

Dawley Brook Primary School

Dubarry Avenue, Valley Fields, Kingswinford, DY6 9BP

Inspection dates 13–14 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Pupils enjoy their learning at this good school. They achieve well and reach standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 that are above national averages.
- Pupils make good progress from Reception to Year 6 and an increasing proportion make exceptional progress, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- Good teaching promotes very positive attitudes to learning from all groups of pupils and behaviour in lessons and around school is good.
- Pupils, parents and staff say that this is a safe and happy school.
- The new headteacher and her new team of school leaders, well-supported by the school governors, are improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement further.
- Pupils of all ages are given a voice and real responsibilities in the school, such as on the dynamic, pupil-led 'Eco Committee' and in the interviews of candidates to be their new headteacher.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough of the comments that teachers write in pupils' books are precise enough to help them to improve their work.
- Teachers do not always pay enough attention to correcting pupils' punctuation and grammar.
- The school's communication with parents is not always as clear and swift as it could be.
- Not enough use is made of the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoors area for work and play.
- Homework, for older pupils, is not given by all teachers with the same regularity.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, three of which were jointly observed with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspection team looked at pupils' work in their books and listened to younger pupils read.
- There were meetings with groups of pupils, senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 35 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also considered the 51 responses by parents to a recent questionnaire from the school.
- The inspection team examined the school's own information on pupils' recent and current progress; the school's evaluation of how well it is doing and its records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Richard Boswell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Millward

Additional Inspector

Timothy McGuire

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Dawley Brook is an average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The percentage of pupils who are supported through the pupil premium (which in this school provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A new headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject leaders have been in post since the start of the current school year.
- The new headteacher receives the support of a local leader of education from Tenterfields Primary School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching outstanding by ensuring:
 - the comments in pupils' books made by teachers in Key Stage 2 are always precise enough to help them to improve their work
 - teachers across the school encourage pupils to use punctuation and grammar accurately in their classwork and homework.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school, including its governance, by
 - ensuring consistently good use is made of the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoors area
 - ensuring all teachers in Key Stage 2 conform to the school's homework policy and set regular amounts of homework
 - ensuring leaders and teachers communicate better with parents and share information about their children's progress and needs more quickly and effectively.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children usually start in Nursery with good skills and understanding, although a small but growing proportion in recent years have been in line with or below those typical for their age. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage through a well-planned range of activities. This leads to the rapid development of their skills and understanding. They learn to look after themselves and each other in a caring and supportive environment. Facilities and resources in Nursery and Reception are good but not enough use is made of the outdoor area for further extend the children's learning and their enjoyment of school.
- Pupils go on to achieve standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Key Stage 2 that are above those found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Some pupils are achieving the very highest standards, particularly in writing and mathematics. This is because all pupils, and particularly the more-able, are encouraged to be curious and ask questions and so develop very positive attitudes to their learning.
- Pupils of all abilities make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2011 pupils' attainment in English and mathematics was well above the national average. The school responded swiftly to a marked decrease in results in mathematics in 2012 and in the last school year the proportions of pupils making and exceeding expected progress in mathematics and writing have been above average. The proportion of pupils making expected progress in reading has also been above the national average, although the proportion exceeding it has been below.
- Pupils currently in the school are continuing to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' books and the work seen in lessons confirmed the school's own assessment of pupils' progress as being good. This includes more-able pupils and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium. Following actions taken by senior leaders since September, progress in reading has accelerated and the school has sustained the good progress seen in writing and mathematics.
- The pupils supported by the pupil premium make progress broadly in line with other groups. Given the very small numbers, it is not possible to comment on the attainment of pupils leaving Year 6 in 2013 in English or mathematics without potentially identifying individuals. The school keeps close track of these pupils' progress and they receive a good level of support from classroom teachers and support staff.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs from their starting points is also typically good. This is because their individual needs are quickly identified and fully met. The clear focus on these smaller groups of individual pupils is typical of the school's 'caring' approach to equal opportunities and to tackling discrimination.
- Reading and writing are strongly promoted in the school and inspectors saw good teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) to younger pupils. This has not, however, been reflected in pupils' performance in the Year 1 check of these skills in the last two years or in the grammar, punctuation and spelling assessment in Year 6. However a higher than national proportion of pupils met the expected level in phonics in Year 2.

The quality of teaching is good

- In this calm and orderly school, pupils enter lessons keen to learn from the good teaching they

regularly receive and all groups of pupils make good progress in the majority of lessons. Senior leaders make accurate judgements of the quality of lessons they see and good teaching has been sustained under the school's new leadership, and particular improvements made in pupils' progress in reading.

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children work and play together well, listening to their teachers and to each other. As in the rest of the school, experienced and well-qualified support staff give additional guidance and care. Children stick at tasks, even when they are tricky, and learn to work things out for themselves. Problem-solving and thinking skills are developed from the start. For example, in one Reception lesson four pupils puzzled out how to use different sized weights on a sheet to prevent the wind from revealing their hidden dinosaurs while their teacher prompted them into making their own discoveries.
- The high quality of teaching in writing in Key Stage 2 means that pupils make particularly good progress in this subject. More-able pupils are given appropriately demanding work, respond well and are curious to explore further challenges. The school has nurtured some sophisticated writers who have 'something to say' and the skills with which to say it. Indeed, one Year 6 pupil has completed his first novel and is working on the sequel. However, the fluency of pupils' writing is not always matched by their accuracy, particularly in their use of punctuation and grammar
- Work is invariably pitched at just the right level in both literacy and numeracy. Consequently, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are able to make similar progress to their peers, often with the skilled assistance of support staff. In writing about the feelings of a character, for example, some less-able Year 5 pupils wrote simple but telling diary entries while the more-able pupils wrote complex internal monologues.
- The teaching of mathematics is good and pupils learn about its practical applications. Good use is made of information technology in mathematics, with frequent use of the computer room, for example to create presentations using graphs and tables.
- Teachers check carefully that all pupils have a thorough understanding of the work that has been set. While teachers' marking of pupils' books is extensive and celebratory, it does not always give clear advice on what pupils can do to achieve an even higher standard.
- Teachers have strong relationships with their pupils and high expectations of all of them. They plan lessons that are lively and engaging and one group of pupils in discussion with an inspector were particularly enthusiastic about the increasing number of practical experiments they were doing in their science lessons. Parents do show some concern, however, that not all teachers regularly set homework for older pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. There is a culture of respect and courtesy between pupils and staff and they establish strong and positive relationships in lessons. Pupils respond well to teachers' instructions and willingly cooperate with each other, for example, when working in pairs and small groups. These good attitudes to learning are also clear in the pride pupils have in the appearance of their uniform and the generally neat presentation of work in their books over time.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are aware of the importance of staying safe and generally show sensible and considerate behaviour around school. Pupils know what constitutes bullying and what to do on the rare occasions it occurs. Pupils learn about e-

safety and dangers associated with use of the internet.

- Pupils at this school enjoy taking on responsibilities and are given plenty of opportunities to do so. There are jobs to be done in every class and pupils are eager and willing to take them on. Older pupils are proud to be school prefects or playground buddies, showing care and consideration for younger pupils. Pupils of all ages are members of the 'Eco Committee'. While busily recycling paper, two members spoke excitedly and knowledgeably to inspectors about the school's bio-mass boiler, its benefits to the environment and how it featured in local newspapers.
- The school listens to its pupils' voices. For example, teachers give time to discussion and debate in the classroom; pupils are clear that there is always an adult to turn to if they have a concern; and pupils of all ages drew up questions and interviewed candidates for the job of being their new headteacher.
- Pupils' behaviour is well-managed and pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in the absence of any exclusions from school and in pupils' above average attendance. Healthy lifestyles are actively promoted from the ready availability of fruit snacks for Nursery and Reception children to a wide age range of pupils observed in physical education lessons with a visiting professional coach. These aspects of healthy living are also investigated in science lessons.
- While the very large majority of parents agree that this is a happy and a safe school, some say that the school does not always communicate with parents as swiftly or effectively as it could.

The leadership and management are good

- The school's leaders began as a new team at the start of the current school year. They have sustained the good level of progress achieved by pupils in the preceding year and have already shown a track record of improvement, particularly in respect of the numbers of pupils on target to exceed nationally expected progress in reading.
- The headteacher has given new responsibilities to leaders of individual subjects and they have responded with a fresh drive to improve achievement and the quality of teaching in their areas. Staff are supportive of their new leaders and have high expectations for their pupils. The school has detailed and rigorous systems to keep track of pupils' progress in each key subject area.
- The school monitors teaching closely and leaders and governors have, in the past, been quick to tackle any underperformance. Good co-ordination of teachers' planning, scrutiny of pupils' books and listening to pupils' views all contribute to an effective appraisal of the quality of teaching in the school. The school therefore has a clear picture of where its strengths and areas for improvement lie.
- The pupils' positive attitudes to learning are developed through a wide range of subjects and the school makes good use of visiting specialists. For example, pupils' appreciation of the arts is enhanced by weekly music sessions, French is taught by a specialist teacher from the local secondary school and physical education classes are taken by a professional coach. More-able pupils are frequently offered additional challenges through extended project work.
- Pupils show respect for each other in lessons, working co-operatively, sharing their opinions and demonstrating good social skills. There are periods of reflection in the school day, not only in assemblies but in lessons, such as when Year 5 and 6 pupils were asked to empathise with those dealing with the effects of flooding in the local area and internationally. The diversity of modern Britain and of world cultures and religions are celebrated and investigated in lessons and

educational visits, for example to a Gurdwara, and visits to the school by speakers, such as a recent talk about Buddhism.

- The local authority has played an increasingly supportive role in offering training and guidance to staff and support for the new school leaders. The local authority has also provided the opportunity for the new headteacher to make use of the experience and expertise of a headteacher from a strongly performing local primary school.
- The school meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding and the school's policies are regularly reviewed. The school site is secure and parents are generally satisfied with the work of the school and feel their children are happy and safe. Some would, however, like more information on how well their children are doing and ways they can support their learning at home.
- Recent spending of the school's additional physical education funding has been towards a Year 3 'Dance Hub', a four-week project that culminated in a performance at the Town Hall. In addition professional sports coaches have been taking regular sessions with all pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. The school is currently evaluating the impact of this spending on the health and well-being of pupils.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Members of the governing body have a good understanding of the school's performance, including the quality of teaching, and how pupils' test results compare to those of other, similar schools. They make regular visits to the school and, as well as being supportive of the new leadership team, they hold senior leaders to account for progress in raising pupils' achievement. Governors know how the management of staff performance is helping to improve the quality of teaching, and understand the link between staff salaries and the meeting of targets for pupils' progress and achievement. They know how pupil premium funding is being used and the successful impact it is having on pupils' achievement. For example, the one-to-one coaching and purchase of specific software programmes to support spelling and numeracy. Governors have undertaken training to improve their own skills. They make sure that policies, including those relating to safeguarding pupils, are regularly reviewed and updated, and are implemented effectively. Governors closely supervise the school's finances, so that Dawley Brook makes the best use of available resources.

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	103781
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	440503

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Kendall
Headteacher	Jennifer Smith
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2011
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