

Cofton Primary School

Wootton Road, West Heath, Birmingham, B31 4ST

Inspection dates 27–28 September 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, the standards of attainment they reach in English and in mathematics are higher than those pupils should make for their age.
- All pupils, including those who need extra help, make good progress.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good. It is outstanding in Year 6.
- The vast majority of pupils show positive attitudes to learning in lessons. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is always good.
- The headteacher has secured a culture of success among the staff, and morale is high. Leaders, including governors, rigorously check and evaluate the effectiveness of the school's work.
- A clear and explicit link exists between key priorities and staff training. Consequently, pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching continue to improve.
- The headteacher and governing body have empowered leaders at all levels to develop their leadership skills successfully.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in writing is not as strong as it is in reading and mathematics, especially for boys.
- There is not enough outstanding teaching in the school to ensure pupils make rapid and sustained progress.
- The leadership of teaching and management of performance is not resulting in outstanding achievement.
- Pupils' attendance is not consistently above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons taught by nine teachers.
- Meetings were held with parents and carers, senior leaders, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to different groups of pupils and listened to them read.
- The school's safeguarding policies, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings, samples of pupils' work and records of their progress were looked at carefully.
- Inspectors analysed the questionnaire responses from nine staff. The views of 16 parents and carers were sought through the Parent View website. Other parents' and carers' views were gathered at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Sarah Warboys, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Martin Budge

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- There are more boys than girls.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is similar to the national average.
- The percentage of pupils supported by school action is average as is the proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Below average proportions of pupils come from minority ethnic heritages and, of these, very few speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The number of children in the Reception Year has increased in 2012 and, as a result, the school is undergoing a major refurbishment of its Early Years Foundation Stage unit.
- A holiday, before- and after-school club operates on the school site that is not managed by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing so that it is more aligned with the school's above-average standards in reading and mathematics. Build on recent successful initiatives to increase the imaginative, stimulating experiences that inspire pupils, and boys in particular, to write.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers use time more effectively to increase pupils' independent learning in all lessons
 - sharing the most effective practice that exists in the school.
- Strengthen partnerships with parents and carers to improve attendance so that it is consistently above average.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' attainment across the school is rising. The most recent results show that standards in Year 2 were above national averages for the first time in four years in reading, writing and mathematics. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, they are on average two terms ahead of expected levels.
- Results in writing are not as high as they are in reading and mathematics. This is particularly the case for boys. However, the attainment gap that previously existed between boys in the school and those nationally closed in 2012 for pupils in Years 2 and 6. The number of pupils achieving the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics is increasing.
- Pupils make good progress. The school's tracking of pupils' progress shows that an increasing proportion are making more than expected progress, particularly in mathematics. Those who need extra help are making good progress from their starting points because of the targeted support they receive.
- Additional funding received by the school has been used successfully to provide: one-to-one tuition, access to educational trips and extra help in lessons for those pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support. Consequently, almost all of these pupils made accelerated progress.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enter the school with skills that are broadly expected for their age. They make good progress so that they are well prepared for Year 1. Adults make good use of children's interests to provide learning opportunities which help them to develop new skills.
- Pupils enjoy reading. Current standards of reading are above average in all year groups except in Year 5. Early and more complex reading skills are taught regularly and systematically. Information and communication technology is raising the profile of reading and is increasing pupils' rates of progress through the regular use of interactive books.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is enhanced through the school's organisation of teaching reading, writing, mathematics and communication skills alongside other subjects. For example, in Year 6, a history theme inspired pupils to write, with particular empathy, about being an evacuee in the Second World War.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and improving, and there are examples of outstanding teaching in Year 6. As a result of consistently good teaching over time, almost all pupils currently in the school make good progress and achieve well. Those pupils who took the national tests in English and mathematics in 2012 made good progress during their time in the school.
- In all lessons, good relationships support learning. Adults praise pupils' efforts and value their contributions. Other adults provide tailored support for those who need extra help. Consequently, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those for whom the pupil premium provides support, make good progress from their starting points.

- In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations. They use assessment information effectively and accurately to plan activities that closely match pupils' needs and abilities. Adults are skilled in asking pupils' searching questions which allow them to demonstrate their understanding and clarify their thinking.
- In less effective lessons, opportunities for active learning are limited. Teachers spend too long explaining the learning to pupils and the pace of learning slows. In a small number of lessons observed during the inspection, a few pupils became restless in the longer teaching sessions and began to lose interest.
- Where teachers plan for more independent learning, pupils make better progress. For example, they made excellent gains in understanding the speed at which micro-organisms spread through the use of an engaging video clip. Pupils worked closely together to compose a poster on computers to promote good hygiene practices; they consolidated this new knowledge well.
- Teachers plan exciting activities to promote and engage and interest. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn language skills well. In one lesson, for example, adults used carefully chosen questions and enabled them to learn and use new words, such as 'faster', 'slower', 'longer', 'shorter', 'more' and 'less', confidently and accurately. The teacher made good use of the children's fascination in a range of different timers which she had provided.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work identifies what they have done well and gives precise guidance about how they can improve. Pupils across the school are very clear about the 'green for good' and 'pink for think' marking. This effective written feedback makes a significant contribution to pupils' good rates of progress.
- Staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills effectively, encouraging them to play and work together, taking turns. Pupils acknowledge each other's achievements in a celebration assembly. Adults actively teach appropriate behaviour and encourage good manners and politeness.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Typically, pupils' behaviour in school is good. They are polite and courteous as they move around the school. At the time of the inspection, teachers and other adults were establishing new routines and classroom practices. All pupils were responsive to their guidance.
 - Pupils say that they feel safe. They know how to stay safe when using the internet. A very small number of pupils say that, on very rare occasions, there has been bullying in the past. They gave 'name calling' as an example, but said incidents are quickly resolved. They say that they are entirely confident that staff will take their concerns seriously.
 - Most parents and carers who recorded their views on Parent View or spoke directly to inspectors felt that behaviour is good in the school. A few indicated that, where concerns had been raised with the headteacher or with the staff, these were dealt with quickly and efficiently.
 - Pupils' behaviour is managed well. The school's records show that it has improved over
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time. One pupil commented, 'I used to be a naughty boy. I now see the point in learning and want to do well.' Pupils show positive attitudes to learning in lessons and respond well to the school's behaviour management systems.

- The school works well with outside agencies to help pupils who need additional support. Strengthening partnerships with parents and carers have helped remove barriers to learning for individuals and improved their attendance. However, despite the recent improvement in the last academic year, attendance remains only average.

The leadership and management are good

- Led by a committed and determined headteacher, leaders and managers have secured improvements in all key aspects of the school's performance, particularly in teaching and pupils' achievement. Good progress has been made on the areas for development identified at the previous inspection.
- The school's capacity to secure further improvement is good. A strong sense of community and teamwork exists throughout the school. Leadership of the school is widely distributed. Those in charge know the school's strengths and areas for improvement well. As a result, they are sharply focused on the school's key priorities.
- The leadership of teaching and management of staff performance are closely linked to teachers' professional development. The headteacher and other leaders regularly check and evaluate the effectiveness of any training to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement.
- Staff are reflective of their practice. They are keen to learn from the most effective practice in the school and from each other to improve their skills. However, staff development has not been sufficient to secure consistently outstanding teaching and achievement, particularly in writing.
- Leaders rigorous tracking of pupils' progress ensures equality of opportunity. Any form of discrimination is tackled with due care and attention. Those pupils in danger of falling behind, for whatever reason, are identified early and targeted support is provided for individual pupils and small groups of pupils.
- The school's programme for teaching is reviewed regularly and adapted to meet the needs and interests of its pupils. It promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Partnerships with other schools and the local community enable pupils to expand their horizons and, as a consequence, they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - regularly holds the school to account for its performance
 - has brought about improvements to the quality of teaching over time and ultimately raised pupils' achievement
 - is well-organised and utilises the skills and expertise of its members well
 - implements effectively the appropriate systems to manage the performance of staff
 - is managing the school's financial resources prudently so that money is spent on improving

- the quality of what the school has to offer for children
- ensures that statutory requirements for safeguarding children are met.

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	103315
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	400609

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Shattock
Headteacher	Elizabeth Richardson
Date of previous school inspection	14 July 2010
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