

# Cottesbrooke Junior School

Cedars Avenue, Birmingham, B27 6JL

**Inspection dates** 13–14 November 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Over the last two years, pupils' progress has not been good. Attainment has been below average.
- The high number of changes in staffing and leadership has had a negative impact on teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Most-able pupils are not consistently challenged so they do not always reach the levels they are capable of reaching.
- Some pupils find work difficult because they do not have secure basic skills on which to build.
- Teaching of reading has not helped pupils to develop good reading skills.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to think things through for themselves or learn from their mistakes. Many lack initiative in taking the next steps for themselves, which slows their progress.
- There are important areas of leadership that, at present, have to be covered by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. This means they have an unrealistic work load and have had to neglect some issues to concentrate on the most important concerns.
- Governors do not yet know the school well enough to play an effective role in improving its effectiveness.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school is improving. Now that staffing has settled, teaching is improving. Some teaching, particularly in writing, is very effective.
- The progress currently being made by pupils in school is good. Standards in all years are now in line with those typical for pupils' ages.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and at other times during the school day. They are polite and courteous towards adults and each other.
- The school makes sure that pupils are kept safe in school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are doing a good job in dealing with the difficulties created by the high level of staff mobility. They have made sure that teachers new to the school are effective, so that pupils are making better progress and standards rising.

### Information about this inspection

- Fourteen lessons were observed. Five observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher to assess their ability to check on the impact of teaching on learning.
- Inspectors focused on how effective senior leaders have been in helping the high number of teachers new to the school settle in and maintain standards in teaching.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and looked at the work in their books.
- An inspector visited the breakfast club.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders and pupils. A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority and the executive headteacher of the school supporting Cottesbrooke.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's evaluations of its strengths and weaknesses, and the data it collects on pupils' progress. Documents detailing arrangements for safeguarding were reviewed.
- Questionnaire responses from six members of staff were analysed.
- Inspectors took account of 10 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also looked at the results of the school's own parent questionnaire, recording the views of 60 parents.

### Inspection team

David Speakman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sally Pemberton	Additional Inspector
Susan Calvert	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. About a third of pupils are of Pakistani heritage. Small numbers of pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. An above average proportion speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority), at around a half, is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, at just over a quarter, is above average.
- In 2014, the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There has been a high level of staff mobility since the previous inspection. Ten of the 15 teaching staff are new to the school. There are vacant leadership roles for mathematics and for inclusion. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are taking on extra leadership and administrative responsibility in a temporary capacity. Four governors have recently joined the governing body.
- The school is supported by Robin Hood Academy. The school has a sports partnership with Bishop Challoner College.
- The school runs a breakfast club for its own pupils.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good by:
  - making sure that all groups of pupils are sufficiently challenged to move them onto the next steps in their learning more quickly
  - enabling and encouraging pupils to think things through and solve problems for themselves
  - ensuring work is planned to build effectively on previous learning
  - raising teachers' awareness of what makes teaching effective, including the teaching of reading.
- Improve pupils' progress to raise standards by the end of Year 6 by ensuring that:
  - pupils who find learning difficult have secure basic skills on which to build, particularly in reading and mathematics
  - the most-able pupils reach the highest levels they are capable of
  - disadvantaged pupils make better progress to further close the gap in their attainment with other pupils.
- Improve leadership and management by enabling:
  - governors to get to know the school well enough to support school leadership and make more thorough checks on how well the school is doing
  - subject leaders to be more effective in raising attainment in their areas of responsibility.

An external review of governance, including a review of the school's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Changes in staffing and leadership roles, since the school was last inspected, have limited the effectiveness of school leadership. Circumstances mean senior leaders have to regularly prioritise the focus of their work. They have concentrated on the key priorities; for example they have ensured that teaching in school at present is of a good enough quality so pupils now make good progress. However, they have not had time to tackle all the weaknesses they have identified, such as making sure that all subject leaders are effective.
- Leadership of mathematics and the support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is currently not effective. School leaders are aware of these weaknesses, and have plans to improve them, with the help of the local authority and the support of another school.
- The school usually has robust arrangements for setting targets for teachers to improve their work. Staff leaving the school has created some gaps in this structure. Senior leaders are continuing the checks while training future team leaders to get the process back on track. Newly qualified teachers are receiving good induction support.
- Senior leaders have created aspirations amongst the new and sometimes inexperienced staff to improve. There are striking examples of where the checking of teaching has recently improved practice. Noticeable improvements in teachers' marking of pupils' work, and the quicker pace of learning in some classrooms were as a result of feedback from recent lesson observations.
- The pupil premium funding is spent appropriately on teaching assistants working with qualifying pupils, for family counselling, for one-to-one tuition and for targeted support. Leadership has evaluated outcomes and produced an impact statement showing the attainment and progress of qualifying pupils. Gaps in the attainment of these pupils with others in the school remain, but are narrowing.
- In 2013, the primary sports premium was used to employ sports coaches to provide specialist teaching and to run after-school clubs. Although these arrangements increased the number of pupils involved in sporting activities, they were not considered to be sustainable in the future. Consequently, this year, the school has entered into a partnership with a local sports college to run sporting activities, train pupils as sports leaders, develop the schools physical education (PE) coordinator's leadership and provide support for teachers to improve their teaching of PE.
- The curriculum is planned to meet the pupils' interests. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and mathematics, including opportunities for pupils to write in different subjects. The curriculum makes good links between subjects so learning is meaningful. There is a good extra-curricular offer with a wide range of sporting and other activities. The curriculum is fully inclusive and promotes equality of opportunity for all to learn, whilst actively discouraging any form of discrimination.
- The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are taught in mixed age tutor groups on Friday afternoons. Citizenship aspects of learning are covered at this time. This is effective in developing pupils' social skills and a sense of caring for others in the community. Curriculum topics focusing on British politics and parliament, the importance and power of the monarchy and changes in social history raise pupils' awareness of life in modern Britain and how it has evolved.
- The local authority has recently had a positive impact on the school. A new school improvement partner has linked with the school. He works effectively with school leaders to agree the best course of action for rapid improvement. A partnership with a highly effective school that has the capacity to support Cottesbrooke has been set up. Already there are positive moves, not least of all the staff's enthusiasm to improve and willingness to cooperate.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance requires improvement. Some governors have recently joined the governing body and some

have taken on new responsibilities. They have completed a preliminary audit of their skills and identified gaps in their knowledge and understanding of school governance.

- As yet they have limited first-hand knowledge of the school through governors' visits. Some parent governors are more informed. They have plans to link governors to year groups and to subject leaders, but this is work in progress.
- They have some idea about the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work, but rely on senior leaders to inform them, as their understanding of assessment data is limited.
- Governors are kept informed of the performance of teachers. They link effectiveness of staff to pupils' progress and teachers' pay to classroom effectiveness. They set suitable targets for managing the performance of the headteacher.
- Governors ensure statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding. All staff and visitors are vetted.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

## requires improvement

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Behaviour is not good because pupils have not yet developed the initiative to move on to the next steps in learning without direction or the support of an adult. This holds back pupils' learning and some pupils, particularly the most-able, do not progress as well as they could.
- On the occasions when the pace of learning slows or when the work is too easy, pupils lose focus. At these times, they disengage, sit quietly and do not do enough work. Pupils said poor behaviour occasionally disturbs learning, but not often. When lessons are interesting and challenge them, pupils are keen to learn. They said they enjoy English because 'the work given is at just about the right level'. They do not like mathematics because 'We spend too long on each topic and repeat what we have done before'.
- The school's behaviour records show there are still occasional incidents of unacceptable behaviour in the playgrounds and in classrooms. These include a small number of occasions of bullying. Records show incidents have been dealt with effectively. Pupils said that poor behaviour is always dealt with.
- Attendance has improved. It was below average in 2012 and 2013. The percentage of persistent absentees increased and was above average in 2013. Attendance was better in 2014. It was broadly average and the amount of persistent absence reduced significantly.
- Behaviour observed at break times was good with pupils playing calmly together. They are courteous and polite to each other, to adults and to visitors.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff training in child protection is up to date and adults are vigilant. New staff are updated as part of their induction. Relevant senior staff and governors are trained in safe recruitment. All staff and people who work with children are vetted for suitability, with all checks properly recorded.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe at school and feel secure while there. Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying and know what to do if they ever need help. They know how to stay safe while using the internet.

## The quality of teaching

## requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because recent changes in teaching staff have led to a lack of continuity in learning. Despite their best efforts, senior leaders have not yet been able to develop a consistent view across all staff of what makes teaching good. As a result, teaching has not had a good enough impact on pupils' learning and progress, particularly in reading and mathematics.

- On occasions, the most-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to move on in their learning quickly, particularly in mathematics. Teachers do not always recognise when they are capable of doing harder work and do not provide them with further, more difficult tasks.
- Adults sometimes provide pupils with too much help. They do not always give pupils enough time to think things out for themselves and provide pupils' with the answers too quickly, particularly when solving problems.
- The teaching of reading is not always organised well enough. Not enough focus is given to pupils developing a good understanding of what they read.
- Teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs requires improvement. The school provides a great deal of one-to-one and small group support to improve pupils' skills and knowledge. Procedures to evaluate the impact of this support are not in place so class teachers and teaching assistants receive too little help and guidance to ensure their work is effective.
- Writing is often taught well and this shows in higher standards and better progress. Lessons are well structured and pupils are constantly involved in evaluating and improving their own and other's work. Adults interact with pupils effectively to help them improve. Writing tasks are often linked to their topic, giving pupils opportunities to write in a range of different styles.
- Teaching is improving and a number of strengths are becoming evident. For example, teachers work very closely with pupils and they adjust the pace of the lessons in response to how well pupils are learning at any point. Adults encourage pupils to check the quality of their own work, helping them make on-going improvements.
- Lessons are interesting, with strong links between subjects. This has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning, as it is made clear to pupils why they are completing a set piece of work.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Although attainment at the end of Year 6 was below average in both 2013 and 2014, these two year groups joined Year 3 with below average attainment, which is not typical. Achievement for the 2013 cohort required improvement, but in 2014 it was below average. The school has convincing evidence to show that a significant number of pupils were on track to achieve higher levels in 2014 than in their test results, with some missing predicted levels by only one mark.
- Achievement in reading and in mathematics is weaker than in writing, as reflected in better test results in writing. Pupils find reading comprehension hard and often find difficulty in understanding what they have read. A few pupils find difficulty in developing strategies to solve problems in mathematics. Some experience difficulty when working with numbers due to insecure understanding.
- Disadvantaged pupils made slightly slower progress in 2014 than others in the school in reading, writing and mathematics. Like their classmates, their progress across Key Stage 2 was slower than that of others nationally. Despite this, they still managed to narrow the attainment gaps with other pupils seen in 2013. At the end of Key Stage 2, disadvantaged pupils were about a term and a half behind other pupils in the school in mathematics, about a term behind in reading and two terms in writing. Because the attainment of the whole cohort fell in 2014, the gap with pupils nationally widened. Disadvantaged pupils were just over four terms behind in mathematics and reading and over three terms behind in writing.
- Most-able pupils do not achieve as well as they should. The percentages of pupils reaching the higher levels 5 and 6 at Year 6, were below average last year. The achievement of the most-able pupils is improving, but they do not achieve their best because their work is not always challenging enough.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similarly variable progress to their classmates, so their achievement requires improvement.

- Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those from a Pakistani background made better progress than others in the school in national assessments, although their progress was not yet good.
  
- Now that teaching is more settled, it is clear that pupils are making good progress in lessons and standards are rising throughout the school. This is clear in the most recent work in their books and in the school's records of progress. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is now above expected levels for pupils' ages. The proportions of pupils on track to make expected and more than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics are high.

## 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>	103280
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	442525

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	356
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Janette Hill
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pearl Jones
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 November 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 464 3178
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