

Albrighton Primary School

New House Lane, Albrighton, Wolverhampton, WV7 3QS

Inspection dates 21–22 January 2014

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

- Achievement over time is not yet good because there are too few lessons that are taught well.
- Attainment in reading, writing and, especially, mathematics is not as high as it could be.
- Teachers do not plan activities that sufficiently take into account pupils' starting points and some tasks are too easy. This is because teachers are not making accurate use of the better information on pupils' learning.
- Teachers' questions are not always used to check on pupils' understanding or to adapt tasks to modify the level of challenge.
- Although leaders have improved teaching and achievement recently, they have not yet made them consistently good across the school.
- Expectations of the presentation of pupils' work are inconsistent.
- Teaching assistants are not always used to best effect and opportunities are missed to use their time constructively.
- Leaders' judgements on the quality of teaching, and on how well the school is working, are too generous at times. As a result, plans for improvement lack precision.

The school has the following strengths

- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class because good teaching meets their needs well.
- Younger pupils develop reading skills that are better than those typical for their age.
- Strong relationships, supported by good behaviour, create a very positive atmosphere in the school.
- Pupils are eager to learn, they feel safe and attend school regularly.
- The very large majority of parents and carers hold the school in high regard.

Information about this inspection

- Seventeen lessons or parts of lessons were observed. All classroom teachers present during the inspection were observed teaching. The lead inspector undertook four joint lesson observations with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other staff, members of the governing body and different groups of pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, observed the teaching of reading skills and checked on pupils' reading in lessons.
- Inspectors sampled pupils' work, scrutinised the school's tracking records of pupils' progress and took account of the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- The lead inspector held a discussion with a member of the local authority's advisory staff.
- The views of parents and carers were sought and 24 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were examined. Inspectors spoke with parents and carers, at various times, during the inspection. In addition, inspectors took note of the findings of the school's own survey of the views of parents and carers. This took place in June 2013 and involved 69 responses.
- The views of staff were sought through a questionnaire. In total, 14 questionnaires were studied.

Inspection team

Gordon Ewing, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Westall	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a broadly average-sized primary school.
- Pupils come from a range of different heritage groups. The largest group, about nine tenths, is of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- A well-above-average number of pupils is eligible for support from the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for children who are looked after by the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from families with a parent in the armed forces. Pupils from service families account for nearly half of the pupils on roll.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is close to the average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There are eight classes within this school. Some classes have pupils with mixed ages.
- A very few pupils attend alternative provision at the Harlescott Tuition Centre on a part time basis.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of good and better teaching throughout the school, particularly by:
 - making sure that teachers accurately and regularly judge pupils' ability levels and set high expectations so that activities provide the right amount of challenge
 - improve the quality of teachers' questions so that they can more accurately check on pupils' understanding and then adapt activities accordingly
 - ensuring that teaching assistants are fully involved in learning activities throughout the lesson
 - making sure that expectations for handwriting and presentation are consistently high.
- Raise pupils' attainment in reading, writing and, especially, mathematics, by:
 - extending the good practice in the teaching of reading so that older pupils achieve the higher levels of which they are capable
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length across a broad range of subjects and contexts
 - increasing the range of activities that develop pupils' skills of estimation and prediction in mathematics
 - training pupils to consistently check the accuracy of their mathematical answers using alternative methods
 - making sure that mathematical tasks are based on pupils' previous learning so that key skills and knowledge are not revisited unnecessarily.
- Strengthen leadership and management, by:
 - improving leaders' skills in judging the impact of what teachers do on pupils' learning
 - improving the quality of leaders' feedback to teachers so that they know exactly what to do to increase the impact of their teaching on learning
 - ensuring that checks on the school's work are rigorously based on a broad range of evidence, including the good performance information already to hand.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Levels of attainment and rates of progress are not as strong as they could be, especially in mathematics. This is because lesson activities are not always sufficiently challenging to boost learning. Teachers do not consistently use information about pupils' progress to plan tasks that take account of their existing knowledge and skills.
- In problem solving activities in mathematics, pupils are not taught to use estimation and prediction or to check the accuracy of their calculations using alternative methods. As a result, avoidable errors go unchecked and the acquisition of higher-level skills is hampered.
- Children achieve well in the Reception class. From starting points that are typical for their age, they make good progress because adults have a clear understanding of how children learn and provide rich and worthwhile learning experiences for all.
- Younger pupils learn to read well because the teaching of letters and sounds is consistently good in Reception and Years 1 and 2. However, reading skills are not developed consistently as pupils get older and the good progress is not sustained through to Year 6. Though pupils leave the school with broadly average attainment in reading, this could be much higher.
- Attainment in writing has varied over time but improved recently because leaders have taken effective steps to address pockets of underachievement through the school. While this has brought levels of attainment broadly in line with those seen nationally, remaining inconsistencies prevent standards being higher. This is particularly the case for more-able writers. Furthermore, opportunities for all pupils to develop their skills of writing at length and in other subjects are too infrequent, which limits their progress.
- Pupils clearly enjoy mathematics and there is inspection evidence to show recent improvements in achievement. However, significant variations remain across the school and too few pupils are set activities that stretch their learning.
- Pupil premium funding is used to good effect. There is no difference between the progress and attainment of these pupils and that of others in the school. The provision of a learning mentor, release time for leaders to track progress and support learners, as well as one-to-one and small group support in literacy and numeracy, play a key role in helping those who struggle academically.
- Pupil premium funding also helps new pupils from service families to settle in. Extra help boosts their confidence in getting to grips with different approaches to learning. Parents and carers from service families unequivocally appreciate the efforts made by the school to ensure new pupils are made to feel welcomed, and to catch up on learning.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Whilst there is now no inadequate teaching, the proportion of teaching that is consistently good or better is too small to secure stronger achievement. This is especially so in the teaching of mathematics. Leaders have identified this as an area of improvement and have brought in external support to improve the teaching of mathematics, but levels of challenge are too low to ensure that all pupils are stretched.

- Although teaching is improving, particularly recently, the rate of improvement has not been sufficiently rapid to ensure that all pupils make the levels of progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils sometimes take time to settle, so not all lessons get off to a quick start. Sometimes this is because the teaching in early stages of lessons fails to stimulate pupils' interests. Explanations by teachers are not always clear so pupils are not sure as to what they really need to do and some teachers' questioning is too rapid to allow pupils to consider their answers or to share their ideas with a partner. Teachers' questions are not used consistently to assess learning and adapt activities to better meet pupils' needs.
- On too many occasions pupils are given tasks that they have already mastered and they can solve mentally without needing to resort to pencil and paper methods. Extension tasks tend to be 'more of the same' rather than challenges that move pupils to the next level. This is particularly the case for more able mathematicians.
- Teachers' knowledge of what pupils can already do is not always accurate and so some tasks and skills are repeated unnecessarily. Pupils, themselves, report that, in mathematics, they are sometimes given easy pencil and paper tasks that they can solve rapidly mentally. This was the case in a mathematics lesson where pupils were adding groups of numbers together on paper such as $20+10+12+2+3$. The pupil commented, 'This is easy,' and when asked by an inspector, could mentally add $10+11+12$ and then subtract 7 with ease. Further investigation demonstrated that this was the case for several pupils.
- In the Reception class, adults know the children as individuals and well-planned activities enable them to develop new skills with confidence. In part of one lesson, some children used number lines to swiftly count on in two's, others explored 2D or 3D shapes with interest. Close observation ensured that, when children got stuck in their learning, adults swiftly provided clear explanations and additional challenges to advance children's understanding and skills.
- In a well-taught Year 6 English lesson, the teacher's expectations were evident at the outset through clear instructions and probing questioning. Groups of pupils were provided with skilfully developed plans of different reading tasks that were well-matched to the different needs of the pupils. Through precise questioning, based on excellent subject knowledge, the teacher listened to pupils' answers carefully and made suggestions on how they could sharpen their understanding of the text. Such strong teaching is not a common feature across the school, however.
- The school has recently taken steps to improve pupils' handwriting and presentation skills, with evident effect in some areas. However, a close examination of several books across the school shows that inconsistencies remain because teachers' expectations are not always high enough. This was evident in some books where high standards of handwriting and presentation were clearly established earlier in the year only to see the quality deteriorate later in pupils' books without subsequent intervention from teachers.
- Overall, the marking of pupils' work is punctual and positive. In some classes, teachers provide useful guidance on how to take the next step and check on how pupils are progressing against learning targets in literacy and numeracy. They then set new challenges and targets. This is not consistent across the school and, as a result, pupils do not know their targets with confidence or understand the teacher's feedback. When asked about the meaning of marking symbols in his numeracy book, one pupil commented, 'I don't know, but the teacher does.'
- In the majority of lessons teaching assistants are used well to support small groups, prepare resources and help those with particular needs to tackle tasks successfully. This is not the case

in all lessons and, on occasions, especially when the teacher is leading the whole class, they play little part in the lesson. In addition, they do not always monitor closely the work of pupils within their working groups and are not confident in adapting tasks to help pupils who are struggling. This is particularly so in mathematics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Strong relationships and pupils' evident good attitudes help to create a harmonious and positive culture for learning throughout the school.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their consistently above-average attendance and their respect for the school uniform. They move around the school and in lessons politely, calmly and in an orderly way, so that they work in a safe and caring environment.
- Pupils are courteous, show sensitivity to the needs of others and are happy to take turns and share ideas in lessons. At play they are happy, enthusiastic and active. Pupils who have been at the school over a number of years report that the good behaviour seen during the inspection is typical of behaviour over time.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils' safety is clearly given a high priority and parents, carers and pupils rightly report that the school is a very safe place in which to work and play. Bullying incidents are extremely rare, as are exclusions. Teachers manage behaviour well in lessons and any form of disruption to learning is uncommon. Within this positive picture, on occasions, when activities are not sufficiently engaging or challenging, some pupils do become distracted and chatty. This breaks up the flow of learning and progress waivers.
- Pupils understand the dangers when using the internet and report confidently that all adults are on hand to support them if they have worries or personal problems. They know of the different forms of bullying and to whom to go if they feel unsafe or have problems with their learning.
- Pupils from service families really appreciate the buddy system when they are new to the school and their parents and carers are very positive about the school's induction programme for newcomers. One parent commented that, 'It is a friendly school.'
- In a good Key Stage 2 assembly, pupils were asked to consider the feelings and thoughts of others who find themselves lonely or isolated. They displayed sensitivity and empathy in their answers to probing questions posed by the teacher.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Not enough has been done to raise the quality of teaching to consistently good. Existing strategies to improve the teaching of mathematics are not yet paying the expected dividends and assessment information is not used accurately by teachers. This leads to activities that are not sufficiently challenging or based on pupils' previous learning.
- The quality of checks by leaders on the work of the school is inconsistent. Leaders do not have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and, consequently, efforts to eradicate mediocre and uninspiring teaching have had mixed impact. The management of the performance of teachers is inconsistent. Regular lesson observations are a common feature but these focus too much on what teachers do rather than on how well pupils are learning. This leads to feedback to teachers that lacks accurate advice on how to improve further. Good training opportunities are provided

for all staff but there is more to do to ensure that all teachers understand the key characteristics of good teaching and learning.

- Since the last inspection, inadequate teaching has been eradicated and some improvements in the overall quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are evident. Regular meetings about pupils' progress are now used to precisely link pupils' achievement to each teacher's performance objectives. Early signs, for example, in stronger achievement for some current pupils, indicate that this strategy is having clear impact.
- Subject leaders are closely involved in monitoring the work of the school and appropriate strategies are now being used to check on pupils' achievement through lesson observations, book scrutinies and evaluations of the quality of teachers' planning.
- New approaches to tracking pupils' learning are starting to pay dividends and the performance information is now used more rigorously to hold teachers to account for pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This has had positive impact, for example, in some improved outcomes in 2013.
- Given the recent track record in raising some levels of achievement, the school is demonstrating capacity to improve further. Adequate support from the local authority has enabled the school to improve in some areas but leaders' capacity to judge the quality of teaching and to check on the work of the school with precision is inconsistent.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through the sound curriculum and extensive range of clubs and activities on offer. Forest School plays a key role in developing pupils' personal, social and technical skills. However, some weaknesses exist in the provision of reading, writing and mathematics, which contribute to pupils' achievement requiring improvement.
- Pupils benefit from a rich range of opportunities for their social and cultural development. Alongside this, the use of additional funding to promote sport and physical education has already started to pay dividends in improving participation rates and developing healthy attitudes. The use of specialist and team teaching has begun to increase classroom teachers' confidence in providing a wider range of physical and sporting activities.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Many of the governors are new to the role and, under the guidance of a dedicated chair, they have taken on their responsibilities with vigour and commitment. They have a developing understanding of how well the school is working and have participated in an impressive range of training in such a short time, within and beyond the school.
 - They have undertaken a number of focused visits to observe the school at first hand and provided valuable feedback on their observations.
 - Given their relatively short period of service they have not had the opportunity to contribute significantly to the school's self-evaluation. However, from their quick grasp of the available assessment information, they are right to conclude that the school is on track to reach levels of attainment and progress seen nationally. This knowledge now places them in a better position to challenge the school's leadership and hold them to account over pupils' academic performance.
 - Governors have ensured the rigorous implementation of the revised pay policy so that teachers' pay progression is fair and solely based on merit.
 - They have meticulous knowledge and oversight of how additional funding for sports and physical education, as well as the pupil premium, is allocated and are improving strategies to

track its impact.

- They ensure that safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements and that the policy for equal opportunities is implemented rigorously.

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	123410
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	431131

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cath Ratcliffe
Headteacher	Wendy Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2012
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