

Court Farm Primary School

Tedbury Crescent, Erdington, Birmingham, B23 5NS

Inspection dates 13–14 February 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

- Teachers do not always plan work that is at the right level of difficulty for all groups of pupils.
- Pupils are not always clear about how they can improve their work.
- Achievement requires improvement because progress across the school and for different groups is inconsistent.
- Progress in English, particularly reading, is slower than in mathematics.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunity to work together in groups or independently and so take responsibility for their own learning.
- Subject leaders and the leader of Early Years Foundation Stage have not had enough opportunity to drive improvements in teaching and pupils' progress.
- Members of the governing body have not had a full understanding of their role and so have not monitored the progress of pupils closely enough or been aware of the quality of teaching in the school.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has a clear vision and commitment to raise achievement for all pupils. She is relentless in helping staff to understand what they must do to improve the quality of teaching.
- The consistent, good teaching of sounds that letters make is beginning to improve pupils' reading skills. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 screening check in 2012 was above the national average.
- Pupils enjoy school, play well together and say they feel safe.
- Pupils speak enthusiastically about the different trips, visitors to school and special days that help them understand the subjects they are studying.
- Staff correctly say that the improvements made by the headteacher and senior leaders are making a real difference to the pupils' learning and safety.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons and part lessons and saw 20 members of staff teaching and working with the pupils. They were accompanied by the headteacher or deputy headteacher in seven of the lesson observations.
- Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and with pupils from Year 6.
- The inspectors heard pupils read from Years 2, 4 and 6.
- Inspectors looked at the school’s development plans and monitoring files, the headteacher’s leadership files, and arrangements for performance management of staff, and evaluated the work of the governing body. They also looked at the school’s records of pupils’ progress and evaluated work in pupils’ books.
- There were two responses to the on-line parent questionnaire (Parent View) and so no information is available. Inspectors held informal discussions with parents and carers at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Jenny Batelen, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Enid Korn

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school with seven classes.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Reception class.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. These include pupils with complex learning needs and behavioural and social emotional needs.
- An above-average proportion of pupils come from a range of backgrounds including Pakistani, African, White and Black Caribbean and White European.
- The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school other than at normal times is higher than average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language and start school, either in the Early Years Foundation Stage or in different year groups, speaking little or no English.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is above the national average. This is extra government money given to schools for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher, senior leadership team and several other new staff have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- Pupils are educated on site. No alternative offsite provision is used.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good and so accelerate the progress of all groups of pupils by:
 - ensuring that teachers use information on pupils' attainment to plan work that is always at the right level of difficulty for each pupil
 - telling pupils very clearly how well they are doing and what they must do to improve further
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work together in groups and independently
 - giving children in the Early Years Foundation Stage more opportunities to explore and learn in the outside environment
 - ensuring that pupils develop and use their knowledge of sounds and letters to improve their reading and writing skills.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - strengthening the skills of the subject leaders and the leader of Early Years Foundation Stage so that they can help drive improvements in teaching and in pupils' progress
 - ensuring that an external review of governance is undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance can be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Progress for all pupils, including those from a range of backgrounds, across the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is variable. Some pupils make progress that is better than that expected for their age, particularly in mathematics. Other pupils do not always make enough progress, especially in Year 5.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skill below those expected for their age in all areas of learning, but particularly low in communication, language and literacy. Progress is variable, particularly as the opportunities for children to explore and find out for themselves are limited. Previous checks on children's progress have not been consistently reliable, but this is now corrected and progress is carefully checked.
- Standards when pupils leave the school in Year 6 have been below average over time. There is evidence of improving standards and progress throughout the school and the current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach standards that are broadly average.
- Standards in reading have been the lowest in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. This is because previously there was no teaching of phonics (sounds that letters make) and so pupils' literacy skills in reading unfamiliar texts were limited. However, pupils have more confidence now to use the skills they are learning during the phonics sessions and reading standards are rising along with confidence in the use of the sounds they have learnt.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in targeted support group work. However, this progress is not consolidated in class lessons as the work does not always match their learning needs and understanding.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make variable progress, sometimes below that of their peers. The school has evidence to show that the gap between the attainment of these pupils and that of others is closing, particularly in Years 1 to 4. The extra funding is used effectively to provide additional adult support, particularly through small-group activities, resources to support learning and also to enrich the pupils' experiences and so enhance their understanding of the subjects they study.
- Pupils who speak little or no English, who often join the school other than at the usual time, are given good support to develop the communication skills necessary for them to understand their work. Translations of homework, feedback comments in their home language and the support of their friends mean they quickly settle and make good progress.
- Other pupils who join school during the year are helped to settle, to mix with their peers and so begin to make progress in their learning.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teachers do not consistently plan lessons that enable all pupils to make good progress in their lessons. Work does not always match pupils' prior learning and so they waste time because it is too easy or too hard. The school has worked effectively to improve the reliability of data about pupils' attainment, but teachers are not all confident in using this in planning work at the right level for all pupils.

- Pupils know the levels they are working at and older pupils know their targets, but they do not have clear guidance about what they need to do to reach the higher levels. Teachers do not always refer to individual targets during lessons and, as a result, pupils are not able to concentrate on making sure they work towards achieving them.
- Teaching is improving because of a new arrangement whereby pupils are told what they are expected to have learnt by the end of the lesson. Not all teachers use this effectively, because they do not always show pupils how to judge for themselves if they have reached the intended learning. In their marking, teachers use different colours to show the pupils where they have succeeded and where there is still more to do. Pupils are sometimes not given enough time to reflect on and respond to this careful advice. As a result, pupils do not always know how well they have done and how they can make their work better.
- Although pupils work well together they are not given enough opportunities to work in groups and in pairs or to contribute their ideas to what they should learn. This limits their chances of learning from each other as well as from their teacher.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are not given enough opportunity to explore and learn in the outside environment. As a result, their progress slows because they are not accessing the full range of resources and leading their own learning.
- Where teaching is good there is an excellent use of resources that engage pupils in their learning. Pupils in Year 1, learning to tell the time, made good use of analogue clock faces on a hand held computer to learn 'o' clock' as well as practising counting the right way round the clock face.
- All teachers make strong links between the subjects that pupils are learning, particularly in writing. Pupils in Year 3 made good progress in developing their use of language as they described a fossil, thus linking this work closely to their study of dinosaurs.
- Problem-solving skills are developed well and this is particularly strong when pupils work together. This was clear when groups in Year 6 worked out the cost of paint for decorating the classroom, using their knowledge of area and perimeter.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is typically good. They are well-mannered and polite and very pleased to talk about their school with visitors.
- Pupils new to the school are helped to settle quickly and to understand what is expected of them, so that they can work and play with their peers.
- Clear procedures for the management of behaviour and effective behaviour support ensure that pupils who find it difficult to manage their feelings are helped to get on well with others. The school has clear evidence of improvements for such pupils. The level of fixed-term exclusions has declined from the previous inspection to be in line with the average.
- Sometimes, when the work does not closely match their abilities, pupils do not concentrate as hard as they might and lose focus on their learning.
- Pupils report that there is no bullying, of any sort, in the school now. As one pupil said, 'The headteacher has sorted it out', and this is borne out by school records. As a result, pupils feel

safe and secure in school. They understand how to keep themselves safe at home, in school and when out and about. For example, they understand the risks when using modern technologies.

- The school has implemented a range of strategies to improve attendance and this is beginning to rise. The school clearly explains to parents the importance of attendance and has some examples of individual attendance that has risen considerably from very low and has thus allowed these particular pupils to make good progress.
- Parents told inspectors how pleased they were with the care their children receive in school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The new headteacher has brought clear vision and decisive action to make improvements and so ensure that there is no discrimination against any group or individual. She has established a strong and equally committed senior leadership team who are well supported by the staff. Resulting improvements – for example, the impact on reading standards of phonics teaching – show that the school has the capacity to improve.
- Leaders of subjects and of the Early Years Foundation Stage have only recently been able to focus on improving teaching and progress in their areas of responsibility. Training and senior leaders' support ensures that they are rapidly securing the necessary knowledge to lead effectively in their areas.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been relentless in tackling underperformance in the quality of teaching. Teachers are now very clear about what is required and targets set for improvement are linked to pupils' progress and whole school priorities. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving so that monitoring shows an increasing proportion of good quality lessons observed both during the inspection and over time.
- Senior leaders are evaluating the work of the school and have clearly identified areas for improvements. The improving attendance and evidence of improving progress indicate the effectiveness of these developments. They recognise the need to involve all stakeholders in determining future developments.
- The range of subjects studied through themes is enlivened by memorable experiences such as visits to sites of interest, residential visits, theatre companies, sports providers, and instrumental tuition. These studies make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly the cultural aspect.
- The school is developing the relationship with parents through drop-in sessions and opportunities for well-being classes. Parents value these opportunities to meet with each other and with staff and to understand the work of the school.
- Safeguarding requirements are met, so that pupils are kept safe and free from harm. Staff and governors are vetted and trained in child protection procedures.
- The local authority has provided strong support to the new headteacher, particularly in strengthening leadership and management skills.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is now aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and understand how pupils are progressing, compared with all pupils nationally. However, they

have relied too much on information they are given and are not sufficiently equipped to ask pertinent questions to understand what the school is doing to improve the achievement of pupils. They know about the system of checking on teachers' performance and the link to salary, but have not monitored this closely enough to ensure that rewards in pay and promotion link to pupils' progress. They check how the pupil premium has been allocated and understand how this makes a difference for these pupils. The governing body has recently restructured in order to make more effective use of the range of skills amongst its members.

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	103267
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	400601

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	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Buck
Headteacher	Madeleine Wilkinson
Date of previous school inspection	14 September 2009
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