

Dovecote Primary and Nursery School

Greencroft, Nottingham, NG11 8EY

Inspection dates 23–24 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The work of leaders, managers and governors, has not been good enough to sustain the good quality noted at the previous inspection.
- Pupils' attainment until this year in reading, writing and mathematics was stubbornly below average.
- The attainment of pupils from minority ethnic groups was lower than that of their peers by the time they left the school at the end of Year 6 in 2014.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good. Sometimes, a narrow range of tasks in mathematics slows pupils' progress in that subject.
- Pupils' progress in writing is not good enough because writing tasks are often confined to work in literacy lessons. Therefore, pupils do not practice their skills when they are learning about other subjects.
- Teachers' written marking is not leading to rapid improvements in pupils' work.
- Activities in class do not always get the best out of the most able pupils.
- The work of staff with responsibilities for subjects is not making a strong enough impact on pupils' achievement.
- Until recently, governors' work has been hampered by a lack of awareness of what the role entails.

The school has the following strengths

- Most groups of pupils, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and disadvantage pupils, have made good progress this year in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' reading standards have improved. By the time they left school at the end of Year 6 in 2014 their attainment in this subject was about the same as most pupils of their age.
- The teaching of phonics (the link between letters and the sounds they make) has improved and is good.
- The work to improve attendance has made a strong impact. Attendance is now close to average.
- Provision for pupils in science, music and Spanish is of an exceptionally high standard and contributes well to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.
- The majority of parents are very supportive of the school and say they are happy that it takes care of their children's health, well-being and safety.
- The leadership and management of early years provision are good. Teachers' accurate assessment of how well children are doing, and their effective care and support, ensures that they make good progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons across all year groups, as well as the teaching for small groups of pupils, and sessions aimed at helping pupils to learn to read.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised during lessons and separately with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for inspectors to consider. Discussions took place with parents at the start of the school day, a telephone conversation took place with a parent and inspectors scrutinised the school's surveys of parents' views. Inspectors looked at 41 questionnaires completed by members of staff.
- Two meetings were held with four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body and the vice-chair. A telephone conversation took place with the school's representative from the local authority.
- Various school documents were examined. These included: the school's review of its own performance, records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching, external evaluations of the school's work, data on pupils' progress, records of pupils' attendance, behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Lenford White, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Carolyn Wood	Additional Inspector
Marian Driver	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is a much larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. A small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school offers a breakfast club and after-school services, both of which are managed by the governing body and formed part of this inspection.
- Since the previous inspection there have been many significant changes of teaching staff and governors.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good by:
 - ensuring that teachers' written marking of pupils' work leads to improvements
 - making sure that activities teachers provide for pupils in class is at just the right level of difficulty to bring out the best progress they can achieve, particularly for the most able.
- Accelerate progress across the school for all groups of pupils, particularly those from minority ethnic groups and the most able, and raise standards in writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that pupils practice their writing skills in a range of subjects
 - finding more ways for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that all governors improve their understanding of how effective the school's work is in improving pupils' achievement, and how this compares with that of other schools nationally
 - strengthening the work of those with leadership responsibilities by checking that their actions to improve teaching and pupils' achievement have been effective.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management **requires improvement**

- The work of the school leaders and managers has not ensured that the quality of the school has been maintained since the previous inspection. As a result, standards fell to low in 2013, especially in writing.
- The headteacher, supported by the senior leadership team, staff and governors, has a clear view of what they want to achieve for pupils and know what they need to do to improve the school. However, this has not been effective enough to have ensured that teaching and standards attained by pupils are good.
- Until recently, teachers with leadership responsibilities have not been rigorous enough in checking the effectiveness of their actions to improve teaching on pupils' achievement, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- The school's systems for monitoring the quality of teaching are improving. Senior leaders have taken decisive action to provide guidance and training to teachers on how they can be more effective, and provided support where teaching is not yet good. Teachers are held to account by setting targets linked to improving the standards attained by pupils. Their effectiveness is regularly assessed through checks on their performance. This is why standards have risen this year.
- Staff and managers' training has recently improved and as a result, staff know what the school needs to do to improve the quality of teaching and learning. There has been some successes, including improving phonics teaching and improving some weak teaching.
- The subjects taught are well chosen to broaden pupils' experiences. For example, pupils enjoy their membership of the In Harmony school orchestra, the specialist science teaching that they receive and the experiments which they carry out in 'Lab 13'. In addition to this, they benefit from good quality Spanish teaching and regular visits to museums and theatres.
- Most aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils work well together and they enjoy giving to those less fortunate than themselves during Harvest Festival for example. Pupils' spiritual development is enhanced through assemblies, the well attended 'Excite Club' and through their learning about Islam and Hinduism, though their knowledge of other cultures and life in modern Britain is not quite as well developed.
- Leaders' work to ensure pupils attend school, behave well and are safe is effective. They have brought about improvement by working more closely with parents. As a result, pupils' attendance is now closer to average. Safeguarding procedures are implemented well and meet requirements.
- The local authority is supporting the school well. It recently carried out a review of governance, and provided support that has led to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning this year.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Some aspects of governance are not as strong as they could be. Governors are not sufficiently trained to have a clear enough understanding of how effective the school is in raising standards for pupils, or how this work compares with that of similar schools nationally.
 - Governors' strengths lie in understanding how the support offered to disadvantaged pupils in small groups is helping to improve their performance, and that it has in most year-groups almost eliminated the gap between their performance and that of their classmates. They endorse spending which broadens pupils' experiences and provides opportunities for the 'In Harmony school orchestra, for example, to perform at prestigious events, including in the Royal Albert Hall.
 - Information presented to governors by the school, on teachers' performance, is improving. They use this to ensure decisions about increases in pay are justified. They monitor the performance of the headteacher increasingly diligently.
 - Governors ensure that the primary school sports fund is used very effectively. They know that pentathlon fitness in Year 3 and speed, agility, balance and coordination activities for pupils in Reception and Year 1 are helping to improve their health and well-being, and that coaching is helping to

improve the skills of staff in delivering sporting activities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Attendance has improved considerably this year. Pupils say that they always feel safe and well cared for. This is because of the school's good system of care and support, the close links that various staff have with families and the community, and the consistency with which behaviour is well managed.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are keen to start work in lessons and concentrate effectively. This contributes well to their learning. They are well behaved in lessons because teachers make their expectations clear.
- Pupils behave well during lunch times and move around the school sensibly. They are appreciative of the generous playing areas and green spaces that they have, and treat them respectfully.
- Pupils come to school smartly dressed and say that they are proud to wear their uniforms. They are courteous towards each other, staff and visitors and enjoy talking about their learning.
- Pupils are of the opinion that behaviour is good most of the time, as are the majority of parents, staff and governors. Inspection evidence, including a close examination of the school's behaviour logs, reveals that behaviour is typically good. On occasions when pupils find it difficult to handle their feelings and emotions, staff are quick to intervene and provide help and support. However, very occasionally, there are lapses in behaviour when teaching is not fully engaging.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Many visitors are invited into the school to help pupils understand dangers and risks. Most recently pupils have learned about road safety and the dangers of playing near trams and on building sites.
- Pupils have a good understanding of some of the forms of bullying, for instance that based on prejudice. They know that people should not be treated differently because of where they are from or what they believe in. Some older pupils know what homophobic bullying is, and why it is wrong. As a consequence, incidents of bullying, such as name-calling, are uncommon.
- Pupils know what cyber-bullying is, and how to avoid it. They learn how to stay safe through group discussions and assemblies.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and that on the occasions when it occurs that it is always dealt with quickly, and everyone soon gets on well with each other afterwards.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teachers do not always plan tasks and activities in lessons that enable pupils to achieve to the very best of their ability. For some pupils the work teachers set for them is too hard or too easy. Consequently, pupils' progress is not rapid enough.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to choose different work to do. However, teachers do not always make sure that there is a clear difference in the degree of difficulty and skills needed to complete tasks. This holds back progress, particularly for the most able.
- Pupils' work is not consistently well marked, nor is the teacher's marking always up to date. Very little of the work that inspectors looked at provided clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their learning, or showed that pupils improved as a result of the guidance. Few of the pupils with whom this was discussed

could explain how they can improve their English and mathematics.

- Pupils demonstrated their ability to fully engage in their learning, and excel because of the teachers' good subject knowledge and their enthusiasm for the subjects they teach. This was exemplified in music, where Year 3 to Year 6 pupils routinely demonstrated their skill and perseverance in reading music and learning to play the trumpet and trombone.
- Pupils' interest and engagement was also displayed in Spanish, where pupils from across the school relished the opportunity to compete with each other to learn new words and sounds, and in science where pupils listened intently and asked intelligent questions about the world around them. Such activities promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well.
- However, pupils have too few opportunities to experience such excitement and engagement and to practise their skills, particularly in English and mathematics.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are below those typically expected for their age. Most children, including those who need extra help, get off to a good start so that they are reaching standards similar to other children nationally and so are well prepared for Year 1.
- Since the previous inspection standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have been below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Not enough pupils have made sufficient progress between Years 3 to 6.
- In 2013, Year 1 pupils were below average in the phonics check and a below-average proportion achieved the standard when retaking the check in Year 2.
- However, standards improved in 2014. Most pupils made good progress in all year groups in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupil's attainment in reading by the time they left Year 6 in 2014 had risen to average. Pupils' reading has improved because teachers and teaching assistants are better trained in the teaching of phonics, the link between letters and the sound they make. Pupils have been inspired to read for pleasure and information across the curriculum. Those pupils who read for inspectors enjoyed reading books from a wide range of authors, and routinely used their phonic skills to break-up and sound-out unfamiliar words.
- Most pupils are now making good progress in mathematics but their attainment is only rising slowly. This is because the school has yet to fully engage and motivate pupils, especially the most able, in this subject, or encourage them sufficiently to apply their mathematic skills to practical activities such as problem solving.
- Most pupils' attainment in writing has improved, especially at the end of Key Stage 2, and their progress in this subject is good. Inspection evidence and the school's own records of pupils' progress show that small-group teaching activities are beginning to improve pupils' confidence in writing. However, there are still too few opportunities for them to develop their writing skills across the curriculum.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity across the school is improving. Previous gaps between the performance of boys and girls at the end of both Key Stages in 2013, no longer exist. This is because teachers regularly monitor the progress of all groups of pupils and are skilled at identifying any groups of pupils who may be falling behind.
- Disadvantaged pupils were about a term behind their classmates in Year 6 in 2014 in reading, writing and mathematics, and are narrower than those between other pupils nationally. However their attainment, especially in writing, was lower than that of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those with English as an additional language make the same good

progress across most year groups as their peers, though there were some variations in their attainment which was lower than their peers at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014.

- Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs make good progress across different year groups from often very low starting points. This is because staff are well trained, nurture support is good and they are fully included in all learning activities.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels at the end of Key stages 1 and 2 in 2014 improved, especially in writing. This is because the school is quick to identify and support skilled musicians, gymnasts and skaters for example.
- The breakfast club provides a welcoming start to the school day. It has been instrumental in helping to improve pupils' attendance. After-school clubs are offered to all groups of pupils and are well attended. Pupils are valued, say they are well cared for and enjoy learning with their classmates.

The early years provision is good

- Most children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with skills that are lower than those expected for their age, particularly in language and communication and personal development.
- The good links that early years staff have with an adjacent pre-school service, as well as the good care and support children receive, help to ensure that about the same proportion as nationally, including those with disabilities and special educational needs and those for whom the school receives additional funding, catch up quickly and enter Year 1 with the skills and abilities expected for their age.
- Children learn well in exciting indoor and outdoor learning areas and have good opportunities to develop their physical and academic and social skills.
- The speaking, listening and communication skills of children develop well. Previous weak teaching in phonics has been eliminated through improved training. Teachers are imaginative and consistent in their approach and ensure that children's interest is maintained.
- The leadership and management of early years provision has improved since the previous inspection. This is because the early years leader and her staff plan more effectively together to ensure they provide children with many more opportunities to discuss their ideas with each other and with adults. This was exemplified in Nursery where a small group of children took great delight in constructing towers in a sandpit. They confidently discussed with their group, and teacher, why some structures were more likely to topple over than others and thoroughly enjoyed working together to try out new ideas.
- Early years staff work well with parents. Those who spoke with inspectors said that they are kept well informed about their children's progress and that they are happy that they are learning in a caring environment in which they are well looked after.

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	134841
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	448604

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	455
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Edward Williams
Headteacher	Andrew Jenkins
Date of previous school inspection	29 June 2010
Telephone number	0115 9152953
Fax number	0115 9152949
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