

Malvern Wells Church of England Primary School

263 Wells Road, Malvern Wells, Worcestershire WR14 4HF

Inspection dates

9–10 July 2019

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- There are weaknesses in the way that school improvement systems are led and managed. As a result, some ongoing areas for improvement have not been effectively addressed.
- Systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning are not always timely and effective.
- Too few pupils make strong progress in writing across Years 1 to 6. Pupils' progress in writing across key stage 2 has been well below the national average for the last two years.
- Consistency in the quality and approach to the teaching of writing is not secure across the school.
- Leadership of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is in the early stages of development.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good. Teachers do not always provide sufficient challenge to ensure that the most able pupils make strong progress, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to secure and apply their writing skills accurately in English and across other subjects.
- Effective plans are not in place to ensure that pupils develop secure, subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

The school has the following strengths

- The quality of teaching and pupils' progress in mathematics are improving at a good pace across the school. An increasing proportion of pupils are working at higher standards in mathematics.
- Children in early years receive a good start to their education. Careful nurturing, combined with skilful teaching, ensures that children make strong progress.
- The teaching of early reading is improving. Leaders have recently taken action to make sure that reading books are well matched to children's phonic skills. This is having a positive impact.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of other faiths and British values. They are developing a secure grounding for life in modern Britain.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, by:
 - establishing rigorous school improvement systems so that all of the school's areas for improvement are addressed effectively, within given timescales
 - introducing timely and effective systems to check that teachers are swiftly making the necessary improvements to their practice
 - securing consistency in the quality and approach to the teaching of writing across the school so that more pupils, across Years 1 to 6, make strong progress
 - sustaining and building on recent improvements to the provision for pupils with SEND so that these pupils achieve well
 - ensuring that pupils develop secure, subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by ensuring that teachers:
 - provide greater levels of challenge, especially for the most able pupils, particularly in mathematics and writing
 - use effective and consistent methods to help pupils to secure and apply their writing skills accurately in English and other subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Some aspects of school improvement lack rigour and attention to detail. Improvement actions and initiatives are not always linked to, or evaluated against, the key priorities and timescales set in the school development plan. Consequently, some areas for improvement, such as the teaching of writing, have not been addressed effectively.
- Leaders have recently introduced a system that identifies pupils' progress against their prior learning. This is helping teachers and leaders to focus more closely on the progress that pupils are making over time. However, not all leaders fully understand or use this information effectively enough to drive improvements across the school. There remains an overemphasis on improving pupils' progress quickly when they enter Year 6.
- Although leaders look at the work in pupils' books and the teaching in the classrooms, there is no clear, systematic approach to the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders do not always identify precisely what teachers are doing well and what they need to do to improve. Leaders do not all check that teachers are swiftly making necessary improvements to their practice. As a result, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress have not been addressed quickly.
- The newly formed governing body swiftly identified the need to increase leadership capacity in order to drive school improvement. To address this, in September 2018, it restructured the leadership team and appointed two assistant headteachers. This has strengthened the capacity for improvement.
- The two new assistant headteachers have made a positive impact on the school. They have a good understanding of the school's systems for judging pupils' progress. They are effectively using their analysis of this information to drive improvements to teaching and learning. This is particularly evident in mathematics and in early years. It is too early to see the impact on wider school improvement systems and other key priorities.
- Leaders have recently introduced new systems to support pupils with SEND. Plans for each pupil are detailed. These record the extra support and intervention programmes that are in place. Leaders frequently check that plans are working well and making a difference to pupils' achievement. Parents and carers say that they recognise and appreciate the changes. Further work is needed to make sure that the support and resources provided in all classes are well matched to pupils' needs.
- Leaders and governors make sure that the additional funding for the small number of disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to make sure that extra support has a positive impact on pupils' achievement and well-being. As a result, the progress of disadvantaged pupils is in line with the progress of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils enjoy physical education (PE) and the school is making good use of the additional PE and sport premium funding to develop teachers' skills. Pupils also value the range of after-school activities on offer and the many opportunities to participate in sporting events, such as the recent rounders festival at the Chase.

- The school teaches national curriculum subjects through specific themes, as part of a 'skills-based, creative curriculum'. Pupils particularly enjoy the links made between subjects and can talk about the activities that they have done, such as designing and building model longboats in their Viking topic.
- However, more work is needed to ensure that subjects are planned with a clear path of progression. This lack of secure, subject-specific knowledge and skills is evident in pupils' work and when they talk about topic work. Although this has been recognised, plans to address this across the school lack clarity.

Governance of the school

- The newly restructured governing body has recognised the need to strengthen the leadership team. It responded in a timely fashion. Governors are working closely with the diocese and the local authority to make sure that these changes make a positive difference to the pace of school improvement.
- Governors have an accurate and comprehensive picture of the school's strengths and areas that need further development. They use published information about pupils' achievement to judge how well pupils are doing when compared with other pupils nationally.
- Documentation shows that governors raise meaningful and pertinent questions. They take actions where necessary to make sure that the school continues to improve. Link governors work closely with the leaders for mathematics and English.
- Governors work effectively with the school to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are thorough. They carry out regular checks on different aspects of safeguarding, including online safety and staff recruitment. Through regular training, staff and governors have an up-to-date knowledge of procedures and understand the importance of being vigilant.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is an effective culture of safeguarding within the school. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and the school provides a safe environment for all pupils. Pupils feel safe and cared for. Their comments include: 'We can go to anyone in the school if we are worried. It's just the nearest person to you because they will all listen and help.'
- All staff, including lunchtime staff, understand their responsibilities to safeguard pupils. Leaders and governors are suitably trained in safer recruitment. Rigorous procedures are in place for checking the suitability of visitors and any supply staff.
- There are clear systems in place to make sure that pupils and families get the support that they need. Pupils at risk are closely monitored. Day-to-day records and notes are kept appropriately. Actions are followed through, but not always carefully noted and dated. Steps have been taken to address this.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- There has been a lack of consistency in teaching over time. Teaching is improving, particularly in mathematics where there is a clear focus and approach to teaching across the school. This is because of the subject leader's focused support, new resources and effective use of professional development. However, this has not yet led to consistently strong progress for all groups of pupils across the school.
- Where teaching is strong, teachers use their knowledge of pupils' prior learning to build on what pupils know and what they need to do next. During the inspection, pupils were challenged to use their knowledge of shapes and their properties to discuss lines of symmetry and different orientations. They used mathematical language to explain their reasoning. They clearly had to think hard and enjoyed the challenge. However, work in pupils' books across Years 1 to 6 shows that this level of challenge, particularly for most-able pupils, is inconsistent across the school. Work is under way to address this.
- The teaching of English is not securely good. The use of 'non-negotiables' has been introduced to remind pupils of the importance of spelling and punctuation. However, this is not fully effective in all classes. For example, some pupils have weaknesses or misconceptions in basic writing skills, such as letter formation and sentence construction. These errors are not routinely addressed as part of everyday teaching. This hinders pupils' progress in writing.
- Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to write at length, particularly in English and topic work. However, systems are not in place to check that this is helping pupils to improve the quality of their writing or deepen their understanding of the writing process. For example, there are too few opportunities for pupils to make choices about how to organise their writing and to plan or edit their work. This prevents pupils, especially the most able pupils, from working at higher standards in writing.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Pupils use their phonic skills to read unknown words. They are encouraged to use their phonic skills to help them to write and spell. Over time, the vast majority of pupils have met the standard of the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Leaders have recently introduced new early reading books to ensure that reading books are well matched to the sounds that pupils have been taught. This helps pupils to read accurately and with growing confident and fluency.
- Teachers in every class read to pupils every day. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their class readers, such as 'Kensuke's Kingdom'. These activities foster a love of reading. An increasing proportion of pupils are reading at higher levels across the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school is particularly good at helping pupils to develop into confident, self-aware young people. The school's values of empathy and respect are at the heart of daily

school life. This is evident in the respectful relationships and the care and compassion pupils demonstrate towards each other.

- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying. They know what to do if they are worried about anything. Pupils' comments include: 'We have golden rules in every classroom. Mostly, we don't need to use them because behaviour is pretty good here.'
- Pupils speak with great enthusiasm about school trips, such as to the Malvern Theatres' production of 'Beowulf' and the residential visits to Wales. They are happy and demonstrate a love of learning. Pupils' comments include: 'Learning at this school is fun. We do a lot of work in one day.'
- Provision for pupils' spiritual development is a strength. Pupils take part in daily acts of worship and are provided with opportunities for thoughtful reflection. They are encouraged to appreciate and understand other religions. This contributes to their development as well-rounded individuals and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils and parents are positive about behaviour in the school. Typically, there is little disruption to learning in lessons, although at times pupils lose attentiveness when the work is not challenging or the task is not clear. This slows the pace of learning.
- Parents value the benefits of a small village school and feel that children are well nurtured. All of the parents that I spoke to and the vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire said that their children are happy at school and they would recommend it to another parent.
- Older pupils particularly enjoy taking responsibility for looking after the younger pupils on the playground. They are good role models and show pride and respect for the school grounds and property.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average for other primary schools. The monitoring of attendance is rigorous and the school has high expectations of pupils and their families. Punctuality is good.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2018, by the end of Year 6, there was a slight dip in pupils' attainment. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standards in reading and writing was broadly in line with the national average. In mathematics, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard was below the national average. However, over three years, by the end of key stage 2, the standard of pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics combined is above the national average.
- Nevertheless, across key stage 2, pupils' progress in writing has been in the lowest 20% of all primary schools nationally for the last two years. Actions to address this have not been effective or urgent enough. Work in pupils' books and the school's

assessment records show early signs of improvement.

- The strongest improvement in pupils' writing is seen in Year 6. This is due to the quality of teaching and targeting for these pupils. However, across the rest of the school, not enough pupils are making the progress that they should in writing. This is especially so for the most able pupils and lower-ability pupils.
- Over recent years, across key stage 2, pupils have not made good enough progress in mathematics. By the end of Year 6 in 2018, pupils' progress in mathematics was well below that of other schools nationally.
- Leaders have recently taken effective actions to address this. Radical changes have been made to the way that mathematics is taught across the school. Work in pupils' books shows that pupils are more focused on reasoning mathematically and applying their mathematical knowledge and skills to solve problems.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics and demonstrate resilience in problem-solving activities. Early evidence shows that an increasing proportion of pupils are working at higher standards in all classes. Lower-ability pupils are given more opportunities to secure their mathematical knowledge and understanding. An increasing proportion of pupils are catching up in their learning. Further work is needed to secure and sustain these improvements.
- Recent improvements in the education of pupils with SEND mean that they are making better progress. Pupils are provided with a range of different interventions to support their needs. While the progress that they make in the interventions is secure, they do not always receive work and/or resources to match their needs in class. As a result, they do not make strong progress overall.
- In 2018, all pupils achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Pupils in danger of falling behind in reading are given extra support immediately. Teachers make sure that books are well matched to the sounds that they can read. As a result, lower-ability pupils are making strong progress and catching up quickly.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make good progress across early years and enjoy their learning. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development has steadily increased over the last three years and is in line with the national average. Children are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Children throughout early years behave well and are happy and settled. This is because routines are well established and relationships are strong. Safeguarding and statutory requirements are met.
- The new early years leader is skilled and knowledgeable about this stage of children's learning and development. She has swiftly and accurately identified strengths and areas for development. Improvement plans for early years are based on rigorous evaluation and precise targets. Professional development opportunities are tailored to need and well planned. Staff work effectively together.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Adults encourage children to use their phonics skills to

match sounds to letters as they are writing. This helps children with spelling.

- New approaches have been introduced to improve the way that children are taught essential key writing skills, such as how to hold a pencil and to develop a good writing posture. This has shone a spotlight on the importance of mark-making to support early writing. It is too early to see the impact of these changes.
- Stories and role-play opportunities are planned, indoors and outdoors, to encourage children to speak and listen to each other and extend their imagination. Children enjoy reciting nursery rhymes and songs as part of daily routines. They eagerly re-tell familiar stories and talk about their favourite characters. As a result of these activities, children are confident to talk about their ideas and demonstrate a love of reading.
- This was evident during the inspection when children were using equipment in the outdoor kitchen to experiment with juice-making. They used equipment confidently, including juice squeezers and water jugs, to measure and select from different materials. They eagerly explained that they were making fresh juice for 'Mr Grinling, the Lighthouse Keeper'.
- Children demonstrated self-confidence and self-awareness, helping each other to fill and empty water containers, using equipment carefully and taking turns. These activities also gave children time to practise and extend their mathematical knowledge and understanding.
- Parents feel involved in their children's start at school. Work is under way to ensure that all parents know how to support their children with the new reading books that are closely matched to children's phonics skills.

School details

Unique reference number	116902
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10091033

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	98
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Frances SurrIDGE
Headteacher	Alison Earp
Telephone number	01684 561179
Website	www.malvern-wells.worcs.sch.uk
Email address	head@malvern-wells.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 February 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are four mixed-age group classes.
- Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is lower than the national average. Numbers of these pupils can vary because of the small cohorts of pupils.
- There are no pupils with an education, health and care plan in place.
- The local authority and the diocese support the school through reviews and recommendations.
- Two new assistant headteachers were appointed in September 2018.
- Since the previous section 5 inspection in February 2014, the governing body has appointed a new chair and vice-chair of governors. Three new governors have joined

the governing body.

- This is a Church of England school. The last inspection of the denominational education given to pupils and the content of the school's collective worship, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, was conducted on 13 October 2014.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector jointly observed teaching in all classes, accompanied at times by the headteacher.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and assistant headteachers. They looked at work in pupils' books and at assessments of pupils' current attainment and progress.
- A number of documents were reviewed, including the school's records of recruitment and vetting checks, a range of documents relating to safeguarding pupils, the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement, and minutes of governing body meetings.
- The inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and six other governors. She held telephone conversations with representatives from the local authority and the diocese.
- The inspector spoke informally to pupils, parents and staff at various times during the inspection, including breaktime, lunchtime and at each end of the school day. She also heard pupils read and talked to them about their reading in school and at home.
- The inspector also considered 47 responses from Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 12 responses made through the free-text service.

Inspection team

Marilyn Mottram, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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