

Cromwell Junior and Infant School and Nursery Class

Cromwell Street, Nechells, Birmingham, B7 5BA

Inspection dates 11–12 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Outstanding leadership and management have sustained high levels of pupil achievement since the previous inspection.
- From low starting points, pupils make excellent progress. Standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 6 and there has been an upward trend in attainment over time.
- The management of teachers' performance is very robust. Senior leaders and governors are highly successful in ensuring that, even when there are staff changes, pupils' learning is not compromised.
- Staff rise exceedingly well to the high expectations the school's leadership has of them. The quality of teaching is outstanding.
- The governing body provides high levels of support and challenge that ensure that no stone is left unturned in the drive to secure the best for the pupils.
- Parents are extremely positive about the school and what it does for them and their children.
- Behaviour is excellent. Pupils feel very safe in school and the school makes sure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.
- The pupils' high levels of attendance show how much they enjoy school and want to be there so that they can learn well.
- The entire school – corridors, classrooms and public areas – are a celebration of the aspirations and achievements of the whole school community.
- The school's work to foster community cohesion and eradicate all forms of discrimination is outstanding.
- The school actively helps pupils to develop the skills and attitudes that will help them to contribute positively to life in modern Britain as they grow up.
- Although several aspects are outstanding, provision for children in Nursery and Reception leads to good rather than outstanding progress.
- In Nursery and Reception, and in subjects other than English and mathematics, assessment systems, although developing well, are not yet tight enough to show clearly how well pupils are learning and what they need to do next.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 19 lessons. Three of the visits took place jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors examined the work in pupils’ books, sampled sessions where pupils were being taught phonics (the sounds that letters make) and listened to pupils read.
- Play and lunchtimes were observed and the inspector held discussions with pupils, governors, staff and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 22 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and also gained parents’ views by speaking to some parents as they brought their children to school, and when they attended a workshop for parents and children. The 21 responses to the questionnaires for staff were also considered.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including information about pupils’ progress and attendance, the school improvement plan, the school’s self-evaluation document, and records and policies about safeguarding and the quality of teaching.

Inspection team

Doris Bell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Edginton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school. It provides full-time Nursery and Reception education and it runs its own breakfast club.
- Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and most pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is well above average at 82%. This funding is for children in local authority care and those previously known to be eligible for free school meals.
- At 14%, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school partway through their primary education is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher is a Local Leader in Education. She and other staff in the school support local schools in their drive for improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve assessment procedures further by:
 - completing the work to assess and track pupils' progress in different subjects, especially when subjects are brought together in topic work
 - ensuring that the annotations in children's learning journals in the Early Years Foundation Stage give clear information about children's progress, and making better use of that information to determine the next steps in their learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The commitment of the headteacher, and her ability to communicate her vision and to lead and inspire others, shine through all aspects of the school's work. Conversations with staff, pupils, parents and governors show that great care and attention is paid to the development of the whole school community. That care is evident in the enormous attention to detail in everything the school does.
- The highly successful drive for improvement is underpinned by frequent, well-focused checks on the quality of teaching and learning by senior and subject leaders. Areas for improvement are followed up robustly with well-targeted training and further monitoring to ensure that what has been learned is being put into practice.
- Staff understand the links between the school's accurate self-assessment, the school improvement plan and the objectives set for them as part of the management of their performance. They are full of praise for the support they receive from senior leaders who, they report, are always willing to listen and help.
- What pupils are taught is wide-ranging, interesting and based on what they need to learn to make outstanding progress. Learning is personalised for the pupils, as the school actively seeks to give them experiences that will stay with them through life. It is further enhanced by an excellent range of visitors and visits that include opportunities for pupils to be away from home overnight.
- Subjects are brought together in topics, with a very strong emphasis on pupils' personal development and on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Subject leaders check teaching and learning in all subjects. They provide guidance for staff on the skills pupils need in each subject. Except in English and mathematics, the procedures to assess and track pupils' progress in those skills are not yet fully in place. The school has nevertheless made a good start on developing them.
- The attention given to developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is excellent. The school environment is stimulating, exciting, supportive and restful, and everybody takes care of it. The entrance hall sets the scene for all of this, with pupils' views and personal thoughts, their aspirations for the future, and reminders for all adults about working together for the benefit of the pupils. Equality of opportunity is promoted exceedingly well, and the school's work to eliminate discrimination of any sort is highly effective.
- Assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons are uplifting experiences where staff help pupils to come to terms with personal, local, national and global issues. Much is done to encourage the whole school community to understand and value the principles of freedom and democracy, and contribute positively to British society.
- The management of the provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is excellent. Any problems with learning, behaviour or personal development are picked up and tackled at an early age so that pupils can quickly catch up and learn well. The school also recognises areas in which pupils might excel and makes provision for them to do so.
- Safeguarding procedures, including those for child protection, meet current requirements. The school is vigilant in these areas. It deals promptly and effectively with any issues that arise.
- The local authority recognises the many strengths of the school. It draws on the expertise of the headteacher and other Cromwell staff to support teaching and learning in other schools. It has not needed to provide additional support for this school for some time.
- Excellent use of pupil premium funding – for example, on additional staffing so that pupils can be taught in smaller groups – means that disadvantaged pupils make the same outstanding progress as other pupils.

- The primary schools sports funding has been used exceptionally well to give staff the skills to teach sport and physical education well. It has also enabled the school to extend the range of sporting activities available to pupils during and after school, and to prepare them to take part in competitive sport with other schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is highly effective. Governors are very visible around the school. They engage well with staff, pupils and parents, regularly seeking and acting on their views.
 - Governors hold the school to account very robustly for pupils' progress. They understand data, analyse it, and question any underperformance by pupils or staff. They also check that what the school is doing to tackle any shortcomings.
 - The governing body is very well informed about the quality of teaching and learning and the outcomes of the management of teachers' performance. They support the headteacher in making decisions about pay and promotion related to the impact teaching has on pupils' progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. It reflects the high expectations the school has of its pupils. High levels of attendance show how much pupils want to be at school so that they can learn.
- Pupils show pride in the school and in their work. They readily volunteer examples of good work, behaviour and kindness, and explain how these things make the school a happy place where everyone gets on well together. They are hardworking and committed to improving their work. It is rare to see any lack of application in lessons, as they strive to do their best.
- Pupils learn to respect each other and to work together from an early age. They know it is important to treat everyone equally and to avoid discrimination of any sort. Alongside developing their speaking and listening skills, well-focused sessions develop their social awareness and teach them to be patient with and respect others.
- Pupils relish the many opportunities they have to take responsibility. The very active school council gives them a strong voice in school improvement. Pupils know their views are valued. Weekly coffee mornings or afternoon teas with the headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body enable different groups of pupils to express their views first hand. All concerned take these meetings seriously and use them to improve the school further.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils were unanimous in saying they feel safe in school. They also showed they know how to keep themselves safe outside of school. They have a heightened awareness of the dangers associated with using computers and other electronic devices to access the internet and, in particular, social media sites.
- In order to keep pupils safe, the school tackles difficult issues head-on but with great sensitivity in different age groups. The current Year 6 project is especially well-focused, encouraging pupils to consider what life might be like many years hence if extremism and radicalisation were allowed to continue unchecked.
- Pupils' emotional well-being is given high priority. The breakfast club provides a calm and supportive start to the day and has also helped to improve attendance and punctuality. Breaks and lunchtimes are happy, social occasions where staff provide pupils with the care they need and many opportunities to interact with each other. Nurture sessions provide further support for pupils who need to be in smaller groups from time to time.
- Pupils know the different forms bullying can take. They are confident there is rarely any bullying and what to do about if there were. They talked about the occasional name-calling, sometimes about colour or

religion, but know that this can be offensive and hurtful and must not be tolerated. They report that the school deals with any such incidents quickly and effectively. Pupils say they always have someone to go to if they have any concerns and that they will always receive help.

- Parents are extremely happy with the care they and their children receive, and with pupils' behaviour.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Excellent relationships, in-depth knowledge of each pupil's individual learning needs, and the ability to reshape learning quickly in response to how well pupils are progressing are key features of the successful teaching and learning in this school. All staff have very high expectations of their pupils' learning and behaviour, and they make sure that every pupil, from the least to the most able, has an equal chance to succeed.
- Staff constantly provide pupils with excellent examples of how to use language. Phonics (letters and sounds) is taught well, and adults successfully encourage pupils to try new words and put them into sentences. Throughout the school, the interaction between teachers and support staff works exceptionally well in showing pupils how to speak in sentences, including when they answer questions, how to write well, and how to read with fluency and expression.
- Teaching successfully ensures that pupils have every opportunity to use their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects, and at play, snack and lunchtimes. Pupils have many opportunities to contribute to their own learning, as staff check what they already know and what more they would like to find out before planning new work in detail.
- Careful, well-targeted questioning probes and deepens pupils' thinking. Learning is structured so that pupils' work is consistently challenging but outcomes are achievable for different ability groups and all can achieve success. Staff are very aware of pupils who need extra support to help them learn and they plan accordingly. Parents are extremely pleased with how the staff help their children.
- Pupils' work is carefully assessed and marked in English and mathematics, and literacy and numeracy skills continue to be marked well when used in different subjects. The skills to be developed in different subjects are appropriately planned, but progression in those skills is not routinely assessed to determine whether they have been acquired or how well pupils are learning.
- Dialogues between pupils and staff, the effective organisation of pupils' learning, and the stimulating learning environment in each classroom all help to underpin the careful and considered attitudes and attention to detail that staff cultivate in the pupils. All of this contributes in very great measure to the pupils' excellent progress.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Typically, children start Nursery with low levels of skill and little knowledge of the English language. The school does much to compensate for the poverty of experience and language with which pupils come to school at this age or as they join the school in different year groups. Children make good progress in Nursery and Reception. They are prepared well for their work in Year 1.
- Attainment is well above average. The proportion of pupils making expected and better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics is much higher than is found nationally. Standards in each subject are average in Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. In 2014, pupils left the school nearly a year ahead of pupils nationally. The upward trend of recent years in both age groups looks set to continue.
- Pupils' progress accelerates the longer they are in the school. This is because their command of the English language gets better and they use it well to begin to find things out for themselves.

- The results of the phonics screening check for pupils in Year 1 were above average. Pupils enjoy reading and they read well. The school successfully encourages a love of reading, and workshops for parents are helping them to understand how to help their children read at home.
- Younger pupils use their phonics skills well to help them read new words, while older pupils readily use dictionaries and thesauri to extend their vocabulary. By Year 6, pupils use their good range of vocabulary very effectively as they write in English and in different subjects. They also have good comprehension skills, as well as good grammar and punctuation skills.
- Pupils are alert to the value of mathematical learning in everyday life. They develop an excellent ability to calculate rapidly in their heads but can also explain the methods they use to arrive at their answers. By Year 6, they are also able to glean important information from word problems in mathematics, and select the correct method of calculation to solve them.
- The school knows its pupils extremely well. Through well-targeted and well-resourced support, it ensures that, despite high levels of mobility, all groups of pupils, from the least to most able, make equally outstanding progress. This includes those pupils who join the school partway through their primary education.
- The most-able pupils reach the higher levels of which they are capable, as is evident in the high proportions reaching Level 5 and, increasingly, Level 6 in the national tests.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special education needs receive well-targeted support from an early age. They make outstanding progress, and many reach the national average by the time they leave the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils are in the majority in the school. They reach the same high standards as other pupils in the school. They make outstanding progress and outperform pupils nationally. In 2014, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 were more than two terms ahead of pupils nationally in mathematics and they were a year ahead in reading and writing. Their attainment is less than a term behind other pupils in the school in mathematics and the gap is even less than that in reading and writing.
- Pupils are thoroughly enjoying the additional range of sports and exercise activities available to them through the sports funding for primary schools. The numbers of pupils attending clubs has risen and pupils are successfully learning to work in teams and to compete fairly and honestly.

The early years provision is good

- As a result of good teaching, leadership and management, children make good progress in Nursery and Reception. The proportion reaching a good level of development was above the national average in 2014. Staff very quickly identify children in need of additional support, be it to develop their language skills or because they have special educational needs. The school works closely with parents and, where relevant, with external agencies, to try to get the best for the children.
- The very attractive learning environment is organised extremely well to stimulate children's curiosity and encourage them to start to find things out for themselves. It is very well utilised by teaching and support staff. Learning is exciting, it is planned and managed well, indoors and out. Children follow routines. The division of the area into zones enables children to work in smaller groups, and staff to keep a close eye on their learning and their whereabouts.
- Language teaching is very precise so that children can build up their skills step by step. Language development is built into every learning opportunity so that children become immersed and better able to communicate with those around them.
- Mathematical learning is also promoted well. For example, as children made fruit kebabs, they talked about the different fruits and how they could make patterns as they created the kebabs.

- Much is done to compensate for what children do not have at home. For example, the outdoor area houses a garden, a range of animals, hard play area and equipment, and a grassed area, which children were observed enjoying even in bad weather. All safety procedures are carefully followed, indoors and out. The children's welfare and well-being are paramount in all of their learning.

- Children in this age group do not make the outstanding progress seen in the rest of the school. This is because, although provision, teaching and assessment are much improved, there is still a tendency to record what children do rather than how well they are learning or what they need to do next. The school is working on improving all of this and the new leader is being mentored to improve outcomes further.

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	103191
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	448886

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	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shaida Parveen
Headteacher	Rubina Darr
Date of previous school inspection	24 February 2010
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