

Short Heath Junior School

Pennine Way, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV12 4DS

Inspection dates 22–23 April 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Turbulence in leadership and teaching has been a major barrier in preventing senior leaders and governors in securing good teaching. Consequently, pupils do not make consistently good progress, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils' basic skills in numeracy and literacy are not progressively developed well enough as they go through the school. This is because teachers' subject knowledge, particularly in mathematics, is not good enough.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations about what pupils, particularly the most able, can achieve.
- The quality of marking varies. It does not always provide clear guidance for pupils as to how they can improve their work.
- Middle leaders are in the early stages of learning about their roles and responsibilities. Therefore, they do not yet fully contribute in helping to raise standards in their subjects.
- Even though the school is working closely with parents to improve attendance, this is not yet having the desired impact on increasing the attendance of those pupils who are persistently absent.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well. They are very polite and courteous.
- Pupils feel safe and secure.
- The school's work is effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Teaching assistants support pupils' learning well.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their individual starting points.
- School leaders have been effective in closing the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school in the different year groups.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils’ learning in all classes and in small groups. The interim head of school and the executive headteacher observed all of them jointly with the inspection team.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation including: minutes of governing body meetings; information about pupils’ progress; the school’s evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses; and documents relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read. They looked at a range of work in all year groups with the senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with key staff, pupils, two governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team took account of the 27 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the school’s own survey from parents. They also considered responses from 19 members of staff.

Inspection team

Sharona Semlali, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Cavill

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized school.
- Since the previous inspection, there was an acting head of school in the spring and summer term of 2014. In September 2014, the substantive head of school returned and left in February 2015. The assistant headteacher is now the interim head of school until a substantive head of school is appointed.
- There has been a significant change in the teaching staff.
- In April 2006, the school was federated with Rosedale Church of England Infant School and Lane Head Nursery School. They share the same governing body. The other two schools have a head of school and the executive headteacher oversees all schools in the federation.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average. This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are in the care of the local authority.
- 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.
- The school operates a before- and after-school club on site for all pupils in the federation from Reception to Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is typically good or outstanding by:
 - ensuring that teachers have only the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially the most able
 - developing a consistent approach for marking pupils' work so that they fully understand how to improve it
 - developing teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics.
- Raise achievement, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that pupils are secure in their basic skills in literacy and numeracy as they move through the school.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing the roles of the middle leaders so that they can check and raise standards in their areas of responsibility
 - continuing to work with parents to improve attendance for those pupils who are persistently absent.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- The recent appointment of the interim head of school has strengthened the capacity at the senior level. However, she has not been in place long enough to secure rapid improvements overtime. As a result, the quality of teaching requires improvement and not enough pupils make consistently good progress, particularly in mathematics. This is why leadership and management require improvement.
- Senior leaders and governors have eradicated all inadequate teaching. Actions taken by senior leaders to address weak teaching include team teaching, coaching, getting teachers to observe best practice across the federation and implementing support plans. Recently, systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning have become more rigorous.
- Middle leaders are fairly new in their roles. They are at the early stages of learning about what is expected of them. Senior leaders have started the process of supporting them with this. However, it is too soon to see any impact of their work.
- Senior leaders are keeping much closer checks on pupils' progress, particularly those in vulnerable circumstances and those who have additional needs. They use the information well to ensure that they get the right support needed. As a result, these pupils now make good progress.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively. Its use has successfully closed the gaps between those eligible for the funding and others in the school in all of the different year groups. The governing body monitors the impact of the spending regularly. This is an example of the school's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity. The school does not tolerate any form of discrimination.
- The additional primary school physical education and sport funding is spent well. This has helped to improve teachers' skills in this subject and ensures that the funding is sustainable. For example, the school no longer needs any more qualified coaches to teach lessons in physical education as teachers can do this themselves. More pupils are confident in taking part in competitive sports and an increased proportion of pupils attend the after-school clubs.
- The curriculum focuses well on preparing its pupils for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils learn to understand the rule of democracy as they elect who they want onto the pupil leadership team. The rule of law is learnt through their own Golden Rules and behaviour systems. All topics planned include a focus on modern Britain.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. This is clearly seen in the way that pupils behave and work collaboratively during lessons. Pupils have a good understanding about other faiths and religions. The curriculum is planned well. However, it is not always taught effectively, especially in mathematics, and it does not always meet the needs of the most-able pupils.
- School leaders have used a wide range of options in working with parents to improve the attendance of those pupils who are persistently absent. This includes giving them fines. Even so, the attendance of these pupils has not yet improved.
- Senior leaders ensure that relationships are fostered well across the federation. They share and utilise the expertise of staff well. This is helping to improve the quality of teaching.
- The local authority has helped the school in ensuring that its assessments are accurate. It continues to support them with further improvements in the school.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements. The school ensures that its pupils remain safe.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have not been afraid of making tough decisions needed to address any underperformance in leadership and in teaching. Governors monitor the school's work closely. The link governors visit the school regularly, analyse the school's data and produce detailed reports to the governing body. This helps to inform the governing body about the quality of teaching in all classes and how much progress is being made by pupils. In all meetings, governors ask challenging questions and hold leaders to account.
 - The governing body ensures that any salary increase is linked to pupil progress. Governors make the final decision in the process as to whether teachers will be rewarded or not.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons and around the school, pupils behave well. Their attitudes towards learning are consistently positive. This is having an increasingly strong impact on pupils' achievements.
- Pupils arrive at lessons promptly and are ready to learn. They are attentive in lessons and respond well to staffs' instructions. Low-level disruption is rare.
- Behaviour logs and school records confirm that incidents of bad behaviour are very few and are analysed well by school leaders.
- Pupils generally present their work well. Their books are well cared for and the environment is respected around the school. Those with additional behaviour needs are managed well.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities such as 'go buddies' who support others to play different games at play times and being representatives on the pupil leadership team. They feel fully involved with the school and take on their roles with pride.
- Attendance has remained the same as it was last year, which is broadly average. However, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has increased. School leaders recognise this and are trying to address this.
- The breakfast club provides a safe and secure environment for pupils across the federation.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff ensure that pupils understand how to keep themselves safe around the school and when using the internet. Pupils are aware of whom to talk to if they feel unsafe, and are confident that issues will be resolved quickly.
- Leaders ensure that there is no discrimination and this is evident in the way pupils welcome those from different backgrounds.
- Pupils say that the school has successfully ensured that there is no bullying. They fully understand the different types of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying. Inappropriate name-calling of any type is seldom heard and is always challenged.
- Risk assessments and staff training on keeping pupils safe are up to date.
- Parents, pupils and staff are positive that the school keeps its pupils safe and that behaviour is good.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because pupils' progress over time has not been consistently good, particularly in mathematics.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of the quality and quantity of work to be produced by pupils. At times, expectations for the most-able pupils are not high enough. This limits the amount of progress they make. However, expectations are consistently high for all pupils in Year 6 and they produce a very good standard of work.
- Pupils' work shows that some of the basic skills in writing, such as punctuation, are not always being addressed from an early stage. As a result, pupils continue with some of these misconceptions higher up in the school. The quality of marking is inconsistent throughout the school. Where it is at its best, pupils make rapid progress because they are given clear guidance on how they can improve their learning. This is not the case in all classes. Where work is marked well, pupils make detailed responses to their teacher's comments and act on the advice given. However, this is not yet consistent.
- Where teachers have good knowledge of their subjects, pupils make better progress. However, some teachers do not have good subject knowledge in mathematics, which limits opportunities for pupils to extend their thinking and develop their basic skills in this subject. This is particularly the case for the most-able pupils. This impedes their progress.
- The teaching of reading has improved. Reading is promoted well in lessons. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their reading skills, such as skimming and scanning newspaper reports in Year 5. Pupils read widely and often, although not enough pupils are making good progress.
- Teaching assistants support pupils from all groups well. The extra support they give to those that have special educational needs is helping them to make good progress.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils' progress from their individual starting points has not been consistently good and has not rapidly improved over time. This is especially the case in mathematics, where the proportion of pupils making good progress is not high enough.
- In 2014, standards at the end of Year 6 dipped. They were significantly below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's data and work in pupils' books show that pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to do much better this year.
- Pupils currently at the school are making at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is improving in mathematics but not as quickly as in reading and writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve particularly well. They make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6, in 2014 was significantly below average. The most-able pupils in the school currently are not being challenged enough with work that accelerates their learning. Their progress requires improvement.
- School leaders have been successful in closing the gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils, both at the school and nationally. This follows unexpected widening gaps in 2014, where, in mathematics, disadvantaged pupils were just under a year behind others in the school and almost six terms behind others nationally. In reading and writing, disadvantaged pupils were just over three terms behind others in the school and around four terms behind others nationally. The rate of progress for disadvantaged pupils in 2014 was slower compared to that of all other pupils. The gaps are now closed in all year groups in the school.

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	104188
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	453823

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Foster
Executive Headteacher	Cathy Draper
Interim Head of School	Sarah Harris
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 April 2013
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