have a national screening check on their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make (phonics). In 2013, only 16 out of 29 pupils achieved the expected standard, and only five of the 13 pupils eligible for the pupil premium did so. In Year 2 pupils take the test again if they have not achieved the expected standard the year before. Only one out of nine pupils achieved the expected standard on the second attempt.
- Recent information from the school shows that progress has improved over the last year for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. This is because support for them is now better matched to their needs. Additional adults in the classroom have received good training, enabling them to give much more effective support. The leader responsible for these pupils acknowledges that in the past the approach to supporting them has been 'too casual'.
- Pupils in recent years have been starting school in the Nursery with skills and understanding below those typical for their age. They are now making good progress in both the Nursery class and the Reception class. Last year children left the Early Years Foundation Stage closer to the levels typical for their age in almost all areas of their development.
- Pupils do not consistently make the accelerated progress they need to in Key Stage 1. In 2012 pupils achieved standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 that were below the national averages. They improved in 2013 but remained below average in mathematics. Pupils' work shows that they have not always been taught new work in an order that helps them to build up their understanding.

- In the last 18 months the school has responded more urgently to identify areas of weakness. Senior leaders have set more realistic targets for the progress pupils need to make and are now using more challenging national comparisons. The information the school provided about the progress that pupils have recently been making has been cross-checked by the teachers. This information shows pupils making more rapid progress in most subject areas and in most year groups.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Past weaknesses in teaching mean that pupils' progress over time has not been as rapid as it should be. There has not been enough good teaching to close the gaps in pupils' learning quickly. The school's own records show that up to a third of teaching has been less than good over the last two school years and some has been inadequate.
- While school records show positive impact from recent improvements in teaching in many subjects, lesson observations and pupils' books show teaching is not good enough in mathematics. This was confirmed in a study of pupils' work. A new leader of mathematics was appointed with the assistance of the local authority, in recognition of the need to boost the teaching of mathematics.
- Pupils' mathematics books do not show their calculations, so when they go wrong they cannot look back and see why. There is not evidence of pupils learning from their mistakes. In mathematics lessons teachers are not confident in suggesting alternative approaches if pupils do not initially understand.
- Although teaching is now improving, there remain weaknesses. Sometimes, for example, there is unnecessary repetition of activities, and at other times pupils are moved on before they have fully understood. While most lessons include activities matched to the abilities of the pupils, sometimes the most able are not sufficiently engaged in these activities at an early stage in the lesson.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to share ideas with each other because teachers' questions do not open up discussions in the classroom. For example, in an English lesson in Year 1, pupils' understanding of the Cinderella story was tested by questions that did not allow pupils to go beyond simple yes or no answers. This led to pupils losing interest in the lesson.
- Pupils' have not achieved as well as they should have in learning about letters and the sounds they make (phonics) because the quality of teaching has not been good enough. This has led to too low a proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in Year 1 and Year 2.
- Teaching is better in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are high expectations and well-established routines with good contributions from support staff. Until recently the school has not been flexible enough in targeting additional teaching support where it is most needed. This has resulted in slower progress for some pupils, including those supported by the pupil premium.
- The school has a clear marking policy and it is used well by teachers, particularly in literacy. Pupils respond to the comments that teachers make in their books and this helps them to make their next steps in learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are inadequate

- Behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate because attendance is consistently low. Attendance over the past three years has fallen from 94.6% to 93.0%.

- The percentage of pupil absences so far for this school year is higher than for the same period last year. Over the period for which information is provided, the percentage of persistent absentees increased for all groups of pupils except those supported by school action, and the gap with national averages widened.
- While the school has not been complacent in tackling absences, its actions to raise attendance have not had enough impact. The school has an attendance action plan and works with outside agencies. However, it does not currently use every means at its disposal to communicate with parents who are harder to reach, such as sending text messages.
- The school has had success with reducing the high rate of exclusions for some pupils. Incidents of poor behaviour in lessons or around school are generally limited to a very small number of pupils whom the school is supporting. The school has separate behaviour logs for these pupils and works closely with outside agencies.
- Attitudes to learning observed during the inspection were positive, although pupils spoke about some disruption to lessons from a small number of pupils. They said that teachers deal with these incidents and they 'don't lose concentration too much'.
- In discussion with an inspector pupils were generally positive about the school and said they felt safe and happy at school. Parents who met inspectors or who filled in the online questionnaire were also generally positive about the school, one of them saying, 'It's a friendly school'. There was some concern about the frequent changes in teaching staff.
- Although pupils say, and records confirm, that bullying issues are rare, pupils referred to frequent 'name-calling' as an ongoing issue at the school. The school is aware of this and staff are addressing it through personal and social education and through assemblies.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities at school. For example, some older pupils act as playground 'buddies', helping younger pupils to select play equipment and checking no one is feeling unhappy at break time. They also have the opportunity to be members of the school council.

The leadership and management require improvement

- School leaders, including the governing body, have had a positive impact in improving some areas of the school's work, but have not had enough impact in others. Leaders have not always responded quickly enough when the impact of their actions has not been wholly successful. Many changes have been made to school systems, but some of the more recent changes have not yet worked through to help pupils catch up and raise standards.
- Nevertheless, leaders at all levels, including teachers who lead subjects, are demonstrating the capacity to improve the school. They have reduced the amount of inadequate teaching and raised the proportion that is good. This is starting to have an impact on achievement. The 2013 Key Stage 2 results show progress was better than in 2012, and other year groups also learnt at a more rapid rate in 2012/13 than before.

- There has been a lack of accountability among staff until recently. The school has now made teachers more accountable through more rigorous performance management. In a questionnaire during the inspection most staff were positive about the school and the level of support they received from senior leaders. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is strong and the school has appointed a very effective practitioner as the new mathematics leader.
- The subjects that pupils study and the activities they are involved in are chosen to meet their needs and to broaden their horizons. This includes a large number of trips to support the creative themes that are being studied. Pupils are taught a broad and balanced range of subjects, such as history, geography and French. Pupils have created their own 'secret garden' outside the school through work with a visiting artist and drama workshops. The governors recently purchased a set of tablet computers that are used, for example, to assist pupils in reading a wide range of texts.
- Pupils' spiritual development is encouraged in lessons and through collective worship. There is evidence around the school of a celebration of the school's ethos and an understanding of world faiths through, for example, displays of religious artefacts. The school also takes part in 'Open Door' events organised by the diocese.
- Safeguarding in the school meets all statutory requirements and the site is checked for safety and security. Pupils who may be vulnerable are well cared for and one case study showed a pupil continuing to make progress in their work in spite of challenging circumstances. The school's breakfast club provides a calm and quiet start to the school day for around 16 pupils.
- The local authority did not take immediate action to identify the school as needing a high level of support after its poor 2012 results. However, it moved the school to a higher category of concern in summer 2013. The school has a number of partnerships with local schools. The headteacher has had the support of two local leaders of education, organised through the local authority, and this has started to have an impact.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governors have not challenged the school enough nor been critical enough. They have become more proactive and recognise the weaknesses in their work, but have only very recently had specific training on comparing their school's performance to the national picture. They have not had enough understanding of how good teaching is in the school. The governors acknowledge that targets for the headteacher have not been challenging enough, and in the past very similar targets have been set each year.
- Governors have capably managed most of the school's finances and balanced a very tight budget. They have a clear spending plan for the sports and physical education funding that involves two sessions of professional sports coaching each week for pupils. While governors are aware of how the pupil premium funding is spent, for example on learning mentors and behaviour support staff, they are not clear about the impact of this spending on pupils' achievement.

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	123544
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	426983

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sean Peters
Headteacher	Elaine Almond
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2012
Telephone number	01952 386280
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