

Cotwall End Primary School

Cotwall End Road, Sedgley, Dudley, DY3 3YG

Inspection dates 6–7 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- The Year 6 pupils did not make as much progress as they should last year and, therefore, did not achieve the standards of which they were capable.
- Although the large majority of the teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good or better, there are still areas for improvement.
- The teaching has not been sufficiently challenging to ensure that the more-able pupils make as much progress as they should.
- Inconsistency in the marking and the use of pupils' individual targets mean that pupils are not always clear about how to improve their work and reach the next level of performance.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills and knowledge in their topic work.
- Teachers miss opportunities to encourage pupils to use more extensive vocabulary.
- The good improvements now being made in the quality of teaching and in pupils' progress have not been sustained for long enough for the school to be graded good.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, well supported by the staff and governing body, has been quick to address previous weaknesses and put in place actions that are having a clear impact on improving teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Relationships within the school are a real strength.
- Behaviour in lessons and around school is good and sometimes exemplary, and pupils feel safe and enjoy school.
- The school leaders provide a curriculum that motivates and enthuses the pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons, of which five were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. All classes were observed at least once.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils, three governors who form part of the governing body's school improvement committee, members of the teaching staff, and the school's local authority representative.
- There were 105 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Parents' views were also sought through discussions at the start and end of the school day and during the school's sports day.
- The inspector also took account of the 44 questionnaires completed by members of the school staff.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, documents relating to safeguarding, and the minutes of various meetings.

Inspection team

Nigel Grimshaw, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janet Catto	Additional Inspector
Stephanie James	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of the pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the additional funding provided for children in the care of the local authority, from service families, and those children known to be eligible for free school meals (the pupil premium) is below average. There are currently three children who are looked after by the local authority and there is one pupil from service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or who have a statement of special educational needs, is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has had a disrupted year with the building used by Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) and the Early Years Foundation Stage pupils having had to close for unforeseen and urgent repairs from the start of September to the end of November 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, by:
 - addressing the inconsistencies in the marking of pupils' work, particularly the guidance given to pupils
 - ensuring that the work planned for pupils challenges the more able pupils in every lesson
 - providing more frequent opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and that of their peers in lessons
 - where teaching is already good, increase the percentage of outstanding practice
 - sharing the outstanding practice in teaching that exists in the school so that teachers can learn from each other.
- Improve progress in literacy and mathematics by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills and knowledge in subject areas other than mathematics
 - ensuring that teachers maximise opportunities for developing and extending vocabulary
 - ensuring that better and more consistent use is made of the pupils' individual targets.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement.

- Pupils enter the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge just below those expected for their age and initially make good progress because of the good and outstanding teaching observed and the good induction procedures. However, pupils' results by the end of Year 6 have fluctuated over the last few years and they dipped below the national averages for the first time in 2012, particularly in mathematics.
- It is particularly the results of the more-able pupils that are lower than the equivalent national figures, mainly because the work set for them in lessons is not always challenging enough to extend their thinking and learning.
- Pupils are not always clear about how to improve their work and the steps required to reach the next level. Teachers also miss opportunities in planning work for the pupils to apply their numeracy skills in other subject areas, mainly through topic work.
- Pupils' progress through the school was slightly below the national average in 2011 but declined to well below expected levels in 2012, prompting a swift and effective response from the school's leaders and governors.
- From the school's own data and from the work seen in pupils' books and in lessons, progress has improved significantly because of the actions taken. Progress is now good and above expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- From the work seen and the school's records, the pupils are now on track to reach attainment levels that are above average again in 2013 and to improve still further the following year.
- The improvements in standards and progress are because of the rigorous and successful focus by the headteacher and other school leaders on improving the quality of teaching.
- The experienced special needs coordinator has organised the support and provision for the disabled pupils and those with special educational needs very effectively. Teachers and support staff have received good-quality training and the school tracks the progress of each pupil carefully. As a result, these pupils make good progress.
- In 2012, the pupils eligible for pupil premium funding were performing less well than their peers and were up to half a year behind in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the leaders have spent the funding very effectively on additional teaching and the improved use of well-trained teaching assistants. The school's current data show that these pupils are making accelerated progress, better in most cases than their peers and, consequently, the gaps in performance are closing rapidly.
- Progress in reading has improved as a result of good teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make). All the pupils say that they enjoy reading and read for pleasure outside school.
- All pupils have targets to achieve in literacy and numeracy and enjoy the challenge that these provide. However, their effectiveness is diminished because they are not used consistently across the school.
- Parents are very positive about the progress made by their children. One parent commented,

'I'm very pleased with the progress both my daughters are making'.

The quality of teaching requires improvement.

- In some lessons, teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils, particularly the more-able pupils. For instance, in some lessons there are missed opportunities for encouraging pupils to extend their vocabulary and to use exciting and more challenging words in their writing, rather than pupils 'playing safe' with their choices of words.
- The marking of pupils' work is variable, especially in the guidance given to pupils on how to improve their work, and especially in mathematics. There are examples of high-quality marking in some classes that are not being shared sufficiently with all staff.
- There has been a strong focus from all school leaders on improving teaching and learning this year. Funding has been used well to focus on support for underachieving pupils. Training has been provided for all staff, who say that they feel well supported by senior leaders. This has led to clear evidence of improvements.
- Pupils enjoy school and are eager to learn because relationships within school are a clear strength. The pupils respond well when the work motivates them, such as in an outstanding lesson in Year 6 where the pupils were undertaking an enterprise activity to raise money for their forthcoming school trip. The class was divided into 'marketing' and 'sales' groups and the quality of mathematics and literacy arising was exceptionally high because the pupils were so engaged and the pace of learning was brisk.
- At the last inspection, improvement in the quality of pupils' speaking was required. The teachers have responded well and the quality of questioning is now encouraging pupils to contribute their ideas and answers and this has become a strength.
- The quality of teaching promotes pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, although pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to reflect on their own work and assess their own progress in the lesson. They do, however, work very well cooperatively together in lessons and show respect for the opinions and ideas of others.
- From discussions with parents and from the outcomes of the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) it is clear that parents are pleased with the teaching in school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good.

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is good and sometimes exemplary. High expectations are well embedded. Consequently, pupils are polite and show respect for others. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and say they enjoy their work.
- The pupils' enjoyment of school and their positive attitudes to learning, coupled with the actions taken by school leaders, have led to significant improvements in attendance over the last three years and the attendance rates are now above the national average.
- Bullying is not an issue in the eyes of parents and pupils, and school records indicate that this is the case. Pupils have a good knowledge of the different forms that bullying can take, including cyber-bullying, and they also have complete confidence that any issues arising will be dealt with promptly and effectively by the adults in school.

- Parents are almost unanimous in saying that their children enjoy learning at school and feel safe. As one parent said, 'My daughter loves school and is always keen to share the exciting things she has learnt during the school day.'

The leadership and management are good.

- Following the disappointing progress made by pupils in 2012, the headteacher responded very quickly and focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Governors and staff were galvanised in this common aim. Training has been provided for all staff. Better use is being made of pupils' attainment and progress information by all staff in discussions with senior leaders, and governors are checking on the impact of the actions taken.
 - The impact has been very positive and there have been good improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Leadership and management at all levels have also improved as a result of this common purpose and the school has good capacity for further improvement.
 - Middle leaders have been supported well through training provided for them and they are now carrying out their roles effectively and monitoring pupils' progress closely in their subject area and within each key stage.
 - The school works particularly well in partnership with other schools in the locality and there is good mutual support and challenge through joint activities. The school has also appreciated the 'light touch' support from the local authority.
 - The school provides a vibrant and broad curriculum that generally enthuses and motivates the pupils. The provision for music across the school is outstanding and the inspectors enjoyed observing the pupils enjoying their playing in the school orchestra. However, the topic work does not currently provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in subject areas other than mathematics.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body responded very effectively to the disappointments in 2012 by setting up a new school improvement committee to monitor and oversee the improvements planned. This group of governors has been proactive and has provided an excellent balance of support and challenge. The governing body is working closely with the staff and, consequently, governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are clear about the links between appraisal, classroom practice and pay progression. Governors have good knowledge of the data on pupils' progress and keep a close check on the effective use of the pupil premium funding. The safeguarding of pupils and staff, including checks on staff appointments, are effective because staff and governors have received appropriate training. Governors have also participated in a range of other relevant training. Governors ensure that all pupils are treated equally and fairly and there is no discrimination.

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	103810
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	411861

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	338
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bob Hickman
Headteacher	Nicole Anderton
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2010
Telephone number	01384 818730
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