

Dovecote Primary and Nursery School

Greencroft, Clifton, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG11 8EY

Inspection dates

27–28 September 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is uneven across the school and over time. Children achieve better in the early years than they do in other key stages.
- Teachers' use of challenging questions to make pupils think at greater depth is variable. This limits what they can achieve and slows down their rate of progress.
- The quality of pupils' writing varies across different subjects. Some of their writing does not have accurate enough grammar, spelling or punctuation.
- Year 1 pupils' achievements in the national phonics screening check vary. Standards have fallen to below average in recent years.
- Senior leaders' feedback on the quality of teaching lacks precision. Comments to develop teaching are not routinely linked to its impact on pupils' learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes continue to make good progress. Early years staff use their good knowledge of the individual children to plan activities which meet their needs very well.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding make good progress, especially in reading. Achievement differences with others nationally are diminishing.
- Behaviour is good, both in and out of lessons. Pupils enjoy learning, and attendance has improved significantly to reach the national average.
- The most able Year 6 pupils achieved their best results at the higher level 5 in 2015.
- The school provides good care and support and has many established partnerships to help those pupils who have additional needs to settle and make good progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Skilled support is used effectively.
- Governors have an excellent understanding of assessment information. They use this to check that additional government funding is raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Safeguarding is effective. Designated leads make sure that all practices are secure and that this remains a high priority for all staff. This ensures that pupils feel and are safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement further by ensuring that teachers regularly pose challenging questions, to enable pupils to deepen their understanding and accelerate their progress.
- Improve further the progress made by pupils in writing, by:
 - continuing to insist and check that pupils regularly produce work that has accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar in all subjects
 - developing greater consistency in the teaching of phonics, so that pupils who are not confident in sounding out words by the end of Year 1 make consistently good progress.
- Make teaching more effective by ensuring that leaders provide teachers with precise feedback about their classroom practice, which will help them to further improve outcomes for their pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership is not yet good because standards and pupils' achievement in the school vary across the key stages. This is because the quality of teaching over time has fluctuated and is not yet consistently good in all areas.
- Senior leaders have good awareness of the quality of teaching in every class and support teachers by setting realistic improvement targets to raise the quality of teaching. Occasionally, the feedback provided from observations is not specific enough and the clarity of how to improve further is lacking.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear and honest view of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. This is shared with subject leaders, who have a good understanding of their subjects and the key priorities for school improvement. Involvement of all staff and governors in self-evaluation weeks makes this clear for everyone and has directed focused booster support for phonics and literacy.
- School leaders analyse assessment information and have a good overview of pupils' progress throughout the year, which is shared with staff. As a result, teachers' subject knowledge has improved and this impacts positively on pupils' own knowledge and understanding.
- Leaders at all levels make sure that staff follow school policies with increasing consistency; for example, the marking policy which encourages pupils to read and respond to teachers' comments. As a result, pupils' active involvement in their next steps has contributed to their positive engagement with learning and raised their desire to be successful. Behaviour sanctions are firmly in place and the consistent approach in applying them has had a positive impact on the good behaviour seen in all areas of the school.
- Staff are resoundingly positive and supportive of changes in the school and morale is high. Parents and the majority of those who responded to Parent View, and informally during the inspection, expressed their pleasure and pride in being a part of the school community.
- The school has a welcoming and positive atmosphere where pupils get along and are fully accepted and included. Pupils feel valued and respected by adults and they, in turn, show their respect and regard for each other. Pupils get along with each other well, are treated equally and accept others' differences. Pupils frequently show their care and regard for each other and learn how British values, such as tolerance and democracy, relate to aspects of their everyday life. Topic work and trips to places of worship enhance pupils' awareness of the beliefs and cultures of others living in Britain today.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and carefully monitors this to ensure that all aspects are effectively addressed through assemblies, lessons and visits. Through involvement in a music project, 'the Harmony project' pupils participate in many musical events and performances. This successfully raises their appreciation of the arts, and Year 6 pupils supplement their Spanish studies with French, in preparation for the move to secondary school.
- The school teaches a good range of subjects and topics and provides the expertise of

a science specialist, and a resident languages teacher to deliver Spanish and French. The curriculum is further enhanced by a computer suite where pupils can develop their technical skills. Parents are kept well informed of new developments and are invited to attend workshops and keep up to date through year group newsletters. More parents than previously come into school to support their children's learning.

- The funding for disadvantaged pupils is used highly effectively to improve their academic achievements. The pastoral leader responsible for allocation of the funding is meticulous in her checks that the school's provision is making a strong impact. Pupils benefit from additional adult support in class, have access to trips at a reduced cost and attend their own homework club. This helps them to be fully included in all aspects of school life. In turn, this has significantly raised their attainment, confidence levels and self-esteem.
- Funding for primary sport is used well. Pupils actively participate in a wide variety of sports and make good use of the city's football and cricket expertise. Staff and pupils benefit from the services of a specialist sports coach and the school's work to promote healthy lifestyles is increasingly successful.
- The local authority has provided good support for the school in recent years and helped subject leaders to develop their skills when making checks on the quality of the work in pupils' books and how well they are learning. This will continue and be supplemented by the school's membership of a teaching schools' alliance partnership. This places the school in a strong position to continue to improve further.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a good range of skills and experience. They have an excellent understanding of assessment information and use this to check that the additional funds to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils are having a positive impact. The link governor for sport sees that the additional sports funding is directed to activities which raise pupils' participation in sports and the profile of health and well-being in the school.
- Governors have high aspirations for the school and provide a good balance of support and challenge for school leaders. Governors receive regular information on how the school is doing and make sharp links with the school's improvement priorities.
- Governors oversee the daily breakfast club, and check how it has contributed to a rise in attendance and to pupils' improved punctuality. This represents significant improvements since the previous inspection.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders communicate effectively with parents and external specialists. Safeguarding systems and practices are secure. Pastoral staff have good relationships with some of the school's potentially most vulnerable pupils and make sure they are supported and kept safe. Safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training for staff and governors are up to date. The designated safeguarding governor makes thorough checks on all safeguarding practices to make sure that this remains a high priority. Governors know exactly what to do in the event of a safeguarding concern and staff have all the information they need to provide effective support for pupils in their care. The pupils themselves show that they play safely and know what to do if they have a concern about safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across the school varies and although there is some good practice, there is not enough to ensure pupils' consistently good progress in all subjects and key stages.
- Although some teachers pose challenging questions to help to develop pupils' thinking and raise their understanding to a higher level, this is not consistent across the school. Pupils have limited chances to achieve their very best which means that, overall, progress requires improvement.
- Pupils' writing in different subjects is not always checked as thoroughly as it is in their literacy tasks. Occasionally, the neatness and accuracy of work are unchallenged and corrections are not made to important spelling and grammatical errors.
- Pupils' achievements in phonics have been variable because the quality of phonics teaching has fluctuated over time. A new approach to phonics teaching and additional support for pupils who are at risk of falling behind are currently in their early stages of development. Pupils seen in booster groups responded well to this targeted help.
- Pupils' enjoyment of reading accelerates as they move through the school and good use is made of the school's refurbished, well-stocked library. This reflects a school-wide drive to sustain a high profile for reading. Parents increasingly comment in their children's planners to indicate to teachers their child's reading achievements at home.
- In all classes, teachers set bronze, silver and gold 'levelled activities' from which pupils select; pupils are encouraged to make their own choices based on their confidence and understanding. For the most able pupils who successfully complete the gold task, a platinum extension task challenges them further. Raising the challenge activities in class for the most able has had a positive impact on their achievements.
- Teaching assistants receive good direction from class teachers and support well disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and others who require extra help. They have good skills and subject knowledge and their work enables disadvantaged pupils and those who have additional learning needs to make good progress.
- Teachers know their pupils well and mutually positive relationships help to create a productive learning climate in each class. Teachers' raised expectations of pupils' behaviour are clear and applied consistently and pupils agree that any sanctions for falling below these expectations are fair.
- Marking and feedback have improved since the last inspection. Pupils are developing effective skills to improve their work because, in line with the school's policy, adults frequently provide good-quality written and verbal feedback, which helps pupils to improve. The limited amount of work seen in current books and pupils' comments about their work indicate that pupils are determined to get things right.
- Homework is set from the early years through to Year 6 and is both appreciated and valued by pupils. Teachers offer a variety of tasks and online options to supplement learning in class and parents' comments show their support for the new approach.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Adults take the time to get to know pupils and their families well and this caring ethos helps pupils to feel a part of the whole-school community.
- Pastoral support is highly effective and insightful understanding of pupils lies at the heart of the good-quality, tailored support provided for pupils who have additional needs and those who are disadvantaged.
- The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' health and emotional well-being, and has a good network of specialists to call upon to support those who are potentially most vulnerable. Therapists and a counsellor make regular visits to the school and pupils benefit from the nurturing environment of the 'tree house' within the school. The pastoral leader and special educational needs coordinator make sure that pupils and their families receive regular help and support.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school. The school's work to raise pupils' awareness of safety, such as on roads and when using the internet, is highly effective. They understand the potential perils of social media and how to report concerns relating to cyber bullying.
- Pupils are aware of the different forms of bullying and report that bullying and the use of derogatory language in the school do not happen very often. School records show that the already few incidents of bullying have reduced further and appropriate follow-on actions, such as producing a leaflet for parents, are well received. Pupils express their confidence that adults act quickly to deal with bullying, should it occur.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Attendance has improved significantly over time and is now average. Those with lower attendance are carefully monitored and the school works in close partnership with the education welfare officer and attendance lead teacher to improve these pupils' attendance.
- Pupils behave well in class and move easily around the school. They frequently show their good attitudes and enjoyment of learning. On the few occasions where pupils lose focus and concentration in class, adults are quick to follow the school's policy and use behaviour sanctions effectively so that learning can continue uninterrupted. School records show that behaviour is typically good.
- Pupils are quick to volunteer for additional responsibilities and the 'jobs team' are highly visible around the school, helping to maintain the orderly flow of pupils through the canteen. School councillors have contributed to the school behaviour policy and express their pride at 'having a voice' in the school.
- The vast majority of staff, parents and pupils who responded to questionnaires agreed that behaviour in the school is good.
- Although most pupils show their keen desire to learn, they do not consistently try as hard as they could. A few pupils' drive to achieve their very best is not evident and this limits what they achieve.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Standards and progress across the school are variable. Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and make good progress. Progress through each key stage varies and remains stubbornly slow by the end of Year 2. Pupils' attainment has been significantly below national averages in recent years.
- The quality of phonics teaching has varied over time and Year 1 pupils have failed to reach the national standard since the previous inspection. Inspection evidence shows that the school is trialling a new approach to the teaching of early reading. It is too soon to show the full impact of this; however, small group booster sessions are beginning to raise pupils' early reading skills and confidence.
- School leaders accept that a past history of some poor teaching and staff changes have had a negative effect on previous results. Current tracking information and pupils' work indicate that there are signs of improvement and more pupils in key stage 1 than previously are on track to make good progress.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils have begun to make good progress in each subject and in 2015 they outperformed their peers nationally in their very good reading progress. Progress in mathematics had risen and more pupils than previously were making very good progress in mathematics.
- A good proportion of the small number of most able pupils make good progress in each subject by the end of Year 6. Past successes include their combined reading, writing and mathematics scores at the higher Level 5. Leaders acknowledge the importance of providing more challenging questions in every lesson to sustain their optimum achievements.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. They receive good support in and out of class and are fully included in activities. Teaching assistants with specialist skills ensure that their work is having a positive impact on raising pupils' achievements.
- The pupil premium funding has raised the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium funding make good progress in most year groups. In 2016, Year 6 pupils did particularly well in reading and edged ahead of others nationally in achieving good progress in mathematics. This shows the positive impact of the use of the additional funding and ensures that pupils are ready for their secondary school studies.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of the early years is effective. In spite of recent staff changes, children's good progress has been sustained. Children enter the Nursery class with a range of skills, which are typically well below those expected for their age. They make good progress, which continues in the Reception class so that the proportion who achieve a good level of development is rising.
- Good links with early years providers and the school's work with pre-nursery age children and their families ensure that accurate information is used to build on their skills. Adults plan activities which incorporate children's interests and meet their needs very well. As a result, children quickly settle into routines and develop a real enjoyment

for learning.

- The quality of teaching is good and the close-knit early years team ensures that good use is made of the inside and outside areas. Children are encouraged to help themselves as much as possible and understand the importance of sharing resources and waiting to take turns.
- Behaviour is good and children often show their patience and kindness towards each other. Adults encourage 'safe play' and arrangements to keep children safe are planned thoroughly.
- Adults make regular checks on what children can do and use a good range of resources and new technologies to record children's achievements. Parents are welcomed into school to share in their children's learning and value the newsletters and act upon tips on how to help extend their children's learning at home.
- Children are fully involved in whole-school activities and this ensures a smooth transition when they are ready and well prepared to move to Year 1 classes.

School details

Unique reference number	134841
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	10019560

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	453
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dudley Pound
Headteacher	Andrew Jenkins
Telephone number	0115 915 2953
Website	www.dovecote.nottingham.sch.uk/
Email address	admin@dovecote.nottingham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged, and therefore supported through the pupil premium, is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school runs a daily breakfast club which is overseen by the governing body.
- 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.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school has been awarded the primary science quality mark.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class. They worked closely with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, both of whom participated fully in inspection activities.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading and observed support in and out of class for pupils who need additional help with their learning. An inspector attended a whole-school assembly.
- The inspection team spoke informally with parents at the start of each day and took note of their views through the 17 responses to the online Parent View survey. They also looked at the school's own survey of parents' views.
- Staff and pupils' comments were noted during the inspection and the lead inspector took account of their completed surveys.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils around the school and met with two separate groups of pupils for a discussion about their experiences of life in the school.
- The lead inspector met with four governors and spoke with a school adviser about their work with the school. Discussions were held with school leaders responsible for checking English, mathematics and the early years, and for coordinating the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- School documentation on attendance and behaviour was scrutinised and inspectors looked closely at pupils' current progress and the monitoring of safeguarding. They looked at records of meetings of the governing body and how the school manages staff performance.

Inspection team

Aune Turkson-Jones, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Manz	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Lewis	Ofsted Inspector

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