

# Covingham Park Primary School

The Harriers, Covingham Park, Swindon SN3 5BD

**Inspection dates** 11–12 February 2016

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Covingham Park has improved well since the previous inspection and is still improving.
- The headteacher, with effective support from the deputy headteacher and governors, secures consistently good teaching throughout the school.
- The good teaching, learning and assessment are typified by the conscientiousness and skill of staff in promoting pupils' confidence in learning. This results in pupils making better progress than in the past.
- Pupils apply themselves well to their learning. Consequently, they make good progress during their time in the school.
- The average levels of attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2015 reflect pupils' good progress from their varying starting points.
- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils feel safe and are safeguarded well at school.
- Phonics and reading are given a high priority and are now taught well.
- The governing body has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths, and checks that leaders are tackling the remaining areas for improvement effectively.
- Children make a successful start in the early years in response to good teaching, support and the stimulating experiences provided for them.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and in the playground. They apply themselves well to their work and are proud of their achievements.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Marking is inconsistent as it does not identify incorrect spellings, especially in subjects other than English.
- Relatively recent developments and changes to middle leadership roles have not yet had time to impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Pupils' handwriting and spelling skills are not always fully developed. This restricts their ability to write fluently and confidently.
- Occasionally, not enough is demanded of some pupils, especially the most-able pupils.

## Full report

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

- Improve teaching further to raise standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at each key stage, by:
  - enabling pupils, especially the most able, to gain a clearer understanding of what the higher standards look like to enable them to aspire to them
  - ensuring that marking consistently encourages pupils to improve their work
  - improving the teaching of handwriting and spelling throughout the school
  - modelling of good-quality handwriting by staff when presenting their lessons
  - ensuring that pupils know what good presentation means.
  
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, by:
  - strengthening the work of middle leaders (those responsible for particular age groups or subjects) to further develop their skills.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and the special needs coordinator are a strong senior leadership team. They have worked tirelessly to eliminate underperformance and secure a settled teaching team. As a result, progress has accelerated and standards have been raised, and the school has greatly improved since the last inspection. Behaviour is good, teaching has improved and the rates of progress that current pupils make in their learning are accelerating. This is not yet reflected in the statutory assessment data from the end of Key Stage 1 in 2015.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of what the school does well as a result of ongoing, extensive and highly detailed monitoring of the school's performance. They have clear-cut priorities for those areas that require further improvement and are relentless in their pursuit of excellence – communicating a sense of drive and urgency to continue to move forward quickly.
- Middle leaders are playing an increasingly strong role in bringing about improvement and have contributed well, for example, in securing consistent assessment and marking procedures across the school. However, some middle leaders are relatively new to their roles and have not been in post long enough, for example, to fully raise pupils' handwriting, spelling and mental arithmetic skills. Despite this the school's team-based approach to leadership is quickening pupils' progress. This demonstrates the school's capacity to generate further improvement.
- Procedures to check the quality of teaching and learning across the school are highly effective. Leaders and managers are skilful in ensuring that their analysis and interpretation of information about pupils' progress leads to actions that address any areas of concern. These actions include effective use of the pupil premium, ensuring that good support is given to the small number of disadvantaged pupils so that they make good progress.
- Staff performance is managed effectively. Careful monitoring of teachers' performance is achieved through pupil progress meetings, looking at pupils' workbooks, observing teaching and a culture of sharing good practice. All staff, including those who are new, are supported through a high-quality programme for improving teaching which has created an environment where everyone is a learner, adults and children alike.
- Pupils benefit from a lively, broad and well-planned curriculum based on a series of learning challenges. Themes and topics are brought to life by an exciting range of visits and visitors to school. Subjects are linked together very well, pupils having many opportunities to develop their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers work closely together to regularly review the curriculum and check that it meets the needs of the pupils in the school. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in a number of extra-curricular clubs over the year which enhances their learning, such as choir, gymnastics and other sports.
- The school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely strong. It reinforces traditional British values and ensures that its school values are not forgotten. Covingham Park is a caring, outward-looking school, typified by pupils participating in many community activities.
- The views of all pupils are valued and many have an opportunity to play a part in the life of the school. They have roles in the school council and as school prefects, or as 'play agents' for the younger pupils at lunchtimes, as well as a range of different jobs in each class. The school's highly inclusive approach fosters good relationships and there are high levels of trust and respect between all individuals.
- Links with parents are positive and their views are sought and valued. Parents appreciate that the school gives all children an equal opportunity to succeed and does not tolerate discrimination of any kind. The majority of parents who completed the online questionnaire, Parent View, and those who were spoken to at the start of the day during the inspection agreed that their child was happy at school.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium is used very well to raise staff expertise in the teaching of PE. Specialist coaches work alongside school staff, and the school has provided many additional opportunities, which the pupils thoroughly enjoy, to develop sporting skills.
- The school has benefited from good support from the local authority and from the expertise of staff from the Dorcan academy and the Dorcan cluster.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The governing body is extremely effective. It is much improved since the previous inspection. It is very well informed, incisive in its approach to school improvement, and analyses closely all performance information. Leaders and teachers are held to account for the quality of teaching and learning in the

- school and their impact on pupil progress. Performance management procedures are robust and rigorous.
- Rigorous monitoring of finances, including the pupil premium, has ensured that the school is on a sound financial footing. Governors make a meaningful contribution to the way in which leaders check the effectiveness of the school's performance, such as holding structured conversations with pupils, and are individually linked to a school development objective. They are adept at helping to set priorities for development.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils are very well known by staff and detailed records are kept of all safeguarding issues. The majority of parents report that their children are safe at school.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching is now consistently good and has improved since the last inspection. The impact of this good teaching on learning has resulted in pupils sustaining good progress across the school and reaching average standards in 2015.
- Teachers have improved their skills since the previous inspection in response to supportive leadership and guidance. A high-quality programme of support provides good opportunities for teachers to engage in professional development to improve their practice further.
- As a result, for example, improved teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make), reading and writing, and pupils' speaking and listening skills have raised standards across the school.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and usually ensure that the pace of learning and level of challenge enables pupils to concentrate and be fully involved in their learning. Opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their skills in a variety of ways and in a number of different subjects. The design of lessons allows for reshaping of tasks and maximum learning. Staff manage resources well. This includes the way they use teaching assistants who are very good in the way they challenge and support pupils. This results in good attitudes to learning and good behaviour in lessons.
- Occasionally, the progress of some pupils is not fast enough in lessons or is too variable as a result of insufficient challenge, especially for the most-able pupils. As a result, the pace of learning slows and pupils lose concentration. This variance over time has resulted in pupils' rates of progress not accelerating quickly enough, which shows in Key Stage 1 results where progress was not quick enough in 2015. Teachers usually question pupils skilfully and regularly check their knowledge and understanding. When teachers assess pupils' understanding and change or modify the next steps in pupils' learning, teachers secure maximum progress for pupils.
- In mathematics, basic skills are taught very well and consolidated regularly. In Year 5, pupils confidently justified their solutions, providing strategies to solve problems in scaling ingredients up and down. In Year 4, pupils were able to discuss what a decimal is, confidently consolidating previous work.
- The purpose for writing is linked closely to the topic pupils are studying. For instance, pupils in Year 6 were enthusiastically preparing an abridged version of *Romeo and Juliet* and children in Reception were drawing and writing about the Chinese dragon for Chinese New Year.
- The quality of teaching in the Reception class is good. The younger children make an excellent start in their early reading because of a systematic and rigorous approach to the teaching of phonics in order to make sense of words. Many children read at home, often with a member of their family. Pupils continue to enjoy and make progress in their reading, which is fluent and expressive, as they move through the school.
- Teaching assistants and teachers work together very well to give timely and constructive advice to pupils, including to those who have special educational needs or disability. The quality of support is high, whether adults are working with a group or an individual pupil. This results in good academic progress, as well as strong social and emotional development.
- Increasingly, as pupils mature they come to understand that by sharing ideas with each other they can contribute strongly to their own learning. This was seen to good effect, for example, during English in a Year 5 class as pupils checked and improved their 'cohesive plan'.
- The school's marking policy is not always applied effectively. For example, spellings are not always corrected and handwriting is rarely commented on. The standard for pupils to aim at is not demonstrated. Consequently, pupils do not always know how to improve their work. Leaders and managers are set to review the marking policy to address this.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils talk about being proud of their school and enjoy taking on responsibilities, for example as prefects across the school and 'play agents' during lunchtimes.
- They show a good understanding of the differing beliefs and customs seen in modern Britain. They make reference to values, such as resilience, respect and cooperation, which they learn in class.
- The vast majority of pupils concentrate well, are attentive during lessons and show a real love of learning. They show great respect to their teachers and respond well to the guidance they receive. Pupils enjoy sharing ideas with their 'learning partners' and happily help each other with their learning. Very rarely, a few pupils become too dependent on adult support, while a few others sometimes become disengaged from their work and need reminders from staff to concentrate more.
- Pupils talk confidently about their learning and about the strategies they can use to learn successfully. For example, they know what to do if they are stuck. Pupils explained that 'making mistakes is part of learning but you have to keep at it'.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how they can keep themselves safe. For example, they have a good awareness of potential risks when using the internet.
- The responses from the parent online survey and the views expressed by parents spoken to by the inspector at the school gate show that the vast majority also feel that the pupils are safe in the school.
- Pupils' work in personal, social and health education lessons and in religious education helps them develop a strong awareness of right and wrong. Pupils are respectful of different opinions and learn strategies which help them to resolve conflicts.
- Pupils have a good awareness of different kinds of bullying and say that bullying is rare at Covingham Park Primary. However, they are confident that adults will help them to sort out any problems that may occur.
- School records confirm that the number of bullying incidents has decreased considerably to very few.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils move calmly and sensibly around the school. They are very polite and show respect for adults and for one another.
- Routines are well established so that transitions between activities are smooth. As a result, there is very little lost learning time.
- The very large majority of pupils are keen to learn and apply themselves with enthusiasm to their work.
- Pupils who have previously found it difficult to manage their behaviour and maintain concentration are well supported by staff and, as a result, disruptions to learning are rare.
- The playground is well organised and well supervised and a good range of activities are provided for pupils with different interests. As a result, behaviour is good and pupils say that they enjoy their breaktimes.
- Attendance is above average and many pupils miss very little school. School leaders check the attendance of pupils regularly and work supportively with families and outside agencies to improve the attendance of the few pupils who are absent too often.

## Outcomes for pupils are good

- Progress and attainment have improved since the last inspection, especially in Key Stage 2. The school's assessment information, pupil tracking and work in books and on display clearly indicates that currently pupils in every year group are now making consistently good progress. This is the case in English and mathematics, as well as other subjects across the curriculum.
- The school's information, work in pupils' books and evidence from lesson observations indicate that standards are rising consistently fast in Years 1 to 6. Most pupils have made rapid progress since 2014 in reading, writing and mathematics and are now attaining at least in line with expectations for their age. Increasing numbers are reaching higher levels.
- The great majority of children enter the Reception classes with skills at levels below those typical for their age, particularly in the skills that relate to language, speaking and listening, number and personal

development. Children make good progress and just under half the group left the early years in 2015 having reached a good level of development in line with the national average. Inspection evidence shows that this number is set to increase this coming year.

- However, despite many pupils starting Key Stage 1 with skills that are below the good level of development, they are prepared well for life in Key Stage 1. Achievement has improved since the last inspection and evidence from the inspection shows that current pupils in Key Stage 1 are making progress which is at least good. Pupils enjoy reading. Younger pupils' phonics skills are improving. Pupils in Year 1 attained below the expected level in the national phonics check in 2015. This proportion was higher than in the previous year. Data show that the current Year 1 pupils are comfortably above the figures for last year.
- Results in national tests in Year 2 in recent years reflect a legacy of inaccurate assessment, when standards were judged to be higher than they actually were, and poor teaching, rather than the current picture. Pupils who were in Year 2 last year, despite their below average standards in statutory assessments, made good progress from their starting points. They are making rapid progress this year and are catching up quickly.
- Progress data in the Year 6 national tests in recent years reflect the previous unstable teaching in the lower school and inaccurate assessment of standards. This was rectified and progress has accelerated significantly in Key Stage 2 since the previous inspection. Pupils now make good progress in learning from their individual starting points. By the end of Year 6, pupils are soundly prepared to the academic tasks of secondary education and their knowledge of how to be a successful learner is also of great benefit to them.
- Pupils made good progress in 2015 from low starting points to reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils did not make the expected rate of progress across Years 3 to 6 in 2015 in reading. However, this is not the case this year.
- The achievement of the most-able pupils in both key stages has been varied over time. They performed poorly at the higher Level 5 in reading and grammar in 2015, with two pupils attaining the highest Level 6 in grammar and four in mathematics. They made much better progress in mathematics than they did in reading. Currently, assessment information shows that the achievement of the most-able pupils is much improved across the school and their progress has accelerated. Many more are reaching the higher levels in mathematics and writing. However, opportunities are still missed in lessons to add further to the level of challenge and to stretch pupils' thinking. This is because staff do not always model what a good standard of work looks like.
- The few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, achieve better than other pupils in the school. In many cases, in Key Stage 2, they make faster progress than their peers. The achievement gaps of different groups of pupils have narrowed since last year. Pupils speak confidently in lessons in front of the whole class and enjoy the challenge of 'listening partners'. They know when to speak formally and when it is appropriate to speak informally. Older pupils can present a mature reasoned point of view for their decision. Pupils are confident to ask questions and will challenge what others say in a supportive manner.
- Pupils' writing skills have improved since the last inspection. Most now write fluently and legibly, using interesting sentences and imaginative language. An example of this was seen in a lesson in Year 5 where pupils were describing their 'cohesive plan' which helped them to create an argument for or against the ideas put forward by their peers. Skills in creative writing are well developed, resulting in interesting displays around the school.
- The school is quick to identify any pupils who are at risk of falling behind. This also includes those pupils who have special educational needs or disability. These pupils make good progress because teachers give them activities well matched to their individual ability and needs. Some of these pupils make better progress than their peers.
- The gaps in pupils' attainment between different groups of pupils in 2015 have been rapidly reduced.
- There were too few pupils eligible for pupil premium funding in 2014 to comment on their attainment without risk of identifying individual pupils. However, a study of the school's test results, assessment data and the pupils' work confirms that disadvantaged pupils across the school are making good progress from their starting points. Pupil premium funding is having a positive effect on the achievement of these pupils.

## Early years provision

is good

- Children make a strong start to their education at Covingham. Most start the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are below those typical for their age, especially in the areas of language, speaking and listening, and number. As a result of good teaching, excellent provision and a vibrant and safe learning

environment, children make good and sometimes outstanding progress. The proportion of pupils who leave the Reception class with a good level of development, though close to, was just below average. Even so, many children are well prepared to start Year 1.

- Children quickly learn essential social skills and develop well emotionally. They are able to share, take turns, and concentrate and apply themselves to tasks for sustained periods of time. This underpins their strong progress in all areas of learning.
- There are highly positive relationships between staff, children and parents. This helps children to quickly become confident learners and have a positive attitude to school. During the inspection, children worked happily and cooperatively together.
- Staff encourage children to experiment and become independent through well-established and consistent routines. Activities are organised so that there is an effective balance of activities led by adults and those chosen by children to explore and practise skills as they play.
- Interactions between adults and children are good and help to develop children's speaking and listening skills. For example, a range of thoughtful questions designed to extend children's vocabulary and responses was observed during the inspection as adults worked and played alongside children to extend their learning. Children described the foam into which they were putting bottles as 'goeey and soft'.
- Basic skills in reading, writing and number are promoted very effectively. Opportunities for children to write, mark-make and count are plentiful around the Reception class area. One group were typing their names on the computer keyboards.
- All groups of children make good and sometimes outstanding progress in the early years, including the most able and children who have special educational needs or disability. The work and activities provided for children are exciting and interesting, sparking imagination and engagement.
- All children are kept safe and secure in the early years setting, and their behaviour is excellent.
- Links between home and school are strong.
- The leadership and management of the early years are strong. Staff are constantly refining their practice in order to maintain high standards of provision. They accurately measure the progress children make, and have well-thought-through plans to make further improvements. Staff are committed to secure the very best outcomes for all children.



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135206
<b>Local authority</b>	Swindon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002415

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	370
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tony Foss
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Caroline Polley
<b>Telephone number</b>	01793 525465
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cpps.swindon.sch.uk">www.cpps.swindon.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:head@cpps.swindon.sch.uk">head@cpps.swindon.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9–10 October 2013

## Information about this school

- Covingham Park Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. A smaller than average number of pupils is from minority ethnic backgrounds and an even smaller percentage speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is lower than average. The pupil premium is extra government funding to help the education of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- The school has had a turnover of one third of the teaching force since the previous inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Early years provision is full-time in the Reception classes.
- The school has an informal partnership with the Dorcan Cluster/Dorcan Academy.
- Privately run before- and after-school clubs and an independent pre-school operate on the school site and share some of the school's facilities. They are managed independently and so they were not a part of this inspection.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons, including six jointly observed with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors listened to some pupils read in class and scrutinised a sample of their work alongside the subject leaders.
- Inspectors also made a number of short visits to lessons to check the quality of provision.
- Inspectors held meetings with different groups of people involved with the school. These groups included pupils, a number of governors, the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other members of teaching staff. The lead inspector spoke on the phone to a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also talked with a small number of parents as they brought children into school.
- Inspectors viewed a range of documents, including information on pupils' achievements, the school's data on current and recent progress and attainment and the school's view on how well it is doing. They also viewed the school's improvement plan, documents relating to safeguarding and records of behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the 42 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and 18 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff. The school's website was also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Terry Mortimer, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gina Cooke	Ofsted Inspector
Ken Bryan	Ofsted Inspector

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