

Netherton CofE Primary School

Highbridge Road, Netherton, Dudley, DY2 0HU

Inspection dates 30–31 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- While achievement and the quality of teaching have improved, teaching has not been good enough to make up for the inadequate progress that older pupils had made in earlier years.
- Key Stage 2 test results show that pupils do not make enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching does not always meet the needs of different ability groups in each class, particularly the most able.
- In some lessons, learning is too slow because pupils do not get on with their work quickly enough and have to listen too long to their teacher.

The school has the following strengths

- Since the last inspection, leaders have had a big impact on improving the overall quality of teaching and in raising achievement.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make a good start.
- Pupils in most year groups now make good progress because teaching is helping them to catch up where they had previously fallen behind.
- In the main pupils behave well and take an interest in their work.
- Pupils who need additional help with their work, and those for whom the school receives extra funding, benefit from good support and make better progress than other pupils.
- The governing body has become far better at making sure the school is being successful and, along with leaders and the local authority, has made sure the school is no longer judged inadequate.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 16 lessons and heard groups of pupils read. They conducted two learning walks; one to look at the teaching of calculation and the second to investigate how pupils are taught to sound out their letters when they are learning to read. Some observations were joint visits with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff, pupils, a representative from the local authority and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. They spoke to parents and carers as they collected their children at the end of school and met with a small group of parents who had requested a meeting.
- They took account of the 16 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own pupil and parents and carer questionnaires. They observed the school's work and analysed 26 staff questionnaires.
- They scrutinised results for 2012 tests and assessment records. They looked at, the minutes of the meetings of the governing body and the school's development plans and evaluations from the school and the local authority.

Inspection team

Michael Smith, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Deborah Whittle

Additional Inspector

Philip Scull

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- The school is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Around a third of the pupils are eligible for pupil premium (additional government funds to support particular pupils, including looked-after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals). This is an above-average proportion.
- Just over a tenth of pupils are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. This is above average. Less than a tenth of pupils are supported through school action, which is below average.
- The school has received a number of awards including those for Leading Parent Partnership, Basic Skills and Gold Arts Mark.
- Since the previous inspection there have been a number of staffing changes, with around a third of the teaching staff starting in September 2012.
- In April 2012, the school received a monitoring visit for schools which had been given a notice to improve. It was judged to be making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve further the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - teaching is planned to meet the needs of all pupils in the class, particularly the most able
 - when pupils are asked questions, they cannot give simple one word answers but need to explain their answers in more detail
 - opportunities are provided for pupils to improve their speaking and listening skills by more time for discussion and using this discussion to help pupils with their writing.
- Raise achievement so that more pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 by ensuring that:
 - lessons start well with pupils settling down to work quickly without listening to their teacher for too long
 - work always challenges and interests pupils so that they make good progress in lessons and over time.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Results in the Key Stage 2 tests show that pupils have reached higher levels in their writing than last year, although last year's levels were very low. Standards in reading have improved and are now close to the national figures. Although the progress made by pupils during Key Stage 2 is not yet good, it is broadly average, particularly for the higher ability pupils. This is because they have had to make up for a number of years when they had made inadequate progress.
- In some lessons pupils are not all challenged so that the higher ability pupils complete the same work as others or they do not find work interesting. Pupils often have to listen for a long time before they get down to their work and then pupils do learn quickly enough.
- Children start in the Nursery with lower abilities than other children of their age. They often have low levels in the early stages of learning to read. They make good progress across all areas and start Year 1 with skills which are broadly average.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 in their writing and mathematics. The school helps pupils with their reading through daily sessions of reading to an adult. This includes helping them use the sounds that letters make (phonics) to help them read. Pupils make good progress in the way in which they calculate and learn about numbers.
- The school has improved the way in which it checks how well pupils are progressing. Records show that more pupils make good progress during the year and younger pupils have been successful in making up for previous slower progress.
- Pupils who need additional support for their learning are making better progress than other pupils. There is a similar picture for pupils for whom the school receives additional funds through the pupil premium. For both of these groups, additional support for their reading and number work has meant that the school has been successful in raising their attainment at a quicker rate than others and closing the gap between their levels and all pupils.
- The quality of pupils' written work has improved. Pupils have opportunities to write when they are doing work on their topics. This has given greater relevance to what pupils write and makes good links with other subjects. Pupils also use their mathematics during their topic work, for example using a timeline to see how the history of the Aztecs linked with events in England.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is improving but there is still some variability in its quality. It is not yet good enough to make sure that pupils consistently make good progress.
- Teachers who teach the same age groups plan their lessons together. However, at times, work does not always meet the needs of all pupils within the class. This means that higher ability pupils are not always stretched and they sometimes find their work too easy.
- In some classes, teachers use questions well. They get pupils to explain their answers fully. This helps pupils to develop a good understanding of their work. However, in other classes, too many questions are simple and can be answered by one word. Pupils do not have to explain why or how they have worked out their answers and, as a result, the questioning does not help them

with their understanding.

- In lessons, pupils often work in groups. Pupils then discuss their work before deciding how to answer questions or what to write. In the best lessons, pupils are encouraged to speak to each other and also to make sure they listen to each other well. However, this is not the same in all classes and, in some, pupils do not use the opportunity for discussion to help them with their work.
- In all classes there are very good relationships between staff and pupils.
- The quality of marking has improved and is good. Work and books are marked well and often give pupils extra work for them to complete at the start of the next lesson. This gives pupils time to practise work they had got wrong or to extend their work by thinking about the next step they have to take.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school because lessons are usually fun and interesting, although there are exceptions. They enjoy the way in which they work on their topics, especially when they are able to go on an educational visit. Some groups were eagerly looking forward to visiting a local chocolate factory. They felt that teachers really cared for them.
- Teaching allows pupils to think about where they live and the lives of children in other countries; for example, Gambia. Artwork around the school, along with many displays of pupils' work, makes pupils feel proud of their efforts and of the school. These, along with the work they do in religious education and assemblies, help support pupils' spiritual awareness. Pupils were observed measuring out on the school playing field how long the side of one of the great pyramids was. They were amazed to find that the school field was not big enough.
- Pupils enjoy learning about different cultures, including through music and drama. Social development is strong during group work. In the Nursery and Reception classes, children learn to play together and to share. Pupils have a good moral understanding of right and wrong, and also how of they can help each other.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour around school and in lessons is good. If a pupil is distracted, it is usually because they are given work that is too easy or too hard. The school's new behaviour policy has had a positive impact on behaviour.
 - The school works well with parents, and the local church, to make sure that there is a strong family and faith atmosphere. Pupils have a sense of belonging and they feel safe. There are good procedures to ensure they are safe. For instance, the school has made sure that all pupils understand the dangers from fire and fireworks as Bonfire Night approaches. This has also included visits from the local fire brigade.
 - Pupils say bullying incidents are rare because they get on well together and there is good supervision within school. Pupils know about the different types of bullying. They have received good training on the dangers of giving too much information out when using a computer, as well as how to make sure they do not access inappropriate sites on the internet. Pupils understand the consequences of bullying to the victim and also the person doing the bullying.
 - Attendance has improved and is broadly average. The fraction of pupils who have too much time
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off school has reduced but it is still high for some families, although the school is working closely with them to help them to see the importance of good attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders, along with governors and the local authority, have been successful in bringing about significant improvements to the quality of teaching and in raising achievement within the school. They rightly recognise that more is needed before the school can be considered good. Nevertheless, they have reversed the downward trend and have established detailed policies and procedures to carry on improving. There is a clear improvement plan which includes ways to check how effective the school has been in bringing about the identified improvements.
 - All staff who answered their questionnaire said they had confidence in the school's leaders and that they were proud to work at the school. Leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and those areas in need of improvement. They also have a good understanding of what makes a good lesson and how they can help teachers get better.
 - The leadership to improve the quality of teaching has been successful in making sure there is no inadequate teaching and that an increasing proportion is good. New teachers to the school, including those who are new to teaching, said that they feel well supported and that they can get advice whenever they need it.
 - The school frequently checks how well teachers are teaching. All teachers know they have areas which they need to improve. These are linked to both areas which the whole school is working on and areas for individuals on how to improve their own teaching. The governors make sure that those teachers who successfully meet their targets are suitably rewarded.
 - The local authority has worked well with the school and recognises how much it has improved. It is confident that the school will build on its successes and continue to get better.
 - The school has introduced a new way for pupils to study topics. Each topic includes a variety of different subjects, for example the work on Egyptians brings together aspects of geography, history and art, as well as mathematics and opportunities for pupils to read and write. This also contributes to the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Many lessons include practical work and pupils are able to complete investigations in mathematics to help them reason for themselves.
 - The school uses its pupil premium funds well to support pupils. It has funded additional time for teaching assistants in classrooms, small-group support work, and some one-to-one support, by both teaching assistants and teachers. The school also employs a member of staff to help pupils learn better and provides additional support for reading and helping pupils with their number work. Pupils who have received this help have done better than other pupils nationally in Year 2 assessments. In Key Stage 2 tests, pupils who have received additional support have also made better progress than other pupils. The school reports on its website to parents and carers how much money is available, what it is spent on and how effective it has been. This information is also reported to governors.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. Governors have improved the way in which they work, including their committees. They challenge the school to improve constantly and check how well the school is doing by observing lessons and looking at work in pupils' books. Governors check
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to make sure that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet all current requirements. Governors check how well different groups of pupils achieve to make sure that no group does less well than others. One governor always checks on how well any children who are looked after achieve.

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	103841
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	399639

This inspection of the school 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	354
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Laver
Headteacher	Andrew Rushton
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2011
Telephone number	01384 816895
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