

Holy Trinity CofE Primary School

Middleton Road, Oswestry, SY11 2LF

Inspection dates	24–25 May 2016
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The overall quality of teaching is variable across the school. As a result, pupils, especially in key stage 2, do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders' efforts to improve standards have not been successful in all key stages. Pupils' progress in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2015 was significantly below that of other pupils nationally.
- Some leaders do not have the knowledge, expertise, experience or time to secure the rapid improvements necessary to overcome the legacy of poor teaching and pupils' underachievement.
- The roles and responsibilities of some leaders are not clear.
- The most able pupils do not do as well as they should.
- Governance is not effective enough in holding leaders to account for pupils' progress, attainment and attendance. They are overly reliant on the headteacher for direction.
- The progress that pupils make in mathematics, reading and writing is variable across the school. Pupils' attendance, while improving, has been, and remains, below national figures.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has raised expectations, addressed inadequate teaching, improved pupils' behaviour and resolved the school's budget deficit.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe. They have the knowledge and skills to identify and support potentially vulnerable pupils.
- Children in early years get off to a good start and are well prepared for key stage 1.
- Pupils in key stage 1 build on their good start in early years and do well in reading, writing, mathematics and phonics.
- The school fully promotes British values. Pupils demonstrate respect for, and acceptance of, people of different faiths, cultures, sexuality and gender.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are keen to learn and to do well.
- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils say they feel safe and know how to keep safe. Parents and staff agree that this is the case.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Speed up pupils' progress in key stage 2 and raise their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics so that they are ready for Year 7.
- Improve the quality of teaching to accelerate pupils' progress by making sure that:
 - teachers use the information they have about what pupils know and can do to plan tasks that challenge pupils, especially the most able
 - all teachers consistently follow the school's agreed assessment policy so that their written and verbal feedback has a stronger impact on pupils' learning
 - pupils have sufficient opportunities to reason mathematically and solve increasingly difficult problems in order to broaden and deepen their mathematical understanding and ability to use their skills quickly, confidently and efficiently
 - children and pupils, especially those who have English as an additional language, have sufficient opportunities to practise and use and apply their phonics skills in a range of different situations
 - pupils' handwriting, vocabulary and grammar enhances the quality of their writing
 - pupils read fluently and with confidence and understand what they have read.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - governors use the external and school information about pupils' progress and attainment to challenge leaders about the underachievement of pupils, particularly in key stage 2
 - governors have a clear strategic plan of what the school needs to do in order to become a good or outstanding school
 - leaders' roles and responsibilities are clear and that they have the necessary time, knowledge, skills and expertise to bring about rapid improvements in pupils' standards
 - pupils' progress in the foundation subjects, such as science, is checked and analysed in order to intervene quickly if pupils fall behind.
- Improve pupils' attendance so that it is consistently in line with or above the national average by:
 - strengthening relationships further with the parents who do not send their children to school regularly.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have an over-optimistic view of school effectiveness. They have not paid close enough attention to key performance indicators, including how pupils' progress compares to other pupils nationally, particularly in mathematics. In addition, they have not made sure that the most able pupils reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Leaders and governors have not secured good or better teaching in all classes. As a result, not enough pupils make the progress expected of them, particularly by the end of key stage 2. Though improving quickly, not enough pupils are prepared for secondary education.
- There have been some recent changes to the leadership team. There are signs that these leaders are having a positive effect on improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' standards. There has not been enough time to show that these improvements are sustained.
- The checks and analysis of pupils' progress in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics are not rigorous. As a result, leaders do not intervene quickly enough if pupils fall behind in, for example, history.
- Some leaders are unsure about their roles and responsibilities. In addition, some leaders lack the necessary knowledge, understanding and expertise to secure a rapid improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' standards. In addition, some leaders do not have sufficient time to carry out their role effectively.
- The headteacher has successfully addressed a variety of deep-rooted issues that were a legacy of previous ineffective leadership and management. For example, pupils' behaviour has improved and is now good, inadequate teaching has been eradicated and the school no longer operates a deficit budget. The headteacher has used staff appraisal effectively to raise expectations, to hold staff to account for their performance and to challenge staff who do not meet the school's expectations. As a result, some staff have left the school.
- Most of the staff who completed the inspection questionnaire agree that leaders use staff training to encourage, challenge and support their improvement. All of the staff agree that they have a clear understanding of the goals the school aims to achieve. However, there are still some inconsistencies in the quality of learning, teaching and assessment.
- Leaders make sure that the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs or disabilities is used effectively to meet their needs. These pupils do well because their needs are quickly identified and appropriate support and intervention put in place. As a result, the gap between the pupils in school who are disadvantaged and other pupils nationally is closing in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.
- Leaders make effective use of the school sport premium funding. Pupils demonstrate enthusiasm for sport and their skills are improving and competitive successes increasing. A large number of pupils say they enjoy representing the school in competitions. Pupils demonstrate an understanding of how to live an active and healthy lifestyle.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils are respectful towards each other and to staff and have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Pupils have opportunities to meet individuals from different countries, for example Poland, and to experience food and cultures from around the world. As a result, pupils demonstrate an understanding and acceptance of people's different faith, culture, gender, sexuality and race.
- The school actively promotes British values. Pupils are clear about how they play an active and tolerant role in modern Britain.
- Leaders have developed a broad and balanced range of subjects and extracurricular activities. These focus on reading, writing and mathematics but also include science, personal, social and health education, physical education, history, geography, religious education, art and music. Pupils study French from Year 3 through a commercial online teaching resource. The science and French curriculums ensure that pupils are ready for the study of these subjects in secondary school. There are a wide range of clubs on offer throughout the year. However, though improving, not all subjects have been delivered successfully, particularly in key stage 2. As a result, not all pupils do well or are fully prepared for secondary school.

- The vast majority of parents support the school and say that there have been a number of improvements since the arrival of the current headteacher.
- The school has received effective support from the local authority. For example, the local authority has provided training for teaching assistants. As a result, teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body was reconstituted in September 2015 and replaced the previous interim executive board (IEB). Four members of the IEB are on the governing body. Governors are passionate and committed to improving pupils' education. However, they have an over-generous view of the school's overall effectiveness. While they ask some relevant and challenging questions, they do not dig deep enough to secure a full understanding of the school's performance. This means that some weaker aspects, such as in mathematics, remain.
 - Governors have an unmistakable desire for the school to be good or outstanding. However, they do not have a strategic plan for how this can be achieved and overly rely on the headteacher to provide direction.
 - Governors are appropriately involved in decisions about staff pay awards and support the headteacher in making sure staff meet the school's expectations. Governors have worked effectively with the headteacher to manage a difficult budget and to resolve a turbulent period of staffing changes. As a result, the school began this year with a stable staff team and looks set to significantly reduce staff turnover. Governors make sure that the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and disabilities is used effectively. They also ensure that the school sport premium funding is used to improve pupils' physical education and sports experiences.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective throughout the school including in the early years. Children and pupils are well cared for and their safety and welfare is a high priority for staff, leaders and governors. All staff have frequent and appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, including 'Prevent' training, which is informed by current government guidance. The checks on staff's suitability to work with children are rigorous and thorough, including checking that staff are not disqualified by being associated with someone who is disqualified to work with children. The school's personal, social and health education lessons make sure that pupils are aware of how to stay safe including from the risks of extremism or radicalisation. The school site is safe and secure. Leaders have carried out suitable risk assessments to make sure potential hazards are minimised.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Not enough pupils do well because teaching is too variable across classes and subjects. The teaching of mathematics in particular is not strong enough to make sure that pupils reach the standard of which they are capable, particularly in key stage 2. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to reason mathematically and to solve increasingly difficult problems. The most able pupils complete work that fails to challenge them or to increase their understanding. As a result, a minority of pupils are not able to apply their mathematical skills and knowledge quickly, efficiently and confidently.
- A minority of teachers do not have high enough expectations about what pupils can do and achieve, especially for the most able pupils. They do not consistently use what they know about pupils' knowledge and understanding to plan lessons that provide challenge. As a consequence, pupils complete work that fails to stretch their abilities, build on what they already know or speed up their progress. Pupils who complete work quickly and correctly do not always have additional work to carry on with.
- Not all teachers consistently follow the school's agreed assessment policy, especially in the feedback they provide to help pupils improve their work. As a result, some pupils do not have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.
- Children and pupils in early years and key stage 1 do well as a result of teaching that is and has been, historically, more effective than that seen in key stage 2.
- Teaching assistants are skilled and make a valuable and effective contribution to pupils' learning. They help pupils to think for themselves and to persevere when they encounter problems or difficulties in their work. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and disabilities have their needs met and are doing well.
- Relationships among pupils and between pupils and teachers are consistently positive. Classrooms are calm and orderly. Pupils are keen to learn and do well.

- Most pupils in the early stages of reading do well as a result of the effective phonics teaching they receive. However, on occasion, pupils, including those who have English as an additional language, do not have sufficient opportunities to practise or use and apply their phonics skills in a range of different situations. As a result, their progress is slowed.
- Pupils' early writing skills are developed well in early years and in key stage 1. For example, teachers make sure that pupils' spelling and punctuation is accurate. As a result, by the end of key stage 1, pupils achieve writing levels that are in line with and sometimes above the national average. However, this progress is not always sustained in key stage 2. Pupils' handwriting, grammar and vocabulary do not progress rapidly and the quality of their writing is impeded as a result.
- The teaching of reading is generally effective in early years and key stage 1. As a result, by the end of key stage 1, pupils achieve reading levels that are in line with or above the national average. However, in key stage 2, there are still a number of pupils who do not read confidently and do not understand what they have read.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- All of the pupils who spoke with inspectors say they feel safe and know how to keep safe. The vast majority of parents who spoke with inspectors or who completed the online questionnaire Parent View praised the school for its work on developing pupils' confidence, resilience and motivation.
- Pupils are taught well about how to keep themselves safe, including from the risks of radicalisation, stranger danger and predatory grooming. Pupils understand the importance of safety when using the internet. The school is aware that some pupils are using social media underage and staff are addressing this issue effectively with pupils and parents.
- Personal, social and health education lessons and themed weeks such as 'Our Community' actively promote British values and help pupils to have a better understanding and acceptance of people with different faiths, cultures, sexuality, beliefs and values. Enrichment activities, visits, trips and assemblies support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Physical education lessons, clubs and activities throughout the year make sure pupils know how to lead healthy and active lifestyles.
- Pupils say there is little bullying and that staff deal with any issues quickly and effectively so that they do not escalate. Pupils demonstrate acceptance of individuals with different characteristics. Pupils told inspectors that there are very few incidents of pupils using 'unkind' or derogatory language. Staff intervene quickly to challenge any negative or destructive comments.
- The school works well with external agencies to support potentially vulnerable children and their families. Staff quickly identify any issues and use the school's child protection policies consistently to make sure intervention and support is swift and appropriate.

The school works effectively to challenge poor attendance and has appropriate strategies in place to check pupils' absence in order to make sure they are safe. For example, the school makes calls to parents on the child's first day of absence and refers pupils to the local authority 'children missing in education' team if the absence is prolonged. As a result, overall attendance is improving and the number of pupils who are persistently absent (missing more than 10% of school) is reducing. Gaps in attendance between pupils who are disadvantaged and other pupils in the school and nationally are closing. Current attendance figures are much closer to the national average than has previously been the case. However, there are still a number of pupils whose parents do not make sure that they attend school regularly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders and staff work effectively to make sure pupils' behaviour meets the high expectations that have been set and established since the previous inspection. As a result, the number of permanent and fixed-term exclusions and incidents of poor behaviour have been greatly reduced and continue to decline. Staff, parents and pupils agree that pupils' good behaviour is now a strength of the school.
- Pupils' behaviour around school and at breaks and lunchtimes is consistently strong and leads to a calm and purposeful atmosphere in the school. Classrooms are positive places in which to learn and pupils show good attitudes to their learning. However, a few pupils can become distracted when activities do not fully engage, motivate or challenge them.

- The vast majority of pupils wear their uniform in line with the school's policy and are mostly well mannered, polite, thoughtful and courteous. Almost all pupils arrive on time to lessons. As a result, lessons start promptly and little learning time is lost.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Until recently, improvements in pupils' standards were slow. The external information for pupils at the end of key stage 2 in 2015 reflected this. By the end of Year 6, pupils had made insufficient progress from their earlier attainment at the end of key stage 1 and pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics, was below that of other pupils nationally. Many pupils were not well prepared for secondary school.
- The most able pupils do not do as well as they should in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2. This group of pupils' progress in mathematics is significantly below that of similar pupils nationally.
- At the end of key stage 2 in 2015, pupils who are disadvantaged were four terms behind other pupils nationally in mathematics, three terms behind in reading and two terms behind in writing. The school has provided focused support and intervention for this group of pupils. As a result, external and school information on pupils' achievement shows that these gaps are closing.
- Leaders are unable to accurately judge pupils' standards in subjects other than in reading, writing and mathematics as they do not routinely track pupils' progress in subjects such as, for example, history. However, the work in pupils' books shows that the majority of pupils are reaching the standards expected in the majority of subjects, particularly in science and French.
- Although there is still much to be done, especially in key stage 2, the effective actions taken by the headteacher are beginning to have a positive impact. Information provided by the school shows that the large majority of pupils currently in the school are making the progress expected of them, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 3, writing and mathematics in Year 5 and reading and mathematics in Year 6.
- Children in early years do well from low starting points. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the Reception year is just above average. Children's physical and personal, social and emotional development is particularly strong.
- Pupils' good start in early years is maintained in key stage 1. Pupils' reading skills develop quickly as a result of generally effective phonics teaching. In 2015, by the end of Year 1, the proportions of pupils who met the expected standard in the phonics screening check were above average. Information provided by the school shows that this secure progress is set to continue.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard by the end of Year 2 has risen year on year for the last three years. In 2015, it was above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving higher than the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was also above the national average in these subjects.

Early years provision

is good

- Early years provision is judged to be better than the overall effectiveness of the school because children do well as a result of the stimulating, interesting and engaging teaching they receive.
- The leadership of early years is effective. Leaders make sure that children get off to a good start to their education as a result of effective assessment, planning, teaching, support, help and intervention.
- From low starting points, children do well by the end of Reception year. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of early years is above average. Children are well prepared for their transition to key stage 1.
- Teachers use what they know about children's prior learning and interests to plan and deliver activities that interest and engage children in their learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants know the children well and make sure that children with special educational needs or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged or who are falling behind are quickly identified and supported appropriately. However, teachers' expectations of what the most able children can achieve are not always high enough. As a result, this group of children do not consistently do as well

as they can.

- Children's behaviour is positive as a result of the well-established routines and expectations. Children take turns, share and play happily with other children. They listen to staff and respond appropriately to instructions and guidance. Children are developing their ability to be resilient and to persevere when they find tasks difficult.
- Children's reading skills are developed through generally effective phonics teaching. However, on occasion, children do not have sufficient opportunities to rehearse, practise and use their phonics skills in different situations, such as reading instructions.
- While the quality of what children write shows improvement, staff do not always make sure that children's handwriting is developed effectively.
- The school works effectively with parents and there is a secure partnership that makes sure children do well. Parents are actively encouraged to come into the school and to be an equal partner in their child's learning. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the progress their child makes when they join the school. Parents praise the work of staff in helping their child to feel safe and to learn confidently.
- Safeguarding is effective. Children are well supervised and the site is secure. Risk assessments for the outdoor provision have been completed. As a result, the equipment and resources are safe and enable children to play safely and happily.

School details

Unique reference number	135786
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10012422

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

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	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Casson
Headteacher	Pam Edwards
Telephone number	01691 654832
Website	www.holytrinity.shropshire.sch.uk
Email address	admin@holytrinity.shropshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 June 2014

Information about this school

- The current headteacher has been in post since January 2014. The governing body was reconstituted in September 2015, replacing the previous interim executive board.
- The numbers on the school roll have dropped since the previous inspection. As a result, the school is now smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged (eligible for support through the pupil premium) is above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support the learning of those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, however, is above average.
- An above average proportion of pupils have special educational needs or disabilities or have an education, health and care plan or statement.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than the start of the school year is higher than the national average.
- The early years provision comprises part-time Nursery classes and full-time Reception classes.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in lessons across all year groups including in the early years. The work in pupils' books was evaluated during observations. Pupils' progress and attainment was judged from an extensive book scrutiny. Inspectors also heard children read.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, other school leaders, teachers, support staff, parents and pupils and governors including the chair of the governing body. A meeting was held with a representative from the local authority.
- The views of the 17 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) were considered. Questionnaire responses from 26 members of staff were also analysed.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including: the school's information on pupils' current progress, attendance and behaviour; school improvement plans; work in pupils' books; the governing body minutes; and safeguarding and child protection documents, including the checks made on staff's suitability to work with children.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils as they arrived at school, during break and lunchtimes, as they left the school premises at the end of the day, as well as in lessons.

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