

Mary Webb School and Science College

Pontesbury, Shrewsbury, SY5 0TG

Inspection dates 12–13 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Outstanding leadership has been key in bringing about significant improvement in teaching and students' achievement since the last inspection.
- From their different starting points, students make outstanding progress in mathematics and humanities. In English and other subjects, students are now achieving well.
- Students with special educational needs make good progress and those who are eligible for pupil premium funding make outstanding progress.
- Teaching is good and much is outstanding. Teachers' expertise and enthusiasm motivate students to learn.
- The school's values are evident in the highly positive relationships between staff, students, parents and governors. Students behave well and are keen to learn.
- The school's work to keep students safe is outstanding.
- The school is very successful at developing the skills of its subject and other leaders through the support of senior leaders and local networks.
- Governors are highly effective at holding leaders to account. They have an excellent understanding of what is working well and what needs to improve. They work closely with leaders to make sure improvement initiatives are having an impact.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some lessons, teachers miss opportunities to check students' learning through effective questioning. This means they do not always have a clear picture of where students might be falling behind and where they could be challenged further.
- Some teachers do not always give students meaningful feedback about their work that challenges them to improve it.
- Not all teachers check that students improve their work by following the advice teachers give them through marking.

Information about this inspection

- Year 10 and Year 11 students were taking some examinations during the inspection.
- Inspectors visited 33 lessons or parts of lessons. Several lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors looked at students’ work in lessons and in a separate work sample.
- Inspectors spoke with students during lessons, at break times and at lunchtime. They also met with groups of students and listened to some students reading.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers responsible for subject areas.
- The lead inspector held discussions with the Chair and two members of the Governing Body and also met with a representative of the local authority.
- The 109 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account, together with the school’s survey of parents’ views and written responses received during the inspection. Inspectors also considered the views expressed in the 55 questionnaires returned by school staff.
- Inspectors examined a number of documents, including the school’s self-evaluation, records of behaviour and attendance, information on students’ current progress, and documentation relating to governance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Mary Myatt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Christopher Davies	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Macfarlane	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Mary Webb School and Science College is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are White British.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- A small number of students follow part-time courses at County Training in Shrewsbury.
- The school shares building space with Severndale Special School, which is inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of questioning and feedback by ensuring that:
 - the best practice in English and humanities is shared in all subjects so that teachers' questions are used to check understanding
 - all teachers give students clear advice when marking their work, so that students always know what they need to do to improve
 - teachers in all subjects check that students act on the advice they are given.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher provides exceptionally strong leadership. Working closely with the senior leadership team, he has ensured that a culture of improving outcomes for all students is understood and acted on by leaders at all levels. As a result of leaders' relentless efforts to improve teaching and the quality of the curriculum, there has been a very large rise in students' achievement since the last inspection, particularly in mathematics. Standards in physical education and English are also improving. In English, standards are on track to reach those in mathematics. Additional staffing, including the deployment of higher level teaching assistants, has contributed to the rise in standards.
- Senior leaders' careful monitoring means that they have an accurate picture of teaching and learning. This was confirmed during the inspection. There are highly developed structures and cycles for departmental priorities for improvement. Formal and informal discussions mean that any underachievement is tackled immediately.
- Standards in mathematics are much higher than they were at the time of the last inspection. Careful planning to secure fluency and reasoning, and skills in problem solving, are now embedded in all lessons. In addition, there are opportunities for students to develop their numeracy skills through wider curriculum opportunities and planned sessions in tutorials. As a result, all students enjoy mathematics and students in all years are making outstanding progress in this subject.
- Leaders correctly identified English as a priority for improvement. Additional teachers in English, careful planning to address the gaps for students currently in Key Stage 4 and a whole-school programme for additional literacy in extended tutorials mean that teaching in English is now good. As a result, standards for students currently in the school have improved.
- Leaders throughout the school check data about students' achievement very carefully. As a result, teachers understand how well their students are doing and what the next steps in their learning should be. Students in danger of falling behind are quickly identified and given immediate support. For example, the mathematics department identified a group of students with low prior attainment in Year 7 and arranged sessions for them to work with able mathematicians in Year 9. As a result, these students are making better progress and they are increasingly confident in this subject.
- Considerable effort has been put into developing literacy across the school. All subject and other leaders are very conscious of the importance of students speaking and writing accurately in their subjects. The school has made reading for pleasure a priority and has provided extra time in tutorials for extended reading twice a week. This is being monitored by the governing body, which has noted students' exceptional levels of engagement.
- Effort has also been directed at developing a programme for securing numeracy across the school. Teachers have interesting resources to use with students during tutorials. These are designed to develop students' numeracy skills through problem solving and mathematical reasoning. Tutors have been supported with training, and students are very enthusiastic about working on these challenges.
- Professional development opportunities are closely matched to school priorities. Checks on teachers' performance are rigorous. Decisions about promotion and pay are based on the impact of teaching on students' progress. The school uses in-school expertise, local networks and wider sources of support to improve the quality of teaching and share good practice. Members of the governing body have monitored the additional support for those subjects, such as English and physical education, which needed to improve.
- The school uses pupil premium funding well. This additional funding for disadvantaged students has been used for additional staff to work with students as they leave their primary schools, mentoring, and books to read over the summer. Close monitoring of the outcomes for disadvantaged students shows that these initiatives have proved successful and that these students now achieve exceptionally well.

- Maintaining the achievement of students with special education needs has remained a priority. They have made good progress in previous years and close monitoring of their progress and carefully directed support have ensured that they continue to do so.
- The curriculum at Key Stage 3 has been restructured to reflect the expectations of the new National Curriculum and to prepare students for the changes at Key Stage 4. The range of subjects and topics covered in all years is good. Students have opportunities to explore science through extended projects and involvement in national projects. Students participate in regional and national events, including the CREST Awards, the National Science and Engineering Fair, and National Science and Engineering Week.
- There are many wider curriculum opportunities, through business enterprise days and regular cross-curriculum days. Trips to places such as Liverpool Slavery Museum, the Centre for Alternative Technology at Machynlleth and local universities take place throughout the year. Students welcome the chance to take part in school plays, and to visit the theatre and art exhibitions. Residential opportunities include a camp for students in Year 7. There are visits to the trenches in France, ski slopes in Italy and an annual specialist college trip that has taken in the science and mathematics of London and Paris. There are also opportunities for students to represent the school in a range of sporting activities. Many students become involved in officiating at matches and coaching. Information about what is taught is published on the school website.
- The school provides many opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Curriculum planning recognises local, regional and global differences. Students encounter different cultures and beliefs, and they understand the importance of respecting different faiths and beliefs. The curriculum promotes fundamental British values of democracy and respect, and has explored factors that might lead to extremism. As a result, students are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Advice and careers guidance throughout the school are good. The advice helps students to make informed choices about their next steps. The school makes good use of former students visiting to talk about their careers. Support for students when they leave the school, is very effective. As a result, when compared to national figures, an above-average proportion of students are in full-time education, employment and apprenticeships.
- Arrangements for transition from the primary schools are outstanding. The school's expertise in science is used to run specialist days in primary schools and this work has been recognised nationally. The school also provides a reading book for every pupil in Year 6 before they join the school. This provides an effective way of bridging between the schools and is highly valued by parents and students.
- The school makes sure that all students have the same opportunities to take part in school activities. The school's success in achieving a culture of respect means that discrimination of any kind is tackled robustly.
- All teaching assistants are deployed carefully and have been well trained. This means that they provide high-quality support and challenge for students.
- The arrangements for safeguarding students are exemplary. The school's systems for ensuring that students are safe and secure are meticulously implemented and rigorously checked. The school monitors very closely the progress, attendance and behaviour of students attending alternative provision. As a result, all groups of students feel very safe, as parents confirm.
- The school has commissioned support from the local authority and independent consultants and this has contributed to the rise in standards.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very well informed. Members bring a wide range of experience and hold leaders to account for students' achievement. For example, they have maintained a close overview of improving standards in English and physical education.
 - Governors know how well the school performs in relation to other schools. They have an accurate view of the impact of the pupil premium funding, and the outcomes for disadvantaged students provide evidence for this. They are closely involved in the life of the school, make regular visits to the school

and have a cycle of monitoring. As a result, they are well informed about standards in the school.

- Governors ensure that the performance management of staff is robust and that salary progression is linked to performance. They have worked effectively with senior leaders to manage the school's finances. Governors make sure that the schools' arrangements for keeping students safe and secure are meticulously implemented. They take part in regular training to support their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. It reflects the high expectations and levels of courtesy between staff and students. Behaviour in lessons is good and often outstanding. Low-level disruption is rare. Students arrive punctually to lessons and settle quickly to their work.
- Behaviour around the school is good. Students are polite and courteous to one another at break and lunchtimes. Interactions with students from the Severndale Special School are exceptionally positive. This shows the school's underlying culture of tolerance and mutual respect. The environment is well cared for and students do not drop litter. Students understand and appreciate the school's systems of rewards for good behaviour.
- The work in most lessons is interesting and encourages students to think hard. As a result, they are keen to learn. Their levels of engagement and concentration are impressive. In a small number of lessons, where they are not expected to work hard, students sometimes lose interest.
- Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and there are many opportunities for them to contribute to the life of the school. There is an active student council, students are involved in interviews for new members of staff and they get involved in community activities. For example, students and staff have worked with the local community to raise funds to keep a local landmark safe for wildlife.
- Fixed-term exclusions have fallen and are below average. There have been two permanent exclusions in the last three years.
- Attendance is higher than the national average for the school as a whole. Slightly lower attendance for disadvantaged students has been addressed and is now in line with other students. This has been brought about by working closely with parents.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. This includes extensive risk assessments for trips and procedures for recruiting staff. There are robust procedures for ensuring that visitors to the school are suitable. External speakers to assemblies, for example, are checked and monitored as appropriate.
- Pastoral staff and those with responsibility for disabled students and those who have special educational needs look after students exceptionally well.
- There are very strong relationships between students and teachers. Students say they are able to seek help from a wide variety of staff should they need it.
- Students say they feel safe and all parents who responded through Parent View agree. Several parents contacted the team to praise the work of the school in supporting their children through difficult times.
- The school has provided a wide-ranging programme of education for students on all aspects of safeguarding, including e-safety, extremism and sexual health. Students know that homophobic and racist bullying are totally unacceptable and some impressive examples were seen in students' work on the importance of challenging stereotypes.
- The school works very closely with County Training to check the attendance, behaviour and safety and

progress for the small number of students who attend the off-site provision.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and much is outstanding. Teachers create positive, constructive relationships. High expectations mean that all students are keen to learn. As a result, students make good progress from their starting points. In mathematics and humanities, their progress is outstanding.
- Teaching in English is good and some is outstanding. From a low base, due to previously weak teaching in Key Stage 3, the students currently in Year 11 are now on track to reach the demanding targets set for them. The achievement of students in Year 10 is good and, at Key Stage 3, it is outstanding. This is because leaders at all levels have addressed both the gaps in students' skills and knowledge and have made sure that the quality of teaching has improved at Key Stage 3.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and, in most lessons, provide clear explanations of new material and support students in addressing misconceptions. They use a wide range of resources to ensure that lessons are interesting and challenging for all students.
- Teachers have a wide range of target and assessment information available to them. They carefully plan learning that challenges all abilities and groups, including disadvantaged students, disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and the most able. Experienced and well-qualified support staff ably assist teachers by working in the classroom with individual students and with small groups to enable all to achieve well.
- All subjects contribute to literacy and the school has developed much excellent practice; for instance, literacy in mathematics. In this subject, students are expected to explain their reasoning, using technical terms correctly. They are encouraged to debate and challenge one another's ideas. There were also good examples of extended writing and reading for pleasure seen during the inspection.
- Many teachers use questions to probe students' understanding and to ensure that their new knowledge and skills are secure. During the inspection, teachers asked searching follow-up questions and insisted that students thought long and hard about them. Excellent examples of this were seen in history, art, mathematics and English. However, in some lessons, teachers' questioning of students is too general and does not expect them to think hard or probe their understanding of the subject. In these lessons, students are not always given the opportunity to answer questions that allow them to explain more fully what they know.
- Work in students' books and folders show that the school has made a determined effort to ensure that the policy on marking and feedback is adhered to in every subject. Examples of outstanding practice were seen in English books, where students responded thoughtfully to teachers' suggestions for improvement. Further excellent examples were seen in history and art. Students value opportunities to improve their work. In some subjects, however, comments did not expect students to think hard or do additional work. Not all teachers check that students act on the advice they are given through marking and this means that students do not make the progress they should.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school in Year 7 with attainment that is above average. The proportion of students who leave the school with five GCSE grades at A* to C including English and mathematics was above the national average in 2013 and 2014.
- Students achieve impressive results in a number of subjects, including mathematics, history, geography, science, Spanish, art and drama.
- Students who left the school in 2014 did not achieve as well in English. This was a result of poor teaching when these students were in Key Stage 3. Improvement in the quality of teaching and a whole-school

drive to raise standards in literacy have meant that students in the current Year 11 have made good progress. These improvements were seen during the inspection and are also consistent with the local authority's view of improvement in English. Leaders have markedly raised standards in English through training, additional staff and changes to the curriculum. The changes made by leaders mean that students are now making outstanding progress at Key Stage 3.

- From their different starting points, disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Their individual needs are identified early and they are quickly given extra support. Clear tracking and the positive effect of support programmes show that disabled students and those who have special educational needs are on course to make similarly good progress this year.
- Disadvantaged students make better progress from their starting points than other students in the school. In English, in 2014, they achieved the same grades at GCSE as their classmates and the same as students nationally. In mathematics, they were about half a GCSE grade behind their classmates and less than half a grade behind students nationally.
- For the Year 7 students who are eligible for support through the 'catch-up' premium because they are behind when they start at the school, the school provides extra time to practise their reading and encourages them to read for pleasure. As a result, these students make good progress in their reading.
- The most-able students make progress that is in line with other students nationally in English. They achieve exceptionally well in mathematics and their progress is well above that of similar students across the country. The most able take GCSE in statistics.
- Students have plenty of chances to develop their literacy, numeracy and communication skills in different contexts. This enables them to move confidently and successfully to the next stage of their education.
- The school does not enter students early for GCSEs.
- The small number of students attending alternative provision achieve well.

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	123577
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	462567

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	485
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martyn Cribb
Headteacher	Andrew Smith
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2013
Telephone number	01743 792100
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