

Grange Primary

Bainbridge Green, York Road, Shrewsbury, SY1 3QR

Inspection dates 21–22 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Not enough pupils reach the levels they should in writing and mathematics, especially those who receive additional funding, have a disability or special educational needs.
- Though improving, there is not enough good teaching to help them to catch up.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough.
- Teachers do not check progress frequently enough during lessons, or adapt activities to provide the right level of challenge in line with pupils' ability.
- Leaders, including governors, have not acted quickly enough to boost progress in writing and mathematics.
- Systems tracking the progress of key groups are not always focused enough to consistently address underachievement.
- Teaching assistants are not used consistently well to ensure pupils identified as needing support, receive it.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, including governors, have successfully eradicated poor teaching and minimised the impact of significant staff turbulence.
- Progress in reading has got faster because the linking of letters and sounds is now well taught.
- Adults work hard to create a positive learning environment that motivates and engages pupils.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is evident in their good behaviour and above-average attendance.

Information about this inspection

- 24 lessons or parts of lessons were observed over the two days. All classroom teachers present were observed teaching. Almost all were observed at least twice. Inspectors undertook three joint lesson observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, staff, members of the governing body and different groups of pupils.
- An inspector heard individual pupils read and discussed with them their reading preferences and individual reading records.
- Inspectors sampled pupils' work, looked closely at tracking records of pupils' progress and took account of the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- The lead inspector held a discussion with a member of the local authority's advisory staff.
- The views of parents and carers were sought during the inspection, 24 responses to Parent View were examined, and the inspector took account of the school's own survey of the views of 42 parents and carers carried out in June 2012.
- The views of staff in 38 returned questionnaires were also considered.

Inspection team

Gordon Ewing, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Derek Gardiner

Additional Inspector

Julie Griffiths

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A pre-school group shares the school's facilities in the afternoons. In addition, some after-school clubs are provided by external organisations. These are not managed by the governing body and were not part of this inspection.
- The school became an all-through primary school in September 2009, following the amalgamation of Grange Infant and Grange Junior Schools. The current headteacher was the headteacher of the infant school before the amalgamation.
- There have been considerable changes of staff since the amalgamation, resulting in a number of short term appointments.
- Until recently, the school did not have a full complement of governors.
- The school uses part-time local authority provision to support a small number of pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. These pupils receive off-site schooling for part of each week.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in writing and mathematics by making teaching consistently good or better, particularly by ensuring that teachers:
 - understand the importance of setting a good pace throughout each lesson
 - set tasks in lessons that balance activities led by the teacher with those that develop independent learning skills
 - use regular assessment information to ensure that activities are suitable for pupils of differing ability levels
 - share existing good practice in questioning techniques, feedback to pupils and marking, so that pupils benefit from guidance that helps them move forward swiftly with confidence and greater independence
 - use teaching assistants, supported by suitable training, consistently well to support pupils in whole-class sessions and in small groups
 - give pupils more opportunities to develop and apply their extended writing skills across different subjects

- consistently apply the new number and calculations policy so that pupils can increase their mental agility and use numeracy skills in a wide range of contexts.
- Improve the effectiveness and impact of the way pupils' progress is tracked, particularly in writing and mathematics, by:
 - closely monitoring the progress of different groups of pupils so that underachievement is quickly identified and support is triggered to close the gap
 - using half-termly pupil progress meetings to closely hold teachers to account for the progress of different groups, especially those supported by additional funding and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- Improve the effectiveness of all leaders and managers in increasing the pace of improvement established recently, by ensuring that:
 - the regular monitoring of teaching and learning, through lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work, has a clear focus on pupils' learning
 - all subject leaders and teachers are held fully accountable for pupils' attainment and progress
 - leaders and managers swiftly identify underachievement and initiate well-planned and closely tracked actions so that support for specific pupils has a rapid impact
 - targets for improvement are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-limited
 - governors are well informed about the work of the school and take an increasingly active part in checking on how well pupils are achieving.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement in writing and mathematics is inadequate. Although there have been some recent improvements, pupils' progress is not fast enough to help them to catch up. Attainment in writing and mathematics is still too low at the end of Year 6.
- New teaching approaches and resources to accelerate progress in writing are beginning to have an impact, especially in Key Stage 2, but pupils are not given enough opportunity to write at length in different subjects. Consequently, their skills and knowledge are not improving quickly enough to make sure they reach the levels they should.
- Improvements in mathematics are also at an early stage. The new number and calculations policy has not yet been applied consistently enough to accelerate pupils' progress and increase their ability to solve problems in a range of contexts.
- Achievement in reading has improved at a much faster rate than in writing and mathematics because phonics (the linking of letters and sounds) is now well taught. This gets the pupils off to a good start so that they reach the levels they should, in reading, by the end of Year 6. The involvement of parents and carers in supporting pupils' reading has been instrumental in raising achievement.
- Children enter the school with less well developed skills than those expected for their age, especially in language and in their social development. By the time they move to Year 1 they have developed skills closer to the levels expected for their age in many areas. However, their language and communication skills remain weaker than those in other areas of learning.
- The use of the pupil premium to purchase additional resources has resulted in some improvement in progress, for those known to be eligible, in reading and writing. However, their underachievement in mathematics is not being addressed with enough urgency. Some of the funding has been used to provide two learning mentors to support pupils who are emotionally vulnerable. This has had a positive impact because these pupils now attend more regularly and are beginning to gain in confidence and self-esteem.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs mirrors that of most other groups, especially in writing and mathematics. The teaching of small groups in some lessons is proving to be successful in overcoming underachievement, but the impact of other approaches to increase progress is too variable.
- Considerable success in improving children's personal, social and emotional skills ensures that in these areas of development most children are ready for the next step in their education.
- Pupils who are taught away from school for part of the time do at least as well as their peers because there are good links between the school ensure and those who teach them.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- The impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress, over time, remains inadequate in some important respects. Teachers do not always aim high enough, those who work alongside them often have too little influence on pupils' learning and marking does not always help the pupils to improve their work. However, teaching is improving because of the work undertaken by school leaders. Their actions have begun to tackle key areas of weakness but have yet to pay long term dividends except in reading where progress has accelerated.
- Teachers' expectations are not always high enough. Although teachers provide pupils with learning targets in writing and mathematics, the tasks they set are not matched closely enough to pupils' needs, and their checks on pupils' progress vary in quality. Consequently, some pupils are confused about what they have to do, so the pace of learning falters.
- Teaching assistants are not always used effectively. On too many occasions, they do not influence learning or progress, especially when the teacher is leading the whole class. This means that a valuable resource that could be deployed to support and extend teaching is underused, and pupils do not get enough chance to work on their own or in groups.
- In the best lessons, teaching assistants support the work of the teacher and adapt activities to match the needs of each pupil. This was seen in a good lesson in the Nursery, where children prepared for activities in the 'forest school'. Children developed their fine motor skills by looking at habitats – using their senses, feeling materials and linking their learning to their story telling. All adults used the opportunity to observe children's learning, focusing on linking letters to sounds.
- The quality of marking varies considerably from teacher to teacher. The marking policy is used well when teachers are correcting and praising pupils' work, but few teachers consistently provide pupils with guidance on how to move to the next level. In addition, opportunities are missed to develop pupils' skills in the use of reference resources such as a dictionary or thesaurus. As a consequence, pupils rely too much on adults.
- In the lessons where teaching is good or better, teachers set high expectations, check and extend pupils' understanding, and set tasks that are at the right level for each pupil. This was seen in an outstanding music lesson. The teacher set very high expectations of pupils' musical vocabulary and technique. Pupils displayed an exceptional understanding of musical structure and rhythm. Such effective practice is not a common enough feature across the school.
- Most teachers create good learning environments with vibrant classroom displays. Teachers work successfully to build good relationships with pupils and know them well as individuals. Consequently, pupils behave well in an atmosphere of well-intended encouragement and praise. However, some praise is too general, particularly in whole-class sessions, and pupils are sometimes rewarded for incorrect answers because the teacher does not check on pupils' responses carefully enough.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- One pupil rightly described the school as 'a friendly, welcoming school'. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and show good levels of patience, respect for others and perseverance. Pupils of all ages are proud when they achieve well and are keen to show visitors their work.
- These strong features were observed in an art lesson where pupils were creating still-life drawings of animal skulls. They behaved well, studied the skulls with concentration and perseverance and, independently, showed adults their work. Their pride was tangible at times.

- Very few staff, parents and carers expressed concerns about pupils' behaviour and safety. As one parent commented, 'I'm happy because my son is happy.' Pupils say that they feel safe and that bullying of any kind is rare and always dealt with speedily by adults. They have a good knowledge of most kinds of bullying and understand how to keep themselves safe. Pupils report that prompt communication between home and school over any behaviour issues has resulted in better behaviour over time.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and willingly share resources and ideas in discussions. They usually behave very well and show good levels of concentration, even when tasks are not clearly explained or lack challenge.
- Pupils play and work together in a safe, harmonious community. Relationships are good and pupils are keen to take on responsibilities. For example, pupil 'buddies' are on hand to help at breaktimes if someone is sad or 'in need of a hug' and eco-council members take responsibility for reducing the school's energy footprint.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The recent acceleration in pupils' attainment and progress, notably in reading, is testament to the capacity of leaders and managers to bring about necessary improvements. Most current pupils are now making much faster progress in reading. Current progress in writing and mathematics is also improving but is not fast enough to make sure pupils reach the levels they should.
- Leaders and managers have an accurate grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The plan to raise achievement, developed with the effective support of the local authority, has identified the right priorities but timescales are not sufficiently clear and some targets are not precise enough. Consequently, improvement is not fast enough.
- The headteacher has a clear and ambitious vision for improvement. She is well supported by a committed staff, as shown in the consistently positive responses in staff questionnaires. Morale is high and there is a strong sense of collective enterprise. Senior leaders have provided additional training and observed good practice in other schools. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving and weaknesses are beginning to be addressed more effectively.
- Leaders and managers carry out frequent and comprehensive checks of the school's work. This is particularly so for reading, writing and the learning environment. Their checks on pupils' writing have triggered additional training and the purchase of new resources, and these are now beginning to have a clear impact. Checks on how well pupils are achieving in mathematics have not been frequent or thorough enough.
- The monitoring of teaching takes place regularly and systematically, but the impact has been limited so far in some key areas. Some lesson observations focus too much on how well teachers teach, rather than how well pupils learn. Help and guidance is beginning to improve teachers' practice, and information on pupils' progress is increasingly being used to hold teachers to account for any underachievement.
- Turbulence in staffing, including at senior level, has been managed well by the headteacher and governors, though there is still more to do in securing consistently good teaching across the school.

- The school has a no-tolerance approach to any form of discrimination or inequality. However, the achievement of pupils supported by additional funding, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has been too variable over time. The school's actions to tackle this variability has only recently started to bear fruit.
- The way subjects are taught is currently under review. Pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities that promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Particular strengths include the 'forest school', art, sport, Italian and music.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance requires improvement. However, governors have worked hard to get to know their school and have a realistic view of its strengths and weaknesses. They have recently used new tracking systems to challenge the school's leaders on underachievement, but recognise that the school's subsequent actions have not always had a rapid impact. They rightly judge that their tracking of the use of pupil premium funding is not astute enough. They regularly attend training and some visit lessons and observe the school at work. They have an appropriate understanding of the management of teachers' performance, and have played an important role in supporting the school in eradicating inadequate teaching and in reducing the impact of significant staff changes. They have good procedures to ensure that decisions regarding salary progression and promotion are fair and consistent. Governors ensure that safeguarding practices and procedures, including for staff recruitment, meet national requirements. Training for staff and governors in child protection and safer recruiting is up to date, although the reviewing of some key policies is not planned systematically and deadlines are sometimes missed.

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	135775
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	406627

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	305
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Bilgic (Acting)
Headteacher	Marie Sibley
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2010
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