

Cotwall End Primary School

Cotwall End Road, Sedgley, Dudley, DY3 3YG

Inspection dates 12–13 May 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. Standards at the end of Year 6 are improving quickly and are currently above average.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress.
- Teachers have high expectations of how much pupils will learn in lessons.
- Teachers and teaching assistants question pupils very well to check that they fully understand what they have learnt.
- The extra support given to individual pupils is highly successful in helping them to catch up with others.
- The school is successful in encouraging pupils to read widely.
- Pupils behave well, both in and out of lessons. They are invariably polite and respectful towards others.
- The school has good systems for ensuring pupils' safety, and parents have great confidence in the school's ability to keep their children safe.
- The headteacher provides an outstanding role model for other staff in all she does.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's main strengths and weaknesses. They have taken effective actions to improve teaching and raise achievement since the school was last inspected.
- Leaders have made good use of extra funding to make sure that disadvantaged pupils make faster progress and close the gap in standards with their peers.
- Children make good progress in the early years, where standards are improving rapidly. Staff work very well as a team to ensure that children are well prepared for Year 1.
- The curriculum is very effective in teaching pupils about British values. Pupils are very well informed about current affairs.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers check pupils' progress in lessons quickly enough, so do not provide them with the extra support or more demanding tasks that they need in order to make the best possible progress.
- Pupils do not make as much progress in writing as they do in reading and mathematics. They do not form their letters accurately.
- Leaders do not evaluate the value for money that the extra funding for physical education and sport is providing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons. In addition, the inspectors listened to pupils reading and analysed the work in their books.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff, pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 109 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also spoke to parents informally during the inspection to gather their views.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, including arrangements for keeping pupils safe. They looked at a number of documents including: the schools own information on pupils' progress; the school's evaluation of its performance; records relating to attendance and behaviour; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

David Driscoll, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Timothy Hughes

Additional Inspector

Diane Clapcott

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Children attend the pre-school part time and Reception classes full time.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- An average proportion of pupils is disabled or has special educational needs.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils currently known to have been eligible for free school meals at any time in the last six years and children in the care of the local authority) is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school operates from two buildings: one housing Key Stage 2 pupils and the other for the early years and Key Stage 1. In July 2013, asbestos was found in the Key Stage 1 building. The pupils were immediately evacuated and the whole school reorganised. Children from the early years went to a different school's site and were taught there. Pupils from Key Stage 1 moved into the Key Stage 2 building, where classes were combined to make room for them. All resources, furniture, equipment and pupils' work from the Key Stage 1 building was lost owing to the contamination.
- The pupils returned to the building in December 2013. Two weeks later, the same building was flooded and an electrical fault during the subsequent drying process led to a fire, leading to even more disruption.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and accelerate pupils' progress by ensuring that all teachers:
 - encourage pupils in all year groups to form their letters accurately, especially with respect to the appropriate size of upper- and lower-case letters
 - check frequently that all pupils are making the best possible progress in lessons and provide them with extra support if needed or move them on to more difficult work as soon as they are ready.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of the extra funds for physical education and sport to ensure that the school is getting the best value for money.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides an outstanding role model for other staff. Without exception, staff look up to her as their leader and respond enthusiastically to the demands placed upon them. The headteacher has created a culture where good behaviour and teaching can flourish.
- The headteacher has high expectations of how well staff and pupils will behave towards one another. She ensures that all staff and pupils are treated equally and that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Senior leaders use information about pupils' progress very well in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching. They are quick to address any areas for improvement and their actions invariably prove successful. The quality of teaching and pupils' subsequent achievement are improving across the school as a result.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching paint a very clear picture of what works well and where improvements can be made, even in the very best lessons.
- Leaders manage teachers' performance outstandingly well. They set demanding targets for individual teachers that include a focus on those pupils who have fallen behind in previous years, so that they catch up with others.
- Subject and other leaders, such as those responsible for the early years, play a good part in driving the school forward. They accurately assess the quality of teaching in the subjects and areas for which they are responsible and lead major initiatives, such as the promotion of reading, well.
- The leadership of provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is of the highest quality. The deputy headteacher responsible takes great care to match extra support to the exact needs of each pupil. Many pupils are removed from the register because their progress is so rapid.
- Leaders coped well with the setbacks caused by the building evacuations and the loss of resources and pupils' work. They minimised the impact on pupils' achievement, although the impact was still seen in lower than expected achievement in 2014.
- Leaders have used the extra funds for disadvantaged pupils well. Despite all the accommodation problems, gaps between these pupils' attainment and that of others narrowed dramatically in 2014 and continue to do so.
- Leaders ensure that the school meets safeguarding requirements, so pupils feel secure and parents justifiably feel that their children are safe.
- The curriculum is good and prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. It is broad and balanced for all pupils, and teachers adapt it well to help lower attainers and push on the most-able pupils. The teaching of British values is strong. Even pupils in Year 1, for example, learn about democracy and how the country is governed. One low-attaining Year 1 pupil, for example, explained that David Cameron was 'Clever Crow' for the week because 'he got most votes in the election' and was quickly corrected by another who pointed out that 'It was not just him, but the others who agree with him too.'
- The work on British values is built into the curriculum for each class. Pupils in Year 6, for example, study a topic on 'Are people more accepting of others now than in the past?' They compare and contrast events from around the world, including apartheid in South Africa, race riots in America and their own experiences to learn about tolerance, respect and the celebration of diversity.

- Leaders have used the extra funding for sports and physical education effectively to encourage pupils to play more sport and increase the opportunities for competitive sport. However, they do not monitor and evaluate this aspect of the school's work as well as they do other aspects, so leaders are not sure that they are getting the best value for the money they are spending.
- The local authority has provided good support, particularly in helping teachers to improve the content of pupils' written work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. Governors have a good understanding of what performance data is telling them. They ask demanding questions of the headteacher that get to the detail of where the school needs to improve; for example, 'What impact has the training for teachers on improving writing had on the progress of pupils in Year 6?' Governors check carefully that what they are told is happening actually takes place, and is effective. They frequently visit school to observe lessons, talk to pupils and staff, and look at the work in pupils' books. Their visits to lessons are now so popular with staff that teachers invite them to observe their lessons.
 - Governors use a wide range of evidence to get a clear and accurate view on the quality of teaching. They are knowledgeable about what is being done to reward the best teaching and tackle underperformance, ensuring that teachers' performance is managed effectively.
 - With the exception of the extra funds for physical education and sport, governors have managed the school's finances very well. Despite the huge costs to the school of the building problems, the budget is balanced and the school maintains a small surplus.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' attitudes to learning improve significantly as they get older. By Year 6, pupils pay close attention to their teachers and concentrate totally on their work. Pupils encourage and support one another when working in groups. They are prepared to give their views and argue their points sensibly.
- Around school, pupils are polite and respectful towards one another. They get on well with each other and play together happily at break times.
- Pupils are very appreciative of the attractive learning environment. They respect other pupils' work that is on display and are keen for their own efforts to be exhibited.
- All staff and pupils understand fully the school's expectations of behaviour. Staff apply policies and procedures consistently, so the need for sanctions has reduced considerably since the school was last inspected. The introduction of 'The Den', where pupils go for individual support, has proved particularly successful in helping individuals to learn to control their emotions.
- Staff have relatively few incidents of poor behaviour to record. They deal with those that do occur quickly and efficiently, frequently involving parents, so pupils do not reoffend.
- Pupils' attendance is just below average. Several pupils are on unavoidable long-term absence for personal reasons, such as hospitalisation.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school has good procedures and practices that ensure pupils are safe from harm. All staff have received training on identifying signs of extremism and how to deal with it.
- Bullying is very rare, but pupils know what to do should it occur. They have great confidence in staff to deal with any issues that arise. Pupils are very aware of what constitutes discriminatory language and ensure that they do not use it.

- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe outside of school. Guidance on keeping safe while using the internet starts in Year 1, where pupils are already knowledgeable about the dangers of providing personal details on line.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good in all year groups and leads to pupils making consistently good progress. Teaching in the small 'intervention' groups by teaching assistants and the learning mentor is highly effective. Staff focus on the key skills that are preventing pupils making better progress and work on these intensively, so pupils, especially those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, make rapid progress and catch up with their peers.
- Teachers have high expectations of how much work pupils will complete in a lesson. They give pupils tasks that are usually well matched to their abilities so that all pupils are challenged appropriately.
- Teachers have been very successful in encouraging pupils to read. The weakest readers in Year 2 use their knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters represent) well to work out words such as 'blacksmith'. The books that teachers give to younger pupils are interesting and contain challenging new words.
- Across all year groups, there is a range of incentives for reading outside of school. Pupils join the 'One Million Club', for example, when they have read a million words. The count is carefully tracked online, with pupils registering the books they have read and answering questions about them so that staff can check that they have read the whole book. Rewards for reading include book tokens and parties for large numbers because the initiatives are so popular with pupils.
- Teachers have a very secure knowledge of mathematics and use this well in their teaching. Teachers answer questions from pupils without referring to textbooks and they make links between topics so that pupils can use knowledge they have gained in the past to solve new and more difficult problems.
- Across all years, teachers make extensive use of problem-solving activities in mathematics lessons. These are very effective in making pupils think hard about their work and they motivate pupils well. By Year 4, pupils are taught to explain why they have solved problems in a particular way, as well as explaining what they have done to solve them.
- Teachers use questioning very effectively to check that pupils understand what they have learnt. They do not accept simple one-word answers, even from the lowest attaining pupils, but press the pupils to explain themselves fully.
- Leaders have provided good training for staff to improve the content of pupils' writing. Standards of spelling, punctuation and grammar were above average in 2014, but results in writing were lowered by weaker content. Teachers now use interesting topics, extend pupils' vocabulary and concentrate on teaching pupils about how to use language more effectively. This has been successful in raising standards of writing.
- Despite other improvements in writing, pupils' handwriting in all years still requires improvement. Teachers do not pay enough attention, from the early years onwards, to making sure that pupils form their letters correctly and write upper- and lower-case letters of an appropriate size.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers check the progress of individuals frequently. They identify those who need more help or are ready to move on to more difficult work. The former are often separated off into a small group for a few minutes of intensive support, while the latter are set more challenging tasks. However, this is not consistent across the school. In some classes, teachers do not check pupils' progress often enough, so the most-able finish early, while others get stuck.

The achievement of pupils**is good**

- Pupils now make good progress throughout the school. The building problems had a significant impact on results across the school in 2014, especially in the early years and Year 1. Pupils made the progress expected of them in 2014, but relatively few made good progress. Pupils' progress accelerated as soon as the school got back to normal working conditions and standards are rising at a faster rate than the national average.
- Pupils currently in the school have achieved well. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This reflects good progress from pupils' average starting points. Standards are also above average in the early years and in Year 1, where standards in phonics are now above average.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress. The number of pupils identified as having barriers to learning falls quickly in Key Stage 1 because the support they receive is so effective that they catch up and no longer need extra help. Those with the most severe difficulties continue to receive extra support throughout Key Stage 2 and, almost without exception, leave with average attainment, despite starting Year 3 with very low attainment indeed.
- The most-able pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers give them challenging tasks that make them think deeply. Such pupils read lengthy texts, such as the *Harry Potter* series, and read more widely. They take a great interest in current affairs, reading newspapers and listening to political debates, for example. The most-able pupils very much enjoy getting to grips with difficult problems in mathematics. Their writing shows flair and imaginative use of language, although, like others, their handwriting is weaker than the content of their written work.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in all years. The gap between their attainment and that of others is closing rapidly. In 2013, disadvantaged pupils were around four terms behind pupils nationally and their peers in school in reading, three terms behind in writing and six terms behind in mathematics. In 2014, these gaps closed to less than a term in reading, about a term in mathematics and around two terms in writing. The standards of disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 are now slightly better than those of other pupils in school.

The early years provision**is good**

- Children join the school with knowledge and skills that are typical for their age. They make good progress across all areas of learning and leave well prepared for starting Year 1. Even after the disruption to their learning because of the building work, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development was above average in 2014, and the proportion is expected to improve again this year.
- Good leadership has ensured that children's learning suffered as little as possible during the move and that standards have risen for the last three years as children make better progress. The leader analyses assessment data very carefully to pinpoint where improvements need to be made. Disadvantaged children made less progress than others, for example, in 2014. Staff analysed the weaknesses in their learning in great detail to make sure that they have been able successfully to catch up with the other children.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively as a team. They provide a calm, peaceful and highly stimulating environment for children, who feel safe and secure in the setting. Children quickly learn to behave well, listen to instructions and play happily with other children.
- The curriculum provides a good balance of activities that develop most of the basic skills that children need to be successful in the future. Teachers teach children to use phonics, so that they quickly gain the fundamentals of reading. However, teachers do not pay the same attention to ensuring that children form their letters accurately when writing.

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	103810
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	462579

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	345
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Skitt
Headteacher	Nicole Anderton
Date of previous school inspection	6 June 2013
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