

St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Poynton Road, Shawbury, Shrewsbury, SY4 4JR

Inspection dates

14–15 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Although action taken by the school's leaders has led to strong improvement in the quality of teaching, there is still a way to go before teaching has a sustained positive impact on achievement.
- Pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics has improved. Many pupils are making much better progress. However, not all made the progress they should have last year. Few pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs are making rapid progress.
- Pockets of underachievement in some classes remain, due to weaknesses in teaching in the past.
- Some pupils are concerned about the behaviour of a few others, especially in the playground. They say that adults do not always help to resolve disagreements fairly.
- The school has a good deal of accurate information about each pupil's attainment and progress. However, it is not pulled together to give an overview of performance or analysed to identify strengths or see where common weaknesses persist.
- Self-evaluation documents focus more on what has been done than the impact of the action taken.
- Plans for improvement include important aspects that need to be developed, but they are not specific enough and do not include many measurable indicators of success.
- The governing body has not always ensured that actions, such as the updating of policies, have been carried out in a timely manner. Not all governors know how teachers' pay increases are awarded.

The school has the following strengths

- The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. As a result, children are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Letters and the sounds they make are taught well. Every pupil in Year 1 reached the expected standard in the recent phonics screening check. This is a great improvement.
- Attendance is above average.
- Links with parents are developing well, especially through the school's new website.
- Teachers plan topics and themes that engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm.
- The governing body is strongly supportive of the school and its work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes and made further visits to classrooms to look at work in pupils' books. She attended an assembly and visited the playground at break and lunchtime.
- Discussions were held with the acting headteacher and other leaders, groups of teachers and a group of pupils. The inspector met with several members of the governing body and discussed the school's performance with a representative of the local authority.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including on the school's website, such as information about how the school protects pupils and keeps them safe, plans for future development, minutes of meetings of the governing body and information about pupils' attainment and progress.
- Account was taken of evidence from previous monitoring inspections.
- There were too few responses on the Parent View website to be viewed. The inspector took account of the views of 30 parents and 10 members of staff as expressed in their responses to a questionnaire.

Inspection team

Linda McGill, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's 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

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school's nursery class provides a mixture of full- and part-time places.
- The pupils come from the village of Shawbury and from the nearby Royal Air Force base, RAF Shawbury. The proportion of pupils who start or leave the school during the course of the year is greater than that in most schools.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is lower than that found nationally. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also lower than the national figure.
- The school receives pupil premium funding for two fifths of its pupils. The majority of these pupils are from service families. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is smaller than the national average. Five pupils are looked after children.
- A Sure Start Centre and clubs for pupils before and after school are provided on the school's site. These are not managed by the governing body and are inspected separately.
- Since the school was placed in special measures in March 2013, it has been visited three times by Her Majesty's Inspectors to check the progress that has been made. The school has been receiving support from a National Leader of Education who is the executive headteacher of St Peter's Primary School in Wem.
- The school's substantive headteacher has been on compassionate leave for the past year. An acting headteacher, who is headteacher of another school in the county, has led the school since November 2013. The deputy headteacher's post is currently vacant and is being covered in an acting capacity.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the impact that teaching has on pupils' achievement by:
 - making sure that the targets teachers set for all pupils and, in particular, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, in reading, writing and mathematics are challenging and reflect the progress pupils need to make to compensate for underachievement in the past
 - making sure that all teachers and teaching assistants are vigilant in lessons and do not allow pupils to spend time on tasks that they find easy.
- Improve the impact that leadership, management and governance have on the school's effectiveness by making sure that:
 - leaders summarise the information they have about pupils' attainment and progress in all year groups and analyse it to highlight areas of strength and relative weakness
 - senior leaders, subject leaders and governors use this information to draw up a plan for improvement that is sharply focused on what needs to be done to improve teaching and learning in order to help all pupils make good progress and close the gap on what is expected for their age
 - leaders' evaluations and reports to the governing body give a succinct overview of strengths and weaknesses and explain the impact that actions have had on teaching and pupils' achievement
 - the governing body's work is guided by a schedule that ensures that required actions, such as reviews of policies and discussions about the performance management and rewards for teachers, are carried out in a timely way.

- Improve pupils' behaviour at break and lunchtimes by:
 - making sure that all staff follow the school's agreed procedures for dealing with inappropriate behaviour and that disagreements are resolved in a way that pupils see as fair
 - seeking the views of pupils to find out what concerns them and what they think should be done.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The school's leaders and governors share the ambition for St Mary's to become a good school as quickly as possible. They know that there is still work to be done but are rightly pleased with the progress that has been made so far. Leaders' work has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching; inadequate teaching has been dealt with and the school started this academic year with a complement of enthusiastic, experienced practitioners. Teachers and support staff speak of the positive atmosphere and renewed energy that they feel throughout the school. Better teaching means that many pupils are making faster progress and are closing the gap on what is achieved by pupils nationally.
- Despite several changes in leadership at all levels over the past year, the emphasis on improvement has been successfully maintained. Senior and subject leaders have carried out a wide range of activities to evaluate the impact of actions and to identify strengths and weaknesses. For example, teachers have been observed in class and pupils' books have been scrutinised to look at the progress they are making and to assess the effectiveness of marking. Feedback to teachers is helping them to refine their practice.
- Teachers are provided with support and guidance that is tailored to their needs. As part of their performance management, teachers are given objectives against which their performance will be judged. Too often, however, the objectives relate to the completion of tasks rather than the impact that the action is intended to have.
- The school's self-evaluation of its effectiveness is largely descriptive rather than evaluative. This limits its usefulness as a tool to aid future planning. The school's plan for improvement is rightly targeted on continuing to raise achievement, but it is not specific enough and does not contain many targets that are readily measurable.
- Leaders ensure that the pupil premium is spent appropriately; for example, that it supports the particular needs of pupils from service families and that disadvantaged pupils do not underachieve. The small numbers of disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 last year achieved at least as well as all pupils nationally.
- The curriculum focuses on equipping pupils with the skills and knowledge they need in reading, writing and mathematics. Other subjects are linked together in an imaginative way that puts topics in context and allows pupils to apply what they have learned in different situations. The curriculum reinforces the school's values of respect for others and encouragement to do well, and prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. As a church school, pupils are taught the about the Christian faith but also about the other faiths, beliefs and traditions in Britain today. The promotion of equality of opportunity and tolerance are central to the school's approach. Achievement assemblies reward not only academic success but other attributes such as citizenship. Pupils learn about democracy as they vote for who should receive this award.
- Sport premium funding is used to enhance specialist teaching and to develop the skills of all teachers, as well as to increase the range of sporting activities available to pupils. Many pupils now attend clubs and events such as cross-country running and martial arts after school. Pupils spoke with pleasure of the opportunities that are available to them.
- The local authority has provided the school with effective support that has contributed to the improvements in teaching, particularly in English and mathematics. The local authority has also kept a careful check on the progress the school was making in dealing with areas of weakness. The National Leader of Education gives good support to the school's leaders, particularly in carrying out checks on the quality of teaching.
- The school's arrangements for protecting children and keeping them safe meet statutory requirements.

Staff are vigilant and any concerns are swiftly and systematically logged and followed up. Changes have been made to the access to the car park in order to keep pupils safe at the start and end of the day.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body has been unwavering in its support for the school through the several difficulties that have been faced over the past two years. Its members have not shied away from making tough decisions. Governors have taken a close interest in the school's progress out of special measures, attending in numbers to hear at first hand the feedback following monitoring inspections, carrying out monitoring activities for themselves and attending meetings of the local authority's monitoring group. This means that they have a secure understanding of what is going well and what needs attention. They know about the quality of teaching, the process of managing teachers' performance and how underperformance has been tackled. However, they have not checked that the objectives set for teachers are directly linked to the progress pupils make and not all governors have a secure understanding of how teachers are rewarded. In addition, governors are not provided with a sufficiently detailed overview of the performance of pupils in different year groups. This means that they cannot probe deeply or offer the specific challenge that is needed to speed progress still further. Governors have also not ensured that the full range of up-to-date policies and information about the curriculum is available on the school's website.
- Governors have held the school to account for the spending of the pupil premium funding and the additional sports funding, making sure that it has been used wisely.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. The large majority of pupils behave very well and are respectful of their teachers and one another. Parents and staff raised no concerns about pupils' behaviour or bullying and how it is managed. However, the pupils who spoke to the inspector reported that not everyone behaves as well as they should all of the time, and that this sometimes made them uncomfortable. In particular, they mentioned lunchtimes as a cause for concern. They said that not everyone shows respect to the Year 6 pupils who act as monitors in the dining hall, and that when disputes or arguments arise, they are not always sorted out fairly. Some of the younger pupils were wary of older boys.
- In lessons, pupils are enthusiastic learners. They work readily and happily with others or on their own. For example, pupils in Year 6 cooperated very well to organise how they would read aloud poems about the Second World War. The youngest children, who have just started in Nursery, worked together to complete a jigsaw without the support of an adult. Occasionally, a few pupils lose concentration and fidget, but low-level disruption in lessons is not common.
- Despite their concerns about behaviour, pupils were sure that bullying of any sort is a rare occurrence and they are confident to approach their teachers or teaching assistants should any happen. The pupils understand that name-calling is not acceptable but say that this does not happen often. They know that it is wrong to tease people who are different from themselves.
- Although a few pupils still present challenging behaviour at times, the school's efforts have brought about a marked change for the better in the behaviour of several others.
- During assembly, pupils behaved very well indeed. They listened intently to one another's contributions and applauded everyone's efforts. Pupils who addressed the audience, which included many parents, spoke or sang confidently.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. A good deal of success has been achieved in improving behaviour and in reinforcing the school's values, but a few pupils do not always feel entirely safe at school.
- Pupils are taught how to manage risks in their lives such as when crossing the road and when using the

internet. Pupils spoke highly about a session they had experienced on keeping safe online. They also valued a visit from a representative of the charity 'Childline' when they discussed what to do if they were worried and felt they had nowhere to turn.

- Attendance is above average and the proportion of pupils who are away from school too often is low. The attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and those who are looked after matches that of others in the school. Not all pupils arrive on time for school. 'Punctuality Pig' and 'Early Bird' are in the playground in the morning to encourage pupils and parents to be prompt.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is improving strongly. However, the impact of teaching over time on pupils' learning is not good, because last year not all pupils made the progress that they should have done. Weaker teaching in some classes had a negative impact on the achievement of all pupils, including those who have special educational needs, are disadvantaged or are more able. In contrast, in classes where teaching was strong almost all pupils made the progress that was expected. Many did better than this, making rapid progress and narrowing the gap on what is expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There is a positive atmosphere in lessons and expectations are high. Pupils are responding well to this and the current good rate of attendance shows that pupils do not want to miss school. Classrooms contain bright displays that celebrate pupils' achievements and support them in their tasks.
- Teachers make sure that lessons engage pupils' interest and most are quick to spot if any pupils finish quickly, lose concentration or begin to struggle. They give individual pupils reminders to keep them on their toes, reshape the lesson or give additional support as necessary. However, there are times when pupils spend time on tasks that they find easy. In discussion, pupils of different ages confirmed that this sometimes happens.
- Teaching assistants understand what they are expected to contribute in lessons and they work well in partnership with the teacher. They usually work effectively with groups of pupils on specific activities but do not always manage to keep all of the pupils focused on the task in hand.
- Marking and feedback to pupils have improved greatly. This is having a positive impact on learning. Pupils are given time to think about what they have learned and what they have found challenging, and to respond to any comments made by the teacher. Pupils' books show that they often make corrections or additions to their work and that this helps them with the next task.
- There have been improvements to the way reading is taught. All pupils read every day, sometimes with an adult and sometimes on their own. There is a good balance between reading for pleasure and reading with understanding. Pupils say that they enjoy reading. In some classes, routines such as a 'reading raffle' are having a positive impact on the number of times that pupils read at home with their parents. Better teaching of letters and the sounds they make in the lower years of the school means that pupils, including the more-able pupils, are making better progress in reading.
- Teachers set homework projects for pupils and post updates and messages on the school's website. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils presented their projects in assembly. They included computer presentations, art work and singing related to the topic they are studying in class. Events such as this are leading to a greater involvement of parents in the work that pupils do at home and school.
- Teachers track pupils' attainment and progress regularly. In the past, assessments of what pupils had learned were not always accurate and were sometimes over-optimistic. This has been rectified and staff have confidence in the information about the performance of individuals and groups of pupils.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The variations in teaching noted above mean that not all pupils achieved as well as they should have done over the course of last year. Nevertheless, the results of tests and assessments taken by pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2014 were much better than in 2013. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected

Level 4 in all three of reading, writing and mathematics matched the proportion seen nationally. This was a substantial improvement. In mathematics, just under half of the pupils attained the higher Level 5, but few pupils attained higher levels in reading and writing.

- Many of the Year 6 pupils made rapid progress over the year and made up for lost ground in the past. In writing, almost all of the pupils made the progress that is expected of them from their starting points at the end of Year 2. In contrast, too few pupils made the progress that is expected in reading. In mathematics, pupils made broadly average progress.
- In 2013, the attainment of the small number of disadvantaged pupils was about a term behind that of other pupils, but a year behind all pupils nationally. Their progress also lagged well behind pupils nationally. There was a very small number of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 this year, which makes comparisons with national figures statistically unreliable. There was no gap between their attainment and that of other pupils in the school. They made the progress that is expected nationally.
- There were wide variations in the progress made by more-able pupils. All made at least the progress they should in writing, almost all made expected progress in mathematics but too few made the progress that is expected in reading. The school has questioned the reliability of the assessments of their starting points, and can show that, recently, in line with other more-able pupils across the school, this group of pupils is making progress at least at the rate that is expected.
- Although the attainment of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is generally lower than that of other pupils, across the school almost all are making the progress that is expected of them. However, very few are doing better than this and so are not closing the gap on what is expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Children who are looked after are achieving well.
- The school's assessments show that, across the year groups, pupils' progress is speeding up. However, this is not yet happening uniformly in all classes and in all subjects.

The early years provision

is good

- Children start in the Nursery or Reception class with skills, knowledge and dispositions that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress across all areas of learning. The proportion that attained a good level of development by the start of Year 1 this year was much greater than last year, and above local and national averages. In particular, several of the children who exceeded what is expected for their age in reading were observed in the Year 1 class reading accurately and fluently, and with understanding.
- There is a calm and supportive atmosphere in the Nursery and Reception classes that enables children to settle quickly, feel safe, make new friends and begin to learn. Children who have recently joined the Nursery class played and worked happily together and those in Reception shared equipment and collaborated well; for example, when writing out words or working out who was the tallest or shortest in the class.
- Teaching is good. Adults know when to intervene in children's play in order to move learning on. For example, two boys were playing contentedly but in silence in the home corner in the Nursery class. An adult joined them and initiated conversation. The boys then began to describe what they were doing and thinking, and said what they might do next. The adult added new words to help them with their descriptions, which the boys repeated.
- Assessments of what children already know and can do are used to decide what the next steps should be. They are also used to inform decisions about whether additional support for individual children's particular needs is required; for example, speech and language therapy. Those who have the potential to achieve highly are also quickly identified and activities are adapted for them to make sure they are sufficiently challenged.
- Parents are encouraged to contribute their knowledge of what children know and can do out of school. The 'proud cloud' is a place where parents write especially noteworthy information, such as things that children have done or said for the first time. This is then displayed for all to see.

- The staff work well together across the two classes and keep provision under review. Steps are being taken to enhance the learning potential of the outdoor area as a result of their evaluations of where improvement is needed.

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	123524
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	447142

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Humphreys
Headteacher	Sally Johnson (substantive) Mark Davies (acting)
Date of previous school inspection	20-21 March 2013
Telephone number	01939 250323
Fax number	01939 250944
Email address	admin@shawburystmarys.co.uk

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