

Court Farm Primary School

Tedbury Crescent, Erdington, Birmingham B23 5NS

Inspection dates 18–19 May 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	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Following the previous inspection in January 2015, the headteacher lost no time in establishing her uncompromising ambition for the school's success. She sought the necessary expertise and acted quickly on advice. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved rapidly.
- All teachers check pupils' progress vigilantly and accurately. They carefully plan each lesson so that pupils systematically build on their prior learning and progress quickly towards the long-term goals appropriate for their age.
- Pupils of all ages know exactly that is expected of them in any lesson. They are rightly proud of how well they are doing.
- Pupils believe they are trusted and valued. They look out for each other at playtimes. In lessons, pupils remain alert, interested and self-motivated.
- Children in the early years make good progress because of the interesting and purposeful activities planned for them each day. Children settle quickly. They understand what is expected of them and they are keen to do what is right.
- Governors contribute knowledgeably to directing the school's future. They hold leaders rigorously to account for continued rates of pupils' progress and further raising standards.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The school's successful initiatives to accelerate pupils' progress and attain high standards are at a relatively early stage of development and are not yet fully embedded over time.
- Subjects such as history and geography are not consistently taught in sufficient breadth and depth to ensure that pupils develop levels of knowledge and understanding appropriate for their age.
- Recently appointed subject leaders are at an early stage of developing their leadership skills.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to embed the school's successful initiatives to further accelerate pupils' progress and attain the highest possible standards.
- Ensure that subjects such as history and geography are taught in sufficient breadth and depth so that pupils develop their knowledge and understanding at levels appropriate for their age.
- Further develop the skills of subject leaders who have recently taken on additional responsibilities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher is committed to raising standards by ensuring that staff at all levels provide consistently high quality education and support. She has successfully eradicated weak teaching and pupils of all ages are now making rapid progress. The headteacher is rightly proud of the speedy and significant improvements achieved and the impact on pupils' progress and achievement. She commented, 'I get goosebumps when I see what these children can do.'
- The leaders for literacy and mathematics have provided well-targeted training for staff. They have excellent subject knowledge and have introduced highly successful initiatives to skilfully accelerate pupils' rates of progress. Some subject leaders are relatively new to their role but they are keen to further develop the necessary skills to build on and disseminate good practice.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have developed and implemented secure procedures and systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. The checks are sharply focused on age-related expectations and staff quickly identify those pupils who are likely to meet, could meet or are unlikely to meet the appropriate standards. Teachers regularly consider their pupils' progress. As a consequence, teachers are able to plan detailed steps for pupils' development. Pupils experiencing difficulties are identified quickly and well-defined support is provided. During staff meetings, staff check each other's judgements by comparing tracking information with work in pupils' books. They challenge each other where necessary and have had their judgements checked by staff in other schools. Decisions about pupils' progress are based on thorough and accurate analysis.
- The headteacher is vigilant in her checks on staff performance and ensures close links between their performance and their salary progression. She has high expectations of everyone, and keeps a constant eye on how well the pupils are taught and how effectively they learn. She gathers a broad but appropriate range of evidence to support her judgements. She sets ambitious but realistic targets for improvement.
- The coordinator for special educational needs and the inclusion leader ensure that pupil's individual needs are quickly identified and understood. They seek specialist support where necessary to make sure that intervention is pertinent to pupils' specific needs. Parents are kept up to date about their children's progress and they contribute openly to discussions about the necessary support or readiness for increased independence. All those involved in supporting pupils who have special educational needs, including the chair of the governing body, regularly attend training to ensure that their specialisms remain up to date and well informed.
- The senior leadership team have developed the curriculum to inspire pupils' genuine interest in different subjects. They identified links across subjects where appropriate and introduced themes to stimulate pupils' imagination. The school provides a rich range of extra-curricular activities so that pupils further develop their interests and skills. They visit a range of educational venues such as Birmingham's library, museums and places of interest. They benefit from a wide range of visitors who come into school to enliven their learning. Pupils value the range of experiences they have. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 learn French. School leaders consulted with local secondary schools to choose a modern foreign language which would be developed following transition to Year 7. Pupils learn to pronounce and name common objects, numbers and colours. They are able to write and verbally exchange simple phrases and conversations.
- Leaders effectively allocate the pupil premium funding (additional government funding) to improve disadvantaged pupils' rates of progress. The funds have provided additional staff to support specific initiatives so that pupils effectively make up for underachievement in the past. The funding has also helped to improve pupils' attendance and provide after-school clubs to further accelerate pupils' progress.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used well to improve pupils' physical skills through additional sporting activities. The funds also provide professional coaching for pupils and develop teachers' subject knowledge. Pupils have increased access to a range of after-school sporting activities through the Kingsbury School Sports Partnership.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher plan themed assemblies which are developed further by teachers in class. Celebration assemblies held every Friday identify and celebrate individual pupils who have demonstrated particular strengths in their work or play. Displays in every classroom remind pupils about particular ethics, for example, charity, learning from different faiths, democracy and teamwork. Pupils regularly visit different places of worship and understand a range of religious beliefs, customs and traditions. Pupils have a keen sense of equality and show a high degree of mutual respect.

- The pupils are aware of the links between the values held and promoted by school and life in modern Britain. They know that rules about their behaviour are underpinned by themes such as the rule of law and balance with individual liberty. For example, a display in a main corridor reminds pupils that, 'we know our behaviour affects our rights and the rights of others. We understand the consequences of breaking laws and rules.' Pupils have opportunities to put democracy into practice when they vote for members of the school council and the head boy and girl. Their understanding is deepened when they study these issues in different subjects.
- Parents spoken to at the end of the school day confirmed that they thought their children attended a 'great' school. Their children were happy and any minor problems were quickly sorted because parents could easily talk to staff. They appreciated the many activities planned by the school and would happily recommend it to other parents. A few parents emphasised that the support for pupils was excellent because staff were focused on what the pupils need to succeed. Parents appreciate the variety of workshops, courses and events arranged by the school so that they can learn how to better support their children. Following a cookery course, a parent wrote, 'I think it was a great morning. Very interesting finding out about sugars in our food and drinks.'
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are highly committed and rightly proud of the school's swift turnaround since the last full inspection in January 2015. They are ambitious for pupils and the ongoing success of the school.
 - The chair of the governing body has attracted and appointed governors with an appropriate level of skill and experience. She has developed a particular expertise in pupils who have special educational needs or disability and her knowledge is an asset to the school.
 - The fortnightly meetings of the chair of the governing body and the headteacher are sharply focused on the school's progress against agreed priorities. As a result, the governors contribute knowledgeably to setting the school's future direction.
 - Governors are confident. They seek information for themselves and check on the security of reports presented to them.
 - Governors keep a close watch on the difference additional government funding is having on pupils' progress and well-being.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Checks on staff and safeguarding procedures fully meet the statutory requirements. All staff training regarding keeping children safe is thorough and up to date. Procedures for reporting concerns are clear. When issues are reported, additional expertise is sought wherever necessary. Records of the follow-up to concerns are detailed.
- The school meets the requirements on publication of specified information on its website. The information is accessible, informative and helpful for parents wishing to extend their children's learning at home.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The speed with which teachers have developed their respective strengths bodes well for the school's future. Expertise is quickly emerging from within the school. Staff are no longer reliant on external expertise but are now invited to share their knowledge and skills with other local schools. Staff are keen to continue to further polish and refine their skills.
- Staff have a clear view of long-term goals for pupils' achievement. They plan imaginative and purposeful lessons to ensure that each stage of learning is acquired, practised and developed. Teachers identify and share with pupils the necessary small steps, 'steps to success', within each lesson so that pupils know what they must do to achieve the lesson's intended outcomes. As a consequence, pupils are engaged and eager to succeed.
- The school's focus on mathematical problem solving has demanded additional skills of pupils. The themed weeks require pupils to select appropriate methods of calculation and explore their reasoning skills in imaginative investigations. These activities inspire pupils' interest and reinforce the idea that learning can be fun. Teachers introduce tasks at three different levels of difficulty: hard, harder and hardest. Pupils choose correctly for their level of skill and confidence but they are clearly motivated by the challenges and are not put off by the more complex activities.
- Pupils' books are well presented. They take pride in their work. Pupils of all ages apply accurate punctuation and try hard to correctly spell adventurous words. 'Wow writing weeks' inspire the pupils to write imaginatively, for example following a visit by a circus or by 'the queen' in celebration of her birthday. As a result, pupils write descriptively, persuasively or factually. They know the necessary

features of different writing styles and are always eager to try new ways.

- Teachers have taken care to inspire pupils to read for pleasure and seek information. They have created inviting and informative reading areas in each classroom for pupils to investigate topics or simply enjoy reading. Authors' styles of writing are explained and celebrated. Informative displays attract pupils' curiosity.
- Adults teach phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) daily to systematically build on pupils' skills and help them apply their knowledge to reading and writing tasks.
- Teaching at Court Farm is exemplified by adults' strong and confident subject knowledge. Their clear and informative explanations ensure that pupils are prepared for the tasks ahead. Lessons are carefully planned to build on recently learned skills and prepare pupils for their next stage in learning. Teachers demonstrate subject-related vocabulary well and pupils clearly understand the terms and use them accurately in their responses and explanations. Pupils are confident to ask questions if they need clarity or security. Pupils understand what is required of them and what they must do to show they have grasped the concept or to succeed in the task.
- Classroom displays provide helpful hints and reminders so that pupils can refer to them rather than seek help from adults. All rooms displayed information about spelling rules and patterns, punctuation appropriate for the pupils' age and a range of vocabulary to encourage pupils to be ambitious in their writing. Pupils try very hard to master the weekly word, spelling, grammar and number skill promoted in each classroom and they frequently step up to the challenge.
- All subjects are taught so that pupils experience a range of topics. However, in some classes, pupils do not develop a sufficient depth of knowledge and understanding in subjects such as history and geography.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils believe they are trusted and valued. They know that leaders and teachers listen to their ideas; for example, they suggested the purchase of outdoor gym equipment in the playground and carpets in classrooms and corridors.
- Pupils say, 'There is always someone there to look after you' and 'It's safe to play and be with friends.' Some pupils have been trained as 'friends against bullying' (FABs). They are clearly identified by their bright yellow tops. They know what to look out for and are keen to help pupils play alongside each other without argument or silliness.
- Pupils appreciate the regular updates in e-safety and spoke confidently about how to block and report concerns. They know the importance of fire drills and road safety.
- Pupils know about bullying and the different forms it can take. They know about inappropriate name calling and how words can cause offence or hurt. Their behaviours demonstrate how well they respect each other and celebrate individual differences.
- Some pupils experience social and emotional difficulties at times. Staff are particularly skilled at identifying pupils' needs, investigating underlying causes and securing the best possible support for pupils and their families.
- Staff successfully encourage pupils to have high aspirations of themselves. As a consequence, pupils are motivated by challenge and they are not put off by difficult tasks because they believe they can succeed.
- Pupils are proud of the rewards they receive for doing good work, showing high standards of behaviour or achieving improved or perfect attendance.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- During playtimes pupils play cooperatively, share apparatus, make up their own games or chat with friends. They look out for each other so that no one is isolated or left out of games. Staff attend quickly to any accidental fall. Everyone knows the routines and pupils are well cared for.
- Separate outdoor playgrounds are available for younger and older pupils so they all have ample room to play. The older pupils enjoy climbing the available apparatus and take full advantage of the exercise areas. Pupils are playful and pleasantly competitive. They choose not to engage in rough play and prefer to just get on with each other. When the bell rings at the end of playtime pupils quickly respond, listen to instructions and line up without fuss.

- In lessons, pupils' attention does not drift. They remain alert, interested and self-motivated. They read, seek meaning, explain their understanding, explore ideas and listen respectfully to each other and adults. Pupils explained that lessons are challenging but fun. They know sometimes they just have to get on and try their best; for example, one boy explained, 'We had a really good go at the tests last week.'
- Lunchtimes in the hall are conducted calmly. Good manners are expected and encouraged. Music is played in the hall and helps to provide a relaxed atmosphere while pupils eat their lunch. Supervisors are on hand to watch over the pupils and provide assistance when needed.
- Attendance continues to improve and is now very close to the national average. Staff track and investigate all absences. They work closely with parents whose children are persistently absent. Where attendance does not improve enough, leaders use all of the options available to challenge appropriately.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils of all ages are currently making good progress in a range of subjects. The majority of pupils in all year groups are now on track to meet or exceed the standards expected for their age.
- The current Year 6 pupils have done particularly well to meet the increased demands of the new curriculum. In addition, they have successfully bridged many gaps in their knowledge brought about by significant underachievement in the past. Standards attained by the current Year 6 pupils may possibly fall short of those achieved nationally. Nevertheless, their progress over the last two years is impressive given their attainment at the end of key stage 1. As a local authority's commissioned improvement representative stated, 'Their progress is staggering.'
- The published key stage 2 test results in 2015 demonstrated a legacy of past underachievement and poor rates of progress against a range of starting points. This picture reflects historical circumstances and is not indicative of current pupils' rates of progress and achievement.
- The majority of pupils met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2015. The school's progress information indicates a higher proportion of Year 1 pupils are on track to achieve the standard this year.
- Standards at the end of key stage 1 were in line with national figures. Pupils' books, progress tracking information and teachers' assessments indicate that the majority of Year 2 pupils will meet or exceed age-related expectations this year. All assessments conducted by teachers for all age groups have been checked with staff from other local schools and validated as much as possible at this stage.
- Gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others in school are closing due to the effective, targeted support provided. Adults quickly identify emerging weaknesses, or strengths, and investigate how best to meet pupils' individual needs. Their progress is checked assiduously. As a result, the gap in achievement between the disadvantaged and their peers is closing rapidly in all year groups. In some classes, the gap has closed completely.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress from their different starting points. Staff know the pupils very well, so pupils benefit from the well-tailored additional help they receive in lessons. Their progress is regularly checked in detail and tracked thoroughly. Staff are quick to identify where support needs to be amended. As a consequence, pupils consistently do well and their self-confidence is evident.
- Published results for 2015 show that the majority of the most able pupils achieved the higher levels in reading, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling by the end of Year 6. The most able pupils currently in school are making good progress because of the motivational challenges set for them in lessons. Pupils are excited by teachers' high expectations of them and are keen to succeed.
- Pupils read confidently and accurately. They enjoy a wide range of books, including non-fiction, and speak knowledgeably about a range of authors and their writing techniques.
- Pupils adopt appropriate writing styles to meet a range of different purposes. They regularly build upon their knowledge of spelling, punctuation and grammar and, as a result, pupils write with increasing accuracy. Writing tasks are often linked with other subjects or imaginative stimulus so that pupils understand and apply a range of writing skills and vocabulary for different contexts. Pupils write descriptively and build atmosphere expressively. For example, a Year 4 pupil wrote, 'Chihiro was suspicious about the statues that stood dormant and steadfast. She shivered.'
- Pupils cover a good range of mathematical topics appropriate for their age. They regularly solve mathematical problems and increasingly apply their knowledge in practical situations.

Early years provision

is good

- The assistant headteacher with responsibility for the early years is suitably knowledgeable and ambitious for children's success. She plans and tracks children's progress accurately and vigilantly. She is never complacent and has sought external validation for her judgements. Other school leaders now seek her expertise to secure teachers' accurate assessments of their children's progress and development.
- In 2015, a large majority of children achieved a good level of development in line with national figures. The overall proportion of disadvantaged children who achieved a good level of development was above other children nationally and their classmates. There was no significant difference between girls and boys. They were well prepared to enter Year 1 in September.
- The early years leader works closely with the teaching assistants to plan interesting and purposeful learning experiences for the children. All adults place great importance on modelling spoken and written language clearly and accurately so that children learn to express themselves meaningfully. They explain new ideas and seek children's understanding through questioning and set tasks.
- All activities, whether in the classroom or outdoors, are well organised and supervised. Children experience a good balance of adult-directed tasks and the choice of creative or investigative activities. For example, while two groups worked with adults to develop their knowledge of 'counting on' to make mathematical calculations, others built well-crafted structures from plastic bricks or placed numbered mats in the correct order from 1 to 20. They have regular opportunities to recognise number, make simple calculations and describe the features of shapes.
- The outdoor area provides children with space to climb, balance and ride bicycles. Suitable clothing is made available for them so that rain and mud do not prevent them from enjoying activities and exploration outside.
- One child proudly introduced the inspector to another classroom visitor, Steve the tortoise. Children enjoyed observing him closely and wrote some rules for others to follow, 'do not touch Steve' and 'do not put your fingers in Steve's mouth'. Others wrote imaginatively about what the tortoise might be thinking: 'I wish I had a delicious lettuce.' All examples were written in complete sentences and spelled correctly or plausibly, given what they had learned about letters and sounds.
- Records of children's work over the year provide evidence of their ongoing progress. For example, from their early attempts to control pencils and make marks they now correctly form letters and write simple sentences with appropriate punctuation.
- Children settle quickly and know the routines of the day. For example, when they hear music they know to stop their activity, tidy up and move to the teacher. They take up their places on the carpet and wait patiently for other children to join them. They fully understand what is expected of them and they are keen to do what is right.
- Early years staff meet with parents and pre-school nursery providers to ensure that they know the needs of every child on entry to the Reception class. They visit children and parents at home to understand children's likes and dislikes so that they settle as quickly as possible. Parents are encouraged to complete ongoing diaries so that staff and parents can share 'magic moments' where children show what they can do that they could not do before. Staff meet regularly with parents to share children's progress and next steps. These successful partnerships have led to children making better progress this year particularly in their early reading and writing skills.

School details

Unique reference number	103267
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10010461

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dawn Edwards
Headteacher	Madeleine Bromley
Telephone number	0121 464 1038
Website	www.courtfrm.bham.sch.uk
Email address	enquiry@courtfrm.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 January 2015

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and disability is average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in care) is above average.
- Just under half of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. Other pupils are mostly of Black or Black British heritage.
- In 2015 the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in 10 lessons. Most of the observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector looked at pupils' books across a range of subjects and age groups.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, the coordinator for special educational needs, the inclusion leader, the chair of the governing body, a national leader of education, a representative of the local authority's commissioned support and parents.
- The inspector met with pupils and observed them during break and lunchtimes.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation, including information relating to pupils' progress and attendance, minutes of governing body meetings, reports to governors, school policies and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance and records relating to safeguarding.
- There were too few responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, to form a report. The inspector spoke informally to parents at the end of the school day.

Inspection team

Deana Holdaway, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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