

Chawson First School

Wych Road, Droitwich, WR9 8BW

Inspection dates 5–6 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
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 requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' progress is not yet good and is not rising quickly enough. Children enter the school with skills and attainment typical for their age and leave at similar levels; their achievement requires improvement.
- Achievement in writing is not high enough because pupils do not have adequate opportunities to practise these skills in longer pieces of writing.
- Teaching requires improvement because many lessons fail to promote learning well enough. Teachers do not demand enough of pupils across the ability range.
- Teachers' marking does not always provide enough advice for pupils about how to improve their work.
- Due to a number of staffing issues over an extended period of time, leaders and managers have not made the pace of improvements quick enough to raise achievement and teaching to good.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has overcome a wide range of difficulties in the school, which were slowing progress in making improvements. The now strengthened leadership team has a clear vision of how to improve the school and is driving change forward.
- Reading is taught well across the school and pupils make strong progress as a result.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The behaviour of the pupils is good. They are eager to learn. Pupils say they are well looked after, feel safe and well cared for in school.
- The governing body knows the school well and is active in the school. The governors offer challenge that is helping the senior leadership team to improve the quality of teaching and the standards for pupils. Teachers' performance is managed well and additional funding is used well.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those eligible for additional funding (pupil premium) enjoy strong support. Their progress is better than that of other pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 28 lessons taught by 15 teachers; 16 were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors observed and spoke to pupils during lessons, at lunch and break times, and met formally with a group of pupils. They heard pupils of different ages and abilities read.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and managers, three members of the governing body and a telephone conversation also took place with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including: arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils, the management of teachers' performance, pupils' attendance, information about pupils' attainment and progress, and analysed the quality of work in pupils' books.
- They took into account the 16 responses from parents shown on Parent View (the online questionnaire), a letter from a parent and responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Ronald Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Westall

Additional Inspector

Janet Watts

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average primary school.
- The school has had a number of staffing difficulties over several years. The school has recently appointed a new deputy headteacher to strengthen the senior leadership team.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is well-below average but the proportion who are supported by school action plus or with statements of special educational needs is above average. These pupils have a range of speech and language difficulties and moderate learning difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. (The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those with a parent in the armed services.) In Year 4 there are no looked after children or children from forces families.
- The school has close working links with others locally.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to be consistently good or better so that pupils' achievement in Years 1 to 4 is raised by:
 - improving the quality of pupils' written language and skills of sentence construction through more opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in longer pieces of writing
 - making sure that all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and so set work that matches pupils' abilities and challenges and supports all pupils to reach their full potential for learning
 - making certain that all teachers provide enough information and opportunities for pupils to respond to the guidance given in the marking of work.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - the senior leadership team driving forward the current improvements in teaching and achievement at a faster rate.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Progress and achievement require improvement in Years 1 to 4. Pupils do not make good progress or, by the time they leave, attain better standards than they have on entry because teaching does not make work consistently demanding for all groups of pupils. Pupils do not develop a wide range of writing skills to match those in their reading.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Years 2 and 4 is broadly typical with what is usually found because teaching does not consistently promote progress in writing across all subjects. In Year 2, fewer pupils than anticipated reach above the expected levels in national assessments in both English and mathematics. Given their starting points, pupils' attainment is not high enough across the school. Attainment in mathematics is broadly typical of the age groups, and is improving at a faster rate than that in English.
- The pupil premium is being used well to help specific groups of pupils so that their progress is better than that of their peers. Spending has been targeted on providing a coordinator who monitors these pupils' progress, one-to-one and small-group support, and extra training for both teachers and the other adults who support learning. Attainment levels for the pupil premium group (very largely those eligible for free school meals), reflected in average point scores in Year 2 national assessment data, are below those of other pupils in the school but the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils is closing in both English, especially reading, and in mathematics.
- Children enter The Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and aptitudes that are broadly typical for their age. On entry, however, a number of children have language, communication and mathematical skills which are below those typical of their age. They are well cared for in a happy environment and settle well into school routines. They make good progress and move into Year 1 with attainment which is, for many, above the national average. Progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 slows due to less effective teaching.
- The teaching of phonics (letter and the sounds they make) is excellent in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the proportion meeting the government's phonics screening check in Year 1 was in line with the national average in 2012. Many pupils improved greatly by overcoming the language difficulties they had on entry. In Key Stage 2, reading is a strength of the school and most pupils leave with skills above those typical for their age.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in both English and mathematics, is good and the gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils are closing. This is because the work and support that are planned for them, whether in small groups, individually or in lessons, are appropriately tailored to their learning needs.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning is improving but is not consistently good. As a result, the progress that pupils make is not rapid enough for them to reach their full learning potential, especially in writing.
- Too often, the expectations teachers have of what pupils can achieve are too low and activities fail to challenge pupils of different abilities. Many lessons lack a rapid learning pace and do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills within extended writing.

- Pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to develop their writing through longer pieces of work, so their skills lag behind those of reading. For example, opportunities to produce high-quality writing were missed during an English lesson, where pupils were asked to describe characters from books. Teachers spent too long discussing points with pupils instead of letting them write.
- Marking is not used consistently well throughout the school to give pupils advice about what to do next to take their learning forward. In some cases where work is marked well, the pupils are not given time to respond and, therefore, do not extend their understanding.
- There is improvement in teaching and much is good. The best teaching is characterised by well-paced lessons where activities are demanding for all abilities and excite interest. Questioning and discussion are used well to find out what pupils know and understand. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils were challenged to convert various weight and length measurements into different quantities. The teacher carefully checked each pupil's answer, dealt with any mistakes and then presented all with a harder task.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and is characterised by constantly high-quality questioning by all adults. This develops the children's thinking skills, makes them use a wider range of vocabulary and develops their imagination. Activities are demanding and exciting and so children develop a love of learning which continues with them even when teaching is less inspiring.
- Reading is well taught with plenty of opportunities for pupils to read widely. Pupils are encouraged to use the library and reading together supports their progress. Teaching assistants and parents also support this strong feature of pupils' achievement.
- The other adults in school who support the pupils' learning are used effectively by teachers. These highly skilled and motivated staff provide good support for those who are disabled, those with special educational needs and those eligible for the pupil premium.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils, parents and staff all think behaviour is good and believe the pupils are safe and well cared for in school.
- In discussions, pupils stated that behaviour is good. They have positive attitudes to learning, particularly when lessons are interesting, fun and challenging. Pupils have very good manners and are courteous. They socialise and work with each other and adults well, who they feel treat everyone fairly. Behaviour is not outstanding because some pupils, occasionally, become distracted when their work does not motivate them.
- Pupils understand the different types of bullying, including persistent name-calling, physical bullying and cyber bullying, and say there is little bullying at school, and when there is any, it is quickly dealt with. The school's records confirm this.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe, including e-safety when using the internet and road safety.
- Observations during playtimes and lunch breaks show that pupils play well together outside. There is a wide range of activities for them, and there are enough adults to supervise and to support the games the pupils played.

- Adults in school have a caring and nurturing approach and pupils feel well cared for. Adults set a good example to pupils at all times. Pupils say they are happy to talk to their teachers or other adults if they have a problem.
- Attendance is increasing and is now above average, because the school intervenes more quickly to ensure improved attendance by some pupils.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the pace of change has been too slow and achievement and teaching both require improvement. To a large extent, this is because of staffing continuity that leaders and managers could not anticipate or avoid. These difficulties are largely resolved.
- The headteacher is leading improvement well. The appointment of a substantive deputy headteacher has increased the pace of improvement. However, changes introduced have not, as yet, had time to have the impact intended to improve teaching and achievement to good. There is, currently, a strong management team with both the skills and clear vision to bring about more rapid improvement.
- The senior leadership team has made many improvements since the previous inspection and leadership is now shared across the school and is made strongly accountable for school performance. Middle leaders take responsibility for their subjects and year groups and are, in turn, held to account by both the senior leadership team and governors. These changes – and some better teaching – show that the school does have capacity to improve.
- The school has a good partnership with the local authority, who have provided both support and guidance. This help has assisted the headteacher in raising the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. The local authority continues to work in partnership with the school, providing advice and support where needed. The school has close links with other schools in the area and uses these effectively to provide training opportunities for staff and learning opportunities for the pupils. Specialist partnerships have been helpful to improvement.
- The school has good partnerships with its parents who are actively involved in supporting the school. There are regular parents' meetings and coffee and chat afternoons, which provide opportunities for parents to meet both staff and governors.
- The management of teachers' performance is linked to the current nationally expected standards for teachers. The checking done on teachers' performance identifies targets and professional development for each teacher. However, this improved practice in teaching has not yet had time to show in improved the rates of progress in all subjects and all year groups.
- The subjects pupils are taught are broad and balanced, and designed to promote equal opportunity for all pupils to learn through a range of exciting topics supported by various visits. There is a good range of after-school clubs, which the pupils fully enjoy and which are well attended.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and included in all subjects. It is an integral part of the whole school's work, for example in pupils' artwork, work on other countries, including religions.

■ All safeguarding requirements are met.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It holds leaders to account for school performance and is active in demanding improvement. It works closely with the senior leadership team and monitors the progress of pupils using data that the school provides and the national data available, which they understand. Governors use the data effectively to challenge the school on pupils' standards. For example, a recent focus has been the progress made by pupils in receipt of support through the pupil premium grant and governors have ensured the use of the extra funding has been effective. Governors evaluate the school's performance towards the priorities set in the development plan and have pressed for improvements. The governors undertake training to develop their understanding areas of their responsibilities. Regular meetings between the link governors and key members of staff make sure governors are informed about improvement in key areas for development, including in teaching. The governing body makes sure teachers' performance is linked to salary progression and promotion. The school's safeguarding procedures are monitored as required, as is the financial position of the school to ensure resources are used most effectively.

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	116672
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	405658

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	435
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Frapwell
Headteacher	Helen Wallace
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2011
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