

# Dodford First School

Fockbury Road, Dodford, Bromsgrove, B61 9AW

**Inspection dates** 21–22 October 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
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

- There has been a decline in pupils' achievement since the previous inspection due to staffing turbulence and some weak teaching, now resolved. Achievement requires improvement because recent improvements are not yet sustained.
- While improving, teaching is not yet good enough to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress throughout the school. It does not always provide enough challenge for the most able, and teachers' marking does not always lead to rapid improvements in pupils' work.
- Teachers do not get sufficient opportunities to observe good and outstanding teaching to help them to improve their skills.
- The teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling is not yet resulting in pupils' high-quality writing.
- Writing is not promoted fully across the curriculum to ensure the highest standards can be reached.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has made a significant positive impact on reversing the school's decline since the previous inspection.
- The work of leaders and managers at all levels, and of governors, is good. The impact is seen clearly in improvements evident in the work of the early years, in providing a vibrant curriculum, in standards of behaviour and keeping pupils safe, and in the work to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Pupils get off to a good start in the Reception class.
- The support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well led and managed and, as a result, these pupils make good progress.
- Behaviour in and around the school is good and pupils are kept safe. Pupils are eager to learn and polite to each other and to visitors.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and enjoy coming to school.
- The wide range of enrichment activities is enjoyed by all pupils. These have contributed strongly to developing pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

### Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, he made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and subject and other leaders. The inspector also met with governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and with a representative of the local authority.
- Discussions were held with parents who brought their children to school and the inspector took account of the 23 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. The inspector also considered the views expressed in the seven responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector looked closely at a range of documentation, including the school's information about the progress of pupils, the school's view of its own performance, monitoring details and records relating to the management of teachers' performance, minutes of governing body minutes and plans for improvement. Records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents concerning safeguarding and child protection, were also considered.

### Inspection team

David Evans, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in three classes: Reception (for full time attendance for pupils age four to five years), and two mixed-age classes.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced changes in staffing, including the headteacher. The current headteacher joined the school in January 2014.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- Less than two per cent of the pupils are eligible for the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils known as the pupil premium. This is a much lower proportion than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs varies widely from year to year. No pupil has an education, health and care plan.
- Currently, less than five per cent of pupils are supported by school action. This is well below the usual proportion for primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is eight per cent and slightly above the national average.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to increase the rate of pupils' progress by ensuring that:
  - work is set at the right level for all pupils, especially the most able
  - marking leads to improvements in pupils' work
  - opportunities are sought for teachers to see outstanding teaching regularly.
- Raise standards in writing by ensuring that:
  - the skills of spelling, punctuation and grammar are taught more rigorously throughout the school
  - teachers promote high standards of writing throughout the curriculum.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Since her appointment nearly a year ago, the headteacher has led with determination and moved the school forward. She has restructured teaching and established clear systems of accountability. Successful improvements have been made to the quality of teaching, particularly in the early years. The decline in several aspects since the previous inspection has been reversed and good leadership has been restored.
- All staff with leadership roles work effectively together to generate improvement. Most of the measures taken are having the intended impact as standards rise in reading and mathematics. Their ambitions and expectations are shared and unreservedly supported by all staff who returned the staff questionnaire. An ethos of high aspirations is evident.
- The headteacher and governors have taken tough and decisive actions to deal with underperformance in teaching and this has resulted in some staff leaving. The quality of teaching is checked closely and the headteacher has provided excellent support to teachers on how to improve. Teachers recognise that they have clear responsibilities and are accountable for ensuring that pupils make good or better progress.
- Until fairly recently procedures for assessing how well pupils are performing were not fully effective so that some information was unreliable. The new assessment system which the headteacher has introduced has enabled the staff to have a much-improved understanding of how to assess their pupils and this is helping accelerate progress.
- The school ensures that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed. It ensures that there is no discrimination for any reason. The progress of different groups is checked regularly and prompt actions are taken to ensure that pupils catch up with their learning. This is evident in the good achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Good relations are fostered, for instance with other agencies that support the needs of the disabled and those with special educational needs. Work for the more able is now being reviewed to ensure that those capable of making accelerated progress do so. Leaders and governors are fully aware that achievement in writing is not yet good. Well-thought-out plans are already in place to address this.
- The school accurately identifies the requirements of the very few disadvantaged pupils and quickly puts in place effective support for their particular learning needs.
- The primary sports funding enhances the many opportunities pupils have to be involved in sporting activities, including a greater range of after-school clubs. Participation rates have risen and pupils are involved in a range of inter-school sports competitions. These opportunities have improved pupils' well-being and are influencing their enjoyment of school.
- Parents and carers are very appreciative of the school. Staff provide a wide range of support to help parents and carers work with them in encouraging their children's learning.
- The school has received good quality support from the local authority in managing changes to staff and improvements to teaching and learning.
- The curriculum has been reviewed to bring it in line with new requirements. Staff are implementing a new assessment and recording system to monitor pupils' progress and attainment.
- The curriculum captures pupils' imaginations. Opportunities to promote pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are woven through all aspects of school life, including visits, visitors and an exciting range of after-school clubs. This good development is clearly visible in pupils' growing sense of responsibility, excitement in learning, understanding and tolerance of difference, and knowing right from wrong. It is preparing pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Reading and mathematics are threaded throughout the curriculum, but the opportunities for pupils to

apply and develop their writing skills across subjects other than English are not fully developed to ensure high standards of writing and literacy throughout the curriculum.

- Monitoring of pupils' progress is robust and regular, and includes book reviews, progress meetings, and informal and formal observations of lessons. There are tailored training programmes for newly qualified teachers. However, the school does not yet provide regular opportunities for staff to see outstanding teaching so that they can use it to improve their own practice.

#### ■ The governance of the school:

- The governance of the school has shown a marked improvement since the appointment of the headteacher. Meetings focus sharply on raising standards and on the school's action plan. Governors' knowledge about all aspects of the school has improved considerably. They know about the quality of teaching in the school and they are now sufficiently skilled to enable them to ask the necessary searching questions. They are precise about the school's ongoing weaknesses and areas of strength. They have a secure understanding of published data about the school's performance and are fully involved in planning for improvement. There is a good understanding of how the performance of teachers is managed. Governors make certain that performance links clearly with progression through the pay scale. They are appropriately involved in actions taken to manage underperformance. Governors know how funding is spent and ensure that adequate funds are made available to support pupils. Governors ensure that statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils are met.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They work and play harmoniously. They cooperate in lessons and readily share ideas about their work. This is already leading to good progress for some pupils as pupils are responding very positively to leaders' initiatives to improve achievement.
- Pupils are very orderly as they move around the school building, whether supervised or on their own. They are courteous, polite and well mannered, and have respect for adults and each other. They enjoy taking responsibility for various tasks around the school which help develop them as caring citizens.
- At playtimes, all pupils are happy to participate and enjoy the equipment provided by the school to enable them to engage in various activities. Pupils enjoy a healthy school meal and relate well to each other in the dining hall.
- Attendance is above average. The school has developed a wide range of strategies, including rewards, to ensure that pupils are punctual and attend well.

#### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school.
- Pupils are taught about the types of bullying that children of their age might encounter, and they are taught what to do if they do encounter any unkind behaviour. Pupils say that there is very little bullying in school and that if it does arise, they are very confident that staff will sort it out.
- Pupils are well informed about e-safety and know when they need to tell an adult about their concerns.
- All staff know what to do to keep pupils safe and their training in safeguarding ensures that policies are implemented well and they are kept up to date with requirements.
- All parents and carers spoken to during the inspection confirmed that pupils feel safe and are well looked after.

**The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, teachers' expectations have not been high enough to ensure that pupils consistently make good or better progress.
- Teachers still do not always move on those pupils who are learning quickly and show they are ready for more challenging work. This sometimes limits the learning of the more-able pupils.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise their writing in subjects other than English. The teaching of spelling, grammar and punctuation is not well developed.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and teachers' comments in books encourage and praise pupils' efforts, but teachers do not consistently identify for pupils what they need to do next in order to move their learning on. As a result, pupils are not always sure how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Staff build warm and caring relationships with pupils and use the rewards system well so that pupils work harder.
- Effective learning support assistants make a good contribution, both in class and in special group activities. They help to assess pupils' progress and encourage pupils to check that they are learning and understanding what is being taught.
- Teachers use effective in-depth questioning which probes pupils' understanding and encourages them to really think about their responses.
- The headteacher provides high-quality checks on quality and effective training which is improving teaching rapidly. The focused and unambiguous feedback she provides is also accelerating improvements.
- Good improvement this year has led to all staff providing additional support during lessons activities to increase the progress of those pupils who are at risk of falling behind.

**The achievement of pupils** requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, achievement across the school has been too variable due to inconsistent standards of teaching. Standards at Key Stage 1 declined.
- Pupils' progress is not yet consistently good across the school. Although there are clear signs of better progress this year, due to good leadership of teaching and learning by the headteacher, there is not enough evidence of sustained good progress, across the school, to confirm good achievement.
- Attainment in writing across the school is not as strong as reading and mathematics because pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length or across a range of subjects.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are typical for their age. As a result of improved teaching, they now get a good grounding in developing their reading, writing and knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make). They make good progress, which prepares them well for Key Stage 1. The proportion of Year 1 pupils attaining the expected standard in the screening check in phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) exceeded the national average in 2013.
- In the rest of the school, pupils are making accelerated progress in reading and mathematics as a result of more focused teaching. Pupils make the progress expected for their age, and occasionally, good progress through Key Stage 1. Standards in 2014 improved on the previous year, particularly in reading and mathematics. Standards are now higher than those typically seen, by the end of Year 4.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs typically make good progress. Teachers

have a good understanding of these pupils' specific learning needs and provide stimulating learning tasks to help them achieve well.

- There are too few disadvantaged pupils to comment on their attainment without potentially identifying individuals. They make good progress because the school identifies their requirements accurately and quickly puts in place effective support for their particular pupils' learning needs.
- Leaders have taken effective steps to address pockets of weaker progress in reading, writing and mathematics and this has brought rising attainment and achievement. Pupils are achieving well in other subjects, such as French and physical education, brought about by the many opportunities in school to learn new skills.

### **The early years provision** is good

- Leadership and management of the early years are good. They are focused on helping the children to make good progress in their learning and development, as well as promoting their safety and welfare effectively. Leaders have created a stimulating, well-resourced indoor and outdoor environment which has a positive impact on children's learning and a strong partnership with the local authority to support the good care provided. Children's development is carefully monitored by staff, and parents and carers are kept closely informed about the progress their child is making through both informal daily exchanges and regular meetings with staff.
- Children settle quickly in school because learning is fun and they receive good care. Resources are used well by staff to plan enjoyable activities that cover the areas of learning. Children mix well, learn to share, follow routines well and tidy things away sensibly. Children make good progress in their time in Reception because they are well taught, gain confidence and develop a love of school. Speaking, thinking and number skills are developed well. Disabled children and those who have special educational needs are included well. They enjoy talking and playing with other children, and are well supported so that they too make good progress.
- The staff promote warm relationships and secure children's well-being to ensure that children behave well, enjoy school and learn well. There is a rich variety of learning activities, including those led and supported by adults and those chosen by the children themselves. Adults encourage children to share their ideas and develop their speaking skills.

## 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>	116670
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	448480

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

<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	61
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Valentine
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lisa Parkes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01527 831569
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