

# Netherton CofE Primary School

Highbridge Road, Netherton, Dudley, DY2 0HU

**Inspection dates** 26–27 February 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- The headteacher, the senior leadership team and governing body take a strong lead in helping improve teaching and raising achievement across the school.
- Rigorous checks on teaching, good training for staff and support for pupils where needed, are helping to raise standards.
- Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Teaching is now good and some is outstanding. Pupils enjoy learning and strive to do their best.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to the school's work. Pupils fully embrace this approach, as is evident in their caring attitudes to others.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They have excellent manners, are polite and friendly and talk positively about their school. Pupils feel safe there.
- Pupils' achievement is rising rapidly. They now make good progress in writing and mathematics.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in reading is not as strong as it is in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils do not always pay enough attention to spelling and grammar when completing their written work.
- In some lessons, work that pupils are asked to do is too easy. This is particularly the case for more-able pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- Substantial parts of 18 lessons were observed during the inspection. Several observations were of sessions which focused on improving pupils' reading skills, and included the teaching of phonics (knowledge of letters and the sounds they represent). Four of these lessons were jointly observed with the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors examined examples of pupils' written work both in their books and on display. Groups of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils read to inspectors.
- A number of meetings were organised. These included meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, teaching staff, staff with special responsibilities, the Chair and four members of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils over lunch, during their break times and as they moved around the school during the day. Two groups of pupils met with inspectors formally to give their views.
- Inspectors attended a whole-school assembly, the breakfast club, and a reading, writing and mathematics workshop for Year 6 and their parents.
- A variety of key documents were examined, including: the school's self-evaluation; the school development plan; behaviour records; documents relating to the work of the governing body and the management of teachers' performance and records of visits made by the local authority adviser.
- The views of the 17 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account, together with a letter from a parent. Inspectors spoke informally to parents visiting the school. They also considered the views expressed in the 20 questionnaires returned by staff.
- This was the first re inspection of the school since it was judged to 'require improvement' in October 2012.

## Inspection team

Judith O'Hare, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Marlene Hotchkiss

Additional Inspector

Graham Marshall

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school. Most of the pupils have previously been part of the school's nursery provision.
- There are 11 classes in total in the main school, two in each year group from Reception to Year 3. Pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 are taught in three mixed-age classes. There is one class for pupils in Year 6.
- Most pupils are from a White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support from the pupil premium funding is significantly higher than average. This funding is money the school receives to support those pupils who have a known entitlement to free school meals, who are from service families or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of educational needs is above.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment by making sure teachers insist that pupils pay more attention to checking the accuracy of their spelling and grammar, and so help them to make more rapid progress in reading.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding and so improve achievement, especially in reading, by making sure that:
  - all teachers have high expectations and give each group of pupils work that is suitably challenging, especially the more-able.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below those typically found at this age. Thanks to good teaching, which places high emphasis on developing literacy, mathematics and communication skills, most children make good progress from their different starting points and so are well prepared for entry into Year 1.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1, as seen in the overall standards they achieve. Results of national assessments in Year 2 have been significantly above the national average overall for the last two years in mathematics and writing, and average in reading. Pupils in 2013 made better progress in mathematics and writing than they did in reading.
- Teachers have received good training in the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent). This means that pupils' attainment in early reading is improving steadily. While the results pupils in Year 1 achieved in the phonics screening check last year were below national results, pupils' skills are now improving rapidly.
- The results pupils achieved in the Year 6 national tests in 2013 were the best the school has achieved in the last five years. They indicate a marked improvement since the last inspection in pupils' overall performance, and good progress for this group since Year 2. However they remained below national outcomes. Results achieved in writing and in mathematics were significantly higher than in reading and in spelling, punctuation and grammar for all pupil groups. The school's information, based on accurate internal assessment of how well pupils are progressing, suggests that pupils are on track to achieve even better results in 2014.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress due to the well-targeted additional support they receive.
- More-able pupils make good progress, with almost all making the expected progress from Key Stage 1 to reach level 5. However, few exceed this to reach the very high level 6 by the end of Key Stage 2.
- In 2013, the progress made by pupils supported by pupil premium funding, was better than that of similar pupils nationally, and better than that of other pupils in this school. Compared to their classmates, the attainment of such pupils in Year 6 was about two terms behind in reading mathematics and writing, a similar gap to that found nationally. Work seen by inspectors, and data from the school, confirms that the gap in their attainment and that of others in the school is closing rapidly.
- Teaching across the school is sensibly focused on improving pupils' performance in reading, spelling, and grammar where progress is slower than in all other subjects.
- Pupils' achievement in physical education is good. Uptake for additional sports activities after school is high and pupils are active at playtimes. Pupils enjoy taking part in team sports such as rugby and cricket. There are also increased opportunities to develop their skills in other sporting activities, for example, gymnastics and dance.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection it is now most typically good and some is

outstanding. Teachers and support staff know pupils' interests and abilities well. They use this knowledge to plan lessons which excite them to learn. A typical pupil comment was, 'We like learning new things.'

- Teachers make accurate assessments of pupils' work. They use this information to ensure that pupils of all abilities, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and the most able are supported well and are given work at the right level of challenge, both in class and in other teaching situations.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and evidently enjoy teaching. Pupils' response to this is very positive. They listen attentively in class and reflect carefully before answering questions. One such example was seen in a Year 4/5 English lesson. Following a lively discussion about anger and anger management, pupils went on to write successfully some interesting character descriptions of Shakespeare's Hamlet.
- The school places a high emphasis on celebrating pupils' success and in encouraging all to achieve their best. Work on public display includes 'writer of the month' and 'work we are proud of' displays. Pupils are invited to comment and typical quotes are, 'This topic was fun and I learned a lot.'
- Teachers ensure that work in pupils' books is well presented, with careful attention to handwriting and the use of correct punctuation. Pupils in Year 2 said, 'You need to remember full-stops and commas, this is important.' However, teachers do not always insist that pupils give attention to accurate grammar and spelling in their writing.
- Pupils have good opportunities to use information technology to support their learning. In a Year 3 science lesson, pupils successfully plotted a flight plan for a helicopter. They used this task to demonstrate their understanding of 'drag, thrust, drop and hover.' Such activities provide memorable experiences and help pupils to see the links between subjects.
- Pupils enjoy the tasks they are given to complete at home, because they understand the importance of this in helping them prepare for new work and to practise work they need to improve. All homework is completed to a good standard. Partnership working with parents is very effective. For example, the Year 6 'inspire to achieve' workshops bring pupils and parents together with teachers to work on developing reading, writing and mathematical skills. Attendance at these events is high. One parent spoken to explained how these workshops are helping her children to make better progress.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Indoor and outdoor activities are planned carefully and this is helping children to develop their early reading, writing and mathematics skills in a fun way. In one Reception class, for example, children playing hopscotch were observed to count numbers confidently forward and back.
- Children's learning journals' celebrate their success. The detailed and accurate information about each child's work and progress helps teachers to plan appropriate activities. Parents' engage fully with this process, adding details of what has been done in home-learning.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding because, in some lessons, pupils find the work they do too easy. This is particularly the case for more-able pupils who sometimes quickly complete these easier tasks and do not move on to work which is more challenging.
- Teachers give pupils good advice about how to improve their work. Marking in books is frequent and helpful. Pupils understand the next steps they need to take to improve. Their

responses to marking are clearly evident in the corrections and revisions they make to their work, although they do not always pay careful enough attention to spelling.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have very good manners. They stand to receive visitors and say please and thank you without prompting. Their warm and friendly greetings to inspectors, for example, made them feel welcomed.
- School records show that behaviour over time is good and that disruption to the school day of any kind is extremely rare. Parents and pupils agree that behaviour is good.
- Pupils understand and uphold the school rules. They dress smartly and arrive promptly to class, ready to learn. That this good behaviour is typical is evident in the way pupils conduct themselves in and around the school. Children in the Nursery told an inspector, 'You have to line up carefully and always listen to your teacher'.
- Pupils enjoy their whole-school 'open book' assemblies. They embrace these opportunities to engage in quiet reflection. They listen really well to the bible stories, take part enthusiastically in role-play activities and sing with pride and joy.
- Opportunities for pupils to take on roles and responsibilities are wide and various and uptake is high. For example, pupils act as playground leaders, help organise whole school events and support younger pupils with their reading. One pupil explained, 'It's good to be involved; it makes you feel somehow special and important.'
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school. They understand the need to ensure personal safety, for example, by following rules for road safety, stranger danger and safe use of the internet.
- Pupils understand about the different types of bullying but say this hardly ever happens. Pupils explained, 'We treat other people the way we want to be treated.' They say that teachers are quick to respond to any incidents of unkind behaviour.
- The school has done much to improve attendance. Following a slight dip in 2013, attendance continues to rise and is now average. Attendance at the before-school breakfast club sessions is high. This facility encourages pupils to arrive in good time for school, especially those who found this difficult in the past.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and say 'learning is important'. Sometimes, however, pupils lose interest. They quietly disengage with tasks when work they are asked to do is too easy.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher is a champion of learning. At all times positive but rigorous in his approach, he is determined to ensure all pupils at this school achieve their very best. In a letter to inspectors, one parent wrote: 'My children have achieved beyond my wildest expectations. I am very pleased.'
- Staff morale is high. The headteacher is supported well by a strong leadership team working in

close partnership with the governing body. Together they have inspired all staff to work collaboratively to improve the quality of teaching, and to improve pupils' achievement and attendance.

- Necessary changes that have been made to staffing have been managed well, and past underperformance in teaching tackled appropriately. Teachers say they are supported well in improving their practice through specialist training, opportunities for shared planning and regular checks on teaching by senior leaders. In feedback following lesson observations, teachers told inspectors that the training and support they have received have helped them to improve their teaching.
- Pupils' progress is tracked very closely. All pupils identified as not learning well enough are identified quickly and the support they need is put in place promptly. This approach demonstrates clearly the school's commitment to ensure all pupils have an equal opportunity to learn.
- Senior leaders as well as staff with special responsibilities have a good and accurate understanding of how well pupils are learning. They use this to plan priorities for whole-school improvement. However, although they have identified accurately the right priorities, actions taken so far have not yet resulted in enough improvement in reading or in accelerated progress for higher-ability pupils in Key Stage 2.
- The broad range of topics and subjects taught called 'the irresistible curriculum' promotes positive attitudes to learning and helps pupils to achieve well. Pupils' learning is enhanced further through various clubs and out-of-school activities. For example, regular theatre trips, visits, the recent Year 6 visit to the Tower of London and the planned residential trip to Belgium to visit the First World War battlefield sites.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Important values such as respect for all, caring and sharing are central to the work of the school. Good links exist with parents and the local community and opportunities for life-long learning are supported enthusiastically.
- Strong links have been established with other schools locally. This initiative is helping staff to share good practice and to learn from one another. The positive impact of this can be seen in improved teaching and rapid improvements to pupils' progress.
- The school has started to use the new primary school sports funding. Two specialist sports coaches have been employed and there is a sharp focus on improving teachers' skills. Whilst the range of opportunities for pupils to participate in additional sports has already increased and uptake in after school sports activities is increasing, it is too early to evaluate the impact of these initiatives on developing healthy lifestyles and better physical well-being for pupils.
- The school has received good support in the past from the local authority. This is now more 'light touch' and a clear indication of the confidence they have in the leadership team to move the school forward.
- Whilst the responses to the online questionnaire 'Parent View' were limited, responses received indicate a very positive view of the school. Most parents indicated they would recommend this school to others.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- Governors take their roles and responsibilities seriously. They are well trained, highly experienced and support the school well. They have a good understanding of data that show them how the school is performing and how this relates to all schools nationally. Governors check carefully before making any decisions to ensure all actions the school takes will have a positive impact on pupils' learning and achievement. Financial management is sound including their monitoring of the use of both pupil premium and the new primary schools' sports funding. Governors are rigorous in setting performance targets for the headteacher. They ensure that pay and promotion for all teachers relate appropriately to teachers' performance and the standards pupils achieve. Governors are a highly visible force within the school. They take an active role in monitoring teaching through joint observations. Other activities include supporting pupils in reading recovery groups and through the lead they take in delivering whole school assemblies. All statutory duties are met effectively. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet national requirements fully.



## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103841
<b>Local authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	431683

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	375
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Helen Priest
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Rushton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 October 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01384 816895
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