

Cottesbrooke Junior School

Cedars Avenue, , Birmingham, B27 6JL

Inspection dates 21–22 November 2012

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		Requires improvement	3
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 has been too slow for several years. Although it has improved over the past year in reading and mathematics, there has been less improvement in writing. Frequent staff changes have hampered the consistent progress of pupils.
- Teaching is inconsistent. Consequently, some pupils, often the more-able, are not moved on quickly enough to learn at the pace of which they are capable.
- The school does not have a good relationship with a minority of parents and carers.
- Nearly all pupils behave well, but a small number can sometimes distract the learning of others. A small minority do not fully understand the dangers of bullying when using the internet or mobile phones.
- The governing body knows the school's priorities for improvement but has not played a full part in raising the achievement of pupils or monitoring the performance of staff.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior and middle leaders of the school have been instrumental in raising the achievement and attainment of pupils in reading and mathematics, and have laid firm foundations for future progress.
- Pupils are well cared for. Most express enjoyment of and pride in their school, and enthusiasm for their learning and 'reaching good grades'.
- The school is truly multi-cultural, and an inclusive community offering a wide range of learning opportunities.
- Pupils for whom the school receives additional funding make good progress in reading and mathematics.
- School leaders provide effective support and guidance to staff new to teaching.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 21 lessons or part lessons taught by 15 teachers.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, members of the senior management team, two members of the governing body and an officer from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work. They examined school improvement plans and self-evaluation, safeguarding arrangements, health and safety and behavioural logs, school policies, and a range of pupils' work.
- Inspectors took account of 31 responses to the online Parent View survey, as well as two telephone calls and several discussions with parents and carers.
- Inspectors also examined responses from 21 members of staff.

Inspection team

Rodney Braithwaite, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Julie Bourdon-Pierre

Additional Inspector

Kathryn Skan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cottesbrooke Junior School is bigger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is double the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is above average, as is the proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through pupil premium funding is higher than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been a number of changes to teaching staff in the last year, including the appointment of six newly qualified teachers.
- The school provides a daily early morning breakfast club, which is managed by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in order to sustain and build on pupils' achievement in English and mathematics by:
 - guiding and supporting teachers in developing a broader range of opportunities for writing in subjects other than English
 - ensuring that pupils, especially the more able, move as quickly as possible on to activities
 - which fully challenge them, so that they have the time especially, to complete written tasks
 - improving the monitoring and guidance given to pupils in their reading diaries, including
 - encouraging pupils to use their reading skills to help improve their writing.
- Strengthen and develop the present partnership with parents and carers by:
 - helping all parents and carers to gain a clear understanding of the schools' priorities for improvement and of the role of governors in the management of the school
 - taking measures to ensure that parents and carers know the procedures to be followed when they have concerns or issues to raise with the school
 - introducing wider opportunities for parents and carers to join with the school in working for the benefit of their children's education and personal development.
- Develop and improve the contribution of the governing body by ensuring that governors receive specific and regular training to enable them to evaluate the school's performance, especially in relation to the achievement of pupils, and the performance management and pay of teachers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In the last few years, standards have mostly been below average in English and mathematics. Not all pupils achieved as well as they could. In 2012, however, the attainment of pupils improved considerably in reading and mathematics, and, at the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment was average in English, and slightly above average in mathematics.
- Although the rise only reflects improvement in one year, there are promising signs in all year groups that this better progress is on track to be continued in the future. In Years 5 and 6, the school's data suggests that most pupils are now making the progress expected of pupils of this age, although fewer are making better than expected progress.
- There is a similar picture in Years 3 and 4, and teachers and school leaders realise that good achievement, for the majority of pupils throughout the school, will require continued and accelerated progress in learning, especially in the development of writing skills.
- There has, over time, been some inconsistency in the achievement of different groups of pupils. Boys, in Year 6 last year, for example, made less than expected progress in writing, but girls made much better than expected progress in mathematics. There were also differences in the progress of different ethnic groups. However, better analysis of pupils' progress is now helping to iron out these differences.
- Similarly, pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language, have made varying progress in the past. It is now more consistent and these pupils' achievement is rising.
- Pupils for whom the school receives premium funding made good progress in 2012, and continue to do so. The school is using the funding effectively, so that the gap between the attainment of these pupils and that of other pupils has narrowed almost to equality.
- Reading standards are rising consistently. The school has improved the quality of its reading books. Pupils read enthusiastically and often with good expression. Importantly, older pupils, especially, know that the more they read the more it will help them to improve their writing skills, 'Because books give us a much better vocabulary'.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving, the school is still trying to eliminate some inconsistencies. These have been brought about partly by the many staff changes which have taken place in recent years.
- Much of the teaching observed in the inspection was good, with some examples of outstanding practice; no teaching was inadequate. However, for teaching to be good overall, teachers must use their knowledge of pupils more effectively, especially in English and mathematics when pupils are organised into ability sets, so that all groups of pupils have suitably challenging work. Sometimes groups of, for example, more-able pupils, are not moved on quickly enough to prepared activities which will extend their learning.
- Teachers make considerable effort to encourage pupils' literacy skills through speaking and discussion of each others' work. However, some teachers themselves talk for too long, and

sometimes when there are writing tasks, pupils do not have sufficient time to complete them.

- Pupils have frequent opportunities for writing in English lessons, but rather fewer in other subjects. Their verbal recall of things they have learnt and done is better than their written recording.
- Teaching is most effective where teachers have good subject knowledge, check pupils' understanding frequently and have high expectations for pupils of all abilities. Examples of this were seen in lessons in Year 6 on time differences around the world and in Year 4 when pupils were engaged in the morning mental session of 'Big Maths', and the teacher made a number of learning points, and moved pupils rapidly through a series of challenging problems.
- Teachers work closely with teaching assistants, who are involved in many support activities to assist learning and, occasionally, behaviour. Adults plan together effectively for the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and for those who speak English as an additional language.
- Marking has improved, and most pupils remember their targets for improving their work, which teachers indicate consistently in their books. Pupils' reading record books, which are mostly filled in by the pupils themselves, give too little guidance from adults on how pupils are doing and how they could improve their reading skills and use them to help their writing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Although many pupils behave consistently well in classes and around the school, a small number are occasionally disruptive and can disturb the learning of other pupils. This has led to several pupil exclusions in recent years.
- The school has taken steps which are proving to be helpful in enabling all pupils to understand their responsibilities to others and the consequences of their own behaviour. In particular, teaching assistants are closely involved in providing nurture and encouragement to pupils requiring support and guidance.
- Many pupils have a good understanding of all types of bullying, and identify several differences in how pupils can react with each other. Most pupils understand the dangers of cyber-bullying. A small number, though, do not yet appreciate the dangers of bullying through the use of mobile telephones or the internet, as has been shown in a couple of recent incidents.
- The school is a lively and safe environment where pupils regularly show their enthusiasm for learning. The great majority of them are polite and respectful towards each other and adults.
- The school has extensive links with external support agencies. These help in providing for the needs of pupils and families in difficult circumstances, and pupils who have difficulty in managing their own behaviour.
- Attendance and punctuality, which have been issues for the school in the past, have both improved, and are now average. This is as a result of effective procedures instigated by school leaders.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the improvement of the school but has been hampered by the frequent changes of staff the school has had to deal with. This has affected continuity in teaching and learning in the school and, until recently, caused some underachievement by pupils.
- The school engages productively with a good majority of parents and carers, as was shown in a recent positive parent's survey. However, recent controversy with some parents over alleged misreporting of proposals for organising the school day has proved to be a further distraction for the headteacher and school leaders. This has illustrated the need to improve communication between the school and parents and to strengthen the home-school partnership.
- Other school leaders have risen to the recent challenge of increased opportunities to develop their leadership skills. The deputy headteacher has been particularly effective over this difficult period, and is also a good teaching role model for staff.
- Senior leaders are involved in leading improvements in pupils' achievement, reinforcing the inclusivity of the school, and successfully mentoring several staff new to teaching.
- The management of teaching has been improved by the introduction of more effective strategies for evaluating and developing teaching. These link school priorities closely to the performance management of teachers.
- The school promotes equal opportunities effectively, offering a range of interesting and stimulating activities. This helps to promote pupils' wider learning, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. School leaders ensure that there is no discrimination through gender, disability, special educational needs or ethnic heritage.
- The local authority has been supportive of the school over time, and has made good contributions to improvements in the school and its performance.
- The use of the pupil premium funding is well planned by leaders, and its value for money is carefully measured. The school has used this substantial fund to provide mentoring and counselling for some pupils, one-to-one additional adult support, and provision of extra teaching for the specific needs of individual pupils. This has led to a strong improvement in the attainment and progress of these pupils in English and mathematics.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very supportive of the school and understand some of its strengths and weaknesses. There is a strong reliance by the governing body on school leaders, especially the headteacher, to provide information and guidance to help their understanding of the school's performance, including over how pupil premium funding is spent and its effectiveness is monitored. Consequently, as governors indicate, they are not yet fully trained in how to exercise their increased roles in relating school targets to improving pupils' progress and the quality of teachers' performance. They are proactive in making decisions about relating the headteacher's pay to targets, but rely more on advice when considering pay awards for teachers. Members also realise that parents and carers do not all understand the governing body's role and responsibilities in the leadership and management of the school. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet the regulatory requirements, and that school policies are reviewed on a regular basis.

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	103280
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	404864

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

Type of school	Juitor
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	354
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janette Hill
Headteacher	Pearl Jones
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2011
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