

Short Wood Primary School

Limekiln Lane, Wellington, Telford, TF1 2JA

Inspection dates 11–12 March 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school has improved since the last inspection. This is because strong senior leadership has had a very positive impact on the quality of teaching.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and standards are rising. The pupils who left Year 6 in 2014 had made particularly rapid progress in reading and mathematics.
- The curriculum is well planned and creative, and the school makes very effective use of its excellent outdoor facilities.
- Outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures pupils are growing up in a culture of tolerance for different backgrounds and respect for each other.
- The school has a positive and prominent place at the heart of the local community.
- Teaching is good because the senior leaders and others with specific responsibilities have strong systems for checking on teachers' work. They provide high-quality guidance and support, and extra training where needed.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They have tremendous pride in their work and the school. The staff effectively ensure pupils' safety.
- The governing body has worked well to improve its effectiveness since the last inspection. The governors make excellent use of their skills and knowledge to support and challenge the school's leaders.
- Good teaching of children in the Nursery and Reception classes gives them a positive start to their schooling.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always provide lesson activities that challenge pupils sufficiently.
- The marking of pupils' written work does not always make clear how they can improve it.
- Teachers do not always help pupils understand exactly what they are expected to learn when completing a piece of written work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 20 lessons. A number of lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings and discussions with the headteacher, members of the governing body, staff, pupils and parents.
- Inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, some with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Several pupils read to the inspectors.
- Inspectors took account of 20 responses to the online parent survey, Parent View. The inspectors also talked to parents and took account of 58 questionnaires completed by staff.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents produced by the school, including data on pupils' progress and attainment, procedures for safeguarding, the school's own evaluations of its work, reports to the governing body and minutes of its meetings, and the action plans for raising attainment.

Inspection team

Geof Timms, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Karen OKeefe

Additional Inspector

Stephen Palmer

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Short Wood Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is part of the Wrekin Cooperative Learning Trust with another school and a range of local community organisations.
- A well-above-average proportion of the pupils, over half of the school, are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A well-above-average proportion speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- Children in the early years attend the Nursery class on a part-time basis or one of the three Reception classes on a full-time basis.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club each day.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching and achievement, particularly in writing, by:
 - ensuring that pupils know exactly what they are aiming for in written work
 - providing written and verbal feedback to pupils that makes clear precisely what they need to do to improve their work
 - helping more of the most-able pupils to reach the highest possible levels through consistently challenging activities.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders hold teachers firmly to account for the achievement of their pupils. Since the last inspection they have created a climate where teaching and learning are always expected to be good. Because of this, standards are rising rapidly and pupils behave well.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers form a very effective senior leadership team. They delegate tasks and responsibilities well and all staff are clear about their roles. Middle leadership, including subject leadership, is good and has improved through training and opportunities for staff to work together and share good practice.
- Leaders use good systems for checking teachers' performance. Teachers who are new to the school, or who may have recently qualified, are very well supported and rapidly become important members of the team. If extra challenge or support is needed it is quickly provided. Extra training has had a very positive impact on, for example, the teaching of mathematics.
- The system used for recording and tracking pupils' progress is very detailed and been used as a good model by other schools. Pupils' learning is regularly discussed between teachers and a senior leader. This enables any underachievement to be identified and rapidly tackled through timely support. It also ensures leaders have a clear knowledge of how well different groups, such as those at an early stage of speaking English, are performing.
- The local authority has provided very effective support and challenge since the last inspection. A range of training has been very successful in helping the school to make the necessary improvements to leadership and governance.
- The work done to secure pupils' appreciation of British values is a major strength of the school. Pupils understand the importance of showing tolerance and respect for each other. They talk openly about this and about how well those from a range of different communities get on together in school. Staff have promoted pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development outstandingly well to create a highly positive culture and ethos where all groups have an equal chance to succeed without discrimination. This work is supported by the school's role in the cooperative trust, which has helped cement its place at the heart of the community.
- The school has developed a good, creative curriculum, which provides useful links between subjects. This enables pupils to use and extend their skills in different ways. The school makes very good and imaginative use of the extensive outdoor facilities. There is a good range of additional activities and after-school clubs.
- The use of extra funding for disadvantaged pupils is very well managed by a senior leader. The decision to use qualified teachers to provide expert support has proved very successful. The impact of the funding money is checked robustly and resources are used successfully to improve pupils' achievement.
- The school has used the extra money for physical education and sport very efficiently. The joint appointment of coaching staff across the school has had a good impact on pupils' physical well-being and teachers' expertise. Pupils now have more opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities in school and in the local community. Participation has risen and the school's teams are often very successful.
- Good leadership of the early years ensures that children are well prepared for the learning they will encounter further up the school.
- The school has comprehensive plans for raising attainment. They are regularly updated, detailed and contain appropriate priorities, based on accurate and honest evaluations. All leaders and governors share a clear ambition to continue improving the school. Because of this, it has a good capacity to improve still

further.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body has worked successfully since the last inspection to improve the effectiveness of its work and this is now good. The governors have a higher profile in the school and more impact on checking the success of its work. They carry out their statutory duties appropriately. Governors have taken part in a good range of training, including the preparation of pupils for life in modern Britain.
- Governors check the school's work through well-planned visits, such as that recently carried out to see the teaching of reading. They know how good teaching is, check how well leaders are improving its quality and impact, and make sure decisions about teachers' pay increases are linked to performance and responsibilities.
- Governors track finances well and make excellent use of their expertise when making decisions such as that around purchasing new technology. They lead the school in deciding how to spend additional money, such as that to support disadvantaged pupils. They have a clear understanding of the impact of their decisions.
- Together with leaders, governors ensure that all safeguarding requirements are fully met and the school's related procedures are effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They talk positively about others' behaviour and how it rarely has a negative impact on their learning or in the playground. Pupils make many friends and demonstrate high levels of tolerance and respect for others. These positive attitudes are illustrated through the work of the 'charity champions' who voluntarily raise large amounts of money for a wide range of causes.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and when moving around the school. Lunchtimes and playtimes are pleasant occasions with pupils playing together well. In assembly they are quiet and respectful, and listen to each other and to adults politely.
- Pupils talk enthusiastically about lessons, their work and other aspects of school life. All those spoken to said they liked school a lot. One, expressing the views of many, said one of the best things about the school was the teachers because 'they sort out any problems'.
- Pupils show respect for the learning environment. They do not drop litter and they take pride in their work, which is very carefully and neatly presented. They are clearly very proud to be 'Short Woodies'.
- Pupils' response to the school's expectations of their behaviour and social development is consistently good. They have good opportunities to take responsibility, such as on the school council. The atmosphere in the breakfast and after-school clubs is calm and productive.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All parents who responded to the online questionnaire said their children are safe and happy at school and would recommend the school to other parents. Staff work hard to ensure pupils' safety. In areas such as the 'mud kitchen', or the 'Squirrel School' and forest school sites, supervision is good and the staff assess risks well. Pupils have positive attitudes to keeping themselves safe.
- Pupils have a suitable understanding of what constitutes bullying and how to deal with it. They are very positive about the lack of any name-calling or racist bullying. They know how to keep themselves safe when using computers. They are aware of possible dangers from, for example, strangers, and are confident there are adults in school who they can trust and would talk to if they had any worries.
- Attendance is average. Most families ensure their children attend school regularly and are punctual. The school deals with any significant persistent absence appropriately. The school does all it can to work with families who take children abroad for extended visits to stop the practice.

The quality of teaching is good

- Improving the quality of teaching has been a major focus since the last inspection. This has been done successfully through effective recruitment and extra training. Because of this, pupils' progress is good and standards are rising.
- Teachers and teaching assistants form a good, effective team and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. In particular, the help and guidance they provide for disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has a very positive impact on their progress.
- The teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy. In addition, teachers are good at giving pupils opportunities to use and practise these skills in other subjects such as geography or science. A major focus is the development of pupils' language skills. This is because a high proportion of pupils join the school at an early stage of learning English.
- The school's tracking system provides clear information about pupils' progress. Teachers use this well to group pupils and to provide work that challenges them. Just occasionally, the most-able pupils are given work that is too easy for them before they reach the right level of challenge or extension work. Teachers have high expectations of the quantity and quality of pupils' work and this is evident in their books.
- Teachers ask questions skilfully to check pupils' understanding. They often explain clearly to pupils what is expected, especially in mathematics. Recent staff training has improved their understanding of how to develop pupils' skills in mathematics through reasoning and problem solving. However, they are less clear about exactly what they expect when pupils are writing. As a result, pupils are not always sure about how to proceed.
- The marking of pupils' work is often good and makes clear exactly how they can improve or extend their learning. Pupils talk about how well they understand the 'closing the gap' system and have time to respond to the teachers' comments and feedback. Even so, at times the marking of pupils' written work is not precise enough to show them exactly what they need to do to improve their work.

The achievement of pupils is good

- All groups of current pupils throughout the school are making at least good progress. Achievement has improved since the last inspection and many more pupils are now reaching the levels expected for their age as standards rise. This good achievement is evident in the data showing progress throughout the school and the work in pupils' books.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 has been below average in reading, writing and mathematics for some time. The 2014 data show that pupils did better than in previous years, although standards in reading, writing and mathematics remained below average. However, more pupils than was the case nationally made the expected progress from Year 2 to Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. In mathematics and reading, an above-average proportion of the pupils made more than the expected progress.
- Recent improvements to the quality of teaching in mathematics have had a positive impact on standards. Pupils enjoy the subject and particularly talk about how they enjoy solving problems. They have a good understanding of a range of mathematical concepts.
- Standards in the 2014 national tests at the end of Year 2 were broadly average, following a consistent three-year rise. Current Year 2 pupils are on track to reach higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good progress, given their starting points.
- The results of the Year 1 check on pupils' skills in phonics (how sounds in words are shown by different letter combinations) were above average in 2014, and over three quarters of the pupils reached or exceeded the expected level. Pupils develop into good readers with an interest in a range of books.
- The school's strong focus on building pupils' speaking and listening skills clearly helps develop their

vocabulary, especially for those at an early stage of learning English. Their improving speaking skills have a positive impact on their progress in literacy and numeracy, which is good throughout the school. Achievement in writing has improved. Pupils also achieve well in other subjects such as art and design, design and technology, history and science.

- The school works well with its disadvantaged pupils to ensure they make similarly good progress to their classmates. The extra funding provides additional resources and adult support. In 2014, these pupils in Year 6 were a year or more behind other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics, and between one and two terms behind their classmates in these subjects. However, the gaps narrowed from the previous year and the school's current data shows that they are narrowing further. For some younger pupils, gaps have been eliminated altogether.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The largest minority group, from a Pakistani heritage, make better progress than similar pupils nationally. Those from Eastern Europe often make exceptionally good progress, especially in reading and writing.
- Throughout the school, the most-able pupils make at least the expected progress. The school is aware that it is not yet doing enough to ensure that more reach the highest possible levels in their work.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the good teaching they receive and the effective additional help the school provides. Gaps in their knowledge and skills are steadily being reduced in all classes and year groups.

The early years provision

is good

- The Nursery and three Reception classes are led and managed well. Teachers and other adults plan activities well and use their time effectively. This adds greatly to the children's learning. It also ensures children, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, or who are at an early stage of learning English, are well prepared for their work in Year 1.
- The school makes accurate assessments of children's attainment when they start at the school. This is ensured through good checks between staff within the school and externally. Children enter the early years with skills and experiences that are below those typical for their age, especially in language and communication. The assessments and current data confirm that children make good progress.
- Staff use the well-equipped outdoor areas very effectively to support children's learning. There are strong links with parents. During the inspection a high number of parents spent part of the morning undertaking mathematical work with their children. This gave them a clear insight into the work of the school and also helped with children's language development.
- Teaching is good. Adults focus on providing practical activities and experiences through which language can be developed. At the end of each week children reflect on and discuss their learning with adults and decide what aspects or examples of their work should be kept in their learning record books. Other schools have used these activities as examples of good practice.
- Children behave well, including when outside or in a different environment such as in assembly. They use resources, such as computers, carefully and play and work together well. The adults all promote children's safety through careful supervision.

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	104939
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	453468

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	511
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reg Snell
Headteacher	Susan Harris
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2013
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