

Mereside Church of England Primary School

Mereside, Springfield, Shrewsbury, SY2 6LE

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2014

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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The teaching has improved significantly since the school's last inspection and is helping the vast majority of pupils to make good progress.
- Pupils who were previously falling behind have now caught up and are achieving well in all subjects.
- Four- and five-year-old children get off to a good start in early literacy and mathematics. This is built upon in Years 1 and 2, where pupils' attainment is rising quickly and securely in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well and make good progress.
- Pupils are courteous and well behaved. They are energised by the broad range of subjects and topics they study and the varied events and activities provided by the school.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in school. There are positive relationships between adults and pupils.
- The school makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The systems introduced by the headteacher, leaders and governors to check pupils' progress and teachers' performance are robust.
- The headteacher, governors and staff have done a great deal to improve the school and now demonstrate good capacity to sustain further improvements.
- The funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium is being used very well to support their learning and raise attainment.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although achievement in mathematics is improving, more pupils should be reaching higher than age-related levels.
- Teachers do not always plan enough activities in lessons aimed at extending the learning of the most-able pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 15 parts of lessons. Most teachers and teaching assistants were observed teaching. Some observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- An inspector heard a group of pupils read and discussed with them their progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' workbooks were checked during lesson observations.
- A meeting was held with three members of the governing body. Discussions were held with pupils and staff throughout the inspection to gauge their views. The lead inspector also spoke with the local authority's school improvement adviser.
- The inspection took account of the 22 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors looked at the results of the school's own surveys of parents' views and spoke to parents at the start and end of the school day.
- The arrangements and records kept to safeguard pupils were inspected, together with the school's attendance records and child protection procedures.
- The school's action plans and self-evaluation were scrutinised, along with the records that leaders and teachers use to check and assess pupils' learning and progress.
- The school's last full inspection in December 2012 judged that the school required special measures. Since then, the school has received monitoring inspections, which all judged that the school was making reasonable progress.

Inspection team

Charalambos Loizou, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jennifer Taylor

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

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises two Reception classes for four- and five-year-old children. One of the two classes has a mixture of Reception children and Year 1 pupils.
- Most pupils are White British and others represent a range of minority ethnic groups. There are no pupils in the early stages of learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is lower than that of most schools. The pupil premium is additional funding given to the school for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are in the care of the local authority.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs at school action is average. The percentage at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The main areas of additional need include moderate or specific learning difficulties, such as speech, language, communication or autism.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement further in mathematics by:
 - making sure that the most-able pupils are always provided with the right level of challenge to extend their learning and help them to reach higher levels
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' marking and time for them to show the calculation methods they use to increase their mathematical understanding.
- Build on the improvements made to the quality of teaching by always providing more ambitious targets for higher ability pupils to aim for and tasks in lessons that extend their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils now make more consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in all classes. The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to questionnaires or surveys, rightly, agree that their children are making good progress.
- Attainment is rising well, particularly in Years 1 and 2, as it is currently above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. This is due largely to mainly good and some outstanding teaching in Key Stage 1.
- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age. Consistently good teaching and a well-devised early years' programme of literacy, communication and mathematics enable children in both classes to make good progress. Standards by the start of Year 1 are in line with age-related levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improvements to the teaching of phonics (letters and their sounds) are having a very positive impact on raising achievement in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2. This year's phonic screening check for Year 1 pupils and teachers' accurate assessments show a marked improvement in scores compared with previous years.
- Current Year 6 pupils have made remarkable progress, having made up a lot of lost ground. This is due largely to more consistently good teaching and sharper assessments of their progress and performance. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is in line with the national average in English and mathematics. This represents good achievement in relation to their starting points. In Year 5, very effective and outstanding teaching has enabled these pupils to make excellent progress, with standards already above age-related levels in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' books and the school's accurate assessments show that an increasing proportion of pupils in all classes make good progress because of more consistently good teaching over the last nine months. The pace of improvement to pupils' achievement is rapid in most classes. This is helping pupils to apply their reading, writing and mathematics skills across a range of subjects and topics with more confidence and accuracy.
- More-stable staffing and newly appointed teachers have strengthened the quality of teaching over the last nine months. Nevertheless, some inconsistencies remain in the rate of progress made by the most-able pupils across classes, particularly in mathematics.
- Previously, pupils eligible for pupil premium funding were one or two terms behind other pupils in English and mathematics. Assessments and their work show that they have caught up in the last nine months because of targeted support and good teaching, and are reaching or exceeding age-related levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Like other pupils, however, fewer reach higher than age-related levels in mathematics compared with the proportion that exceed the levels expected for their age in reading and writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive effective support and teaching, both in lessons with their classmates and when withdrawn for individualised or support in small groups. These pupils make good progress, with an increasing number on course to reach age-related levels in English. Like other pupils, however, attainment in mathematics is just below that of reading and writing.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils' workbooks and assessments of their progress and performance show that the quality of teaching has improved markedly since the school's last inspection. There is no inadequate teaching and the vast majority is of good or outstanding quality. The parents spoken to and those responding to the online questionnaire believe that the teaching is good and recognise that it has improved since the last inspection.
- Teachers and support staff have high expectations and usually provide the right level of challenge and support for pupils across the ability range. Teachers' lesson plans make good use of their assessments of pupils' progress to organise resources and tasks that build on what pupils have already learned. Nevertheless, in some lessons, the tasks provided for the most-able pupils do not extend their learning enough to enable them to realise their full potential.
- In most lessons, teachers and support staff are vigilant in correcting or pointing out errors that can be addressed while these are fresh in pupils' minds. This is having a more lasting effect on raising achievement and maintaining pupils' good progress. The learning observed during the inspection was most effective, for example, when teachers required pupils to apply their reading and writing skills to extend or construct complex sentences and to self-correct their writing as errors were being pointed out to them.
- In mathematics lessons, pupils are provided with a good range of problem-solving tasks which allow them to explore what they already know about number and calculation to real-life situations, such as working out percentage discounts on shopping bills, or the perimeter and area of a garden. Assessments and pupils' work show that these activities are improving their mathematical knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers have improved the way they mark and assess pupils' work and there is now greater consistency across classes. Pupils are aware of the comments and remarks made by staff in workbooks to help them improve.
- In mathematics books, teachers point out errors and provide helpful guidance but do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to correct mistakes or show their calculation methods. This limits the progress they make, particularly for the most-able pupils, as they do not demonstrate their understanding fully by recording the way they work out problems. This can also affect the way teachers assess pupils' mathematical understanding.
- Reading is well taught across the school and pupils' increasing knowledge of phonics is helping them to break down unfamiliar words to improve the fluency of reading and their confidence and skills when spelling words. Pupils enjoy reading literature and non-fiction books and materials. They are given good guidance to expand the range of books, authors and genres they experience in order to improve skills and extend their vocabulary. This year's spelling and grammar test results in Years 6 and pupils' writing in workbooks across the school show significant improvement compared with the time of the last full inspection.
- Teachers now have much more understanding of, and access to, assessment data about pupils' progress and performance. Nevertheless, the most-able pupils in some lessons start work at levels that are not challenging enough, leaving less time to move on to or complete more demanding work.
- Additional support staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and experiences. This is an improvement since the school's last full inspection and is a particular strength of the provision

made for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The pupil premium funding for eligible pupils is being used well to target those pupils who need to catch up most with their learning. Specialised booster programmes and interventions help to accelerate these pupils' progress in the core skills of reading, writing and mathematics.

- Reception children benefit from consistently good teaching and some that is outstanding. They have a good start to their education, particularly in early language and communication, reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers and support staff throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage provide very effective indoor and outdoor experiences for the children and help them to practise their skills and gain confidence. This helps the children to acquire new skills quickly, helping them to make a good start when they join Year 1. There is expert and high-quality teaching and support for both Reception and Year 1 pupils in the mixed-age early years class.
- The primary school sports funding is being used to provide many opportunities for pupils to be taught by expert coaches in sports such as cricket or specialists who teach dance. This is also helping teachers to improve the way they teach physical education as they work alongside these coaches and experts during sessions to see and share good practice.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' behaviour has improved since the last full inspection. In most of the lessons observed, inspectors found pupils to be attentive and well behaved. Pupils are keen to learn and do their best in lessons. They cooperate well when working in groups or with a partner, and are willing to tackle problems, demonstrating resilience and perseverance.
- Pupils behave well and safely outside of lessons. They are trusted to take on responsibilities, such as monitors or when managing the tuck shop at break times or controlling the computer display during assemblies for collective worship and singing. Playground leaders support or help younger children at break times and house captains are good role models. School councillors make a significant contribution to their school community and come up with ideas and suggestions to improve the school.
- Pupils appreciate that their efforts and achievements are valued by staff. They understand the differences between right and wrong and the expectations set out in the school's behaviour policy, which include clearly defined rewards and sanctions.
- The school provides a strong spiritual and moral code which fosters respect for everyone, whatever their background, race or beliefs. This is making a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to the school community as a whole. The school welcomes members of the wider community; for example, by inviting senior citizens to join pupils at lunchtimes. Parents are also made to feel welcome, as was evidenced during the inspection when fathers were invited to join everyone for a special 'father's day' lunch.
- In a small number of lessons observed, there were times when pupils were not fully engaged when tasks were not challenging enough.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The governing body ensures that all requirements are being met in relation to staff vetting, safeguarding and child protection policies.

- Pupils say that that they feel safe and know what to do if they are worried or concerned, as they trust the adults who support them. Some told an inspector that they are proud of their school and that it is easy to make friends.
- Pupils are tolerant and treat each other with respect and courtesy. If pupils fall out or have disagreements, these are easily resolved by staff and pupils. There are warm and trusting relationships between staff and pupils.
- School behaviour records show that any racist or intolerant behaviour are extremely rare. Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying and they are very clear about what to do if incidents occur. They are confident that teachers and support staff will help them if they are upset or feel threatened.
- Healthy living is promoted well, with a very good range of extra-curricular activities and sports on offer. Many pupils choose to eat fruit bars at break times, and those that bring a packed lunch usually have fruit or healthy eating choices provided by their families.
- Pupils are punctual. Attendance rates have improved and are currently in line with the national average. The vast majority of parents ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time and most believe that their children are looked after and safe in school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong, ambitious leadership. They have succeeded in providing greater staffing stability with well-considered teaching appointments that have strengthened the quality of teaching throughout the school.
- Teaching and support staff work well as a cohesive team and staff morale is high. The parents spoken to also recognise that the teaching is improving and that their children are doing much better. They have also welcomed the stability that new teachers have brought to the school.
- There are clear responsibilities for those with management roles, and leaders are now more focused on moving the school forward towards sustaining mainly good or better teaching in all classes.
- Subject and phase leaders have stepped up their monitoring and all staff are involved in important activities to check and improve how well pupils are doing, such as the scrutiny of work books, visits to see and share good practice in other schools and more robust monitoring of teaching undertaken by senior and phase leaders.
- All monitoring activities, together with regular assessments of pupils' progress and teachers' performance, make a significant contribution to sustaining the current momentum of improvement to teaching and learning.
- Senior leaders and the governing body are checking assessments of pupils' progress and performance more often than previously, although monitoring does not always pick up or focus on ensuring that all lessons extend pupils' learning and understanding enough, particularly for the most-able pupils.
- Action plans provide leaders and governors with a means to check the impact of their actions on raising achievement and improving teaching. Leaders and staff have identified the right priorities for sustained improvement and have addressed successfully the areas for improvement

identified at the time of the school's last full inspection.

- There are now more regular checks, together with improved and more accessible assessment data to monitor pupils' progress and performance. As a result of this increased and systematic level of scrutiny, more teaching is becoming good or better and the school demonstrates the capacity for more sustained improvement to pupils' achievement.
- Pupils benefit from a good range of additional activities and studies that combine subjects around interesting and varied themes. Music tuition from visiting specialists provides good opportunities for pupils to learn to play an instrument. Science lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to explore, investigate and question; for example, when pupils in Year 4 scrutinised the properties and features of different types of soil.
- Religious education and visits to places of worship are well planned to include a range of faiths, beliefs and customs from around the world. These and other projects, together with specially themed days, enable pupils to learn about tolerance and equality and to gain more understanding of other cultures and beliefs. These make a significant contribution to pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A broad range of educational and residential visits add enjoyment and variety to pupils' learning experiences.
- The school uses additional funding for sport well, and this is aimed at increasing sporting opportunities and enhances the school's physical education programme. Specialised coaches in a range of sports work with teachers and pupils to provide expert coaching, complementing the good opportunities that pupils have to play team games and sports.
- There are well-planned opportunities for prospective Reception children to visit with their parents and experience the Early Years Foundation Stage. The vast majority of parents spoken to during this inspection and previous monitoring inspections, as well as those who have responded to the school's surveys, believe that their children are supported well.
- The local authority has provided effective support and challenge since the school's last full inspection. Effective professional development and training for staff have been coordinated well to improve teaching. Consultants and subject specialists from other schools and the local authority's advisory team have helped to improve teachers' subject knowledge and expertise in English and mathematics. The local authority has also provided good opportunities for staff to see and share good practice in other schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have been very proactive and effective in helping the school to improve since its last full inspection. The scrutiny committee and Chair of the Governing Body have skilfully supported and challenged the school's leaders to improve teaching and learning. Governors have stepped up their monitoring and, through its scrutiny committee, they now hold leaders fully to account by linking what they monitor to teachers' performance and pupils' progress.
 - The governing body is now receiving more coherent and accessible assessment information from the school's senior leaders and gathers first-hand evidence of teachers' performance and pupils' achievements. Lesson visits, reports from school leaders and accurate scrutiny of assessments enable governors to gauge the impact of leaders' actions on the identified priorities set out in the school improvement plans, particularly in relation to the quality of teaching and learning. This is helping the governing body to link teachers' and leaders' pay to the impact of their performance on pupils' achievement.
 - The governing body receives accurate information about the performance of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding and scrutinises how well these pupils are doing and the impact of special interventions or catch-up programmes on their achievements.

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	135788
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	441856

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	221
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debbie Sharp
Headteacher	Elizabeth Holmes
Date of previous school inspection	11 December 2012
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