

Dodford First School

Fockbury Road, Dodford, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 9AW

Inspection dates

13–14 December 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
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

- Since the last inspection the headteacher and governors have transformed the school.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this well. Consequently, pupils across the school are currently making good progress.
- The most able pupils are achieving well in all subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress because they are well supported in this inclusive school.
- The curriculum is well planned. It is exciting and captures pupils' interests. A wide range of after-school activities enrich learning for pupils.
- Pupils are developing a love of reading. However, sometimes the books pupils read are not challenging enough.
- Government sports funding has been used most effectively. This is having a positive impact on pupils' participation in sport and their enjoyment of physical activities.
- Pupils enjoy school and they feel very safe. All adults in school are highly committed to pupils' safety, care and well-being.
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding. Pupils are extremely courteous, polite and confident. Pupils thrive in this caring school community.
- Pupils are proud of their school. It is a nurturing school where all have the opportunity to shine. Pupils are highly enthusiastic learners who try hard.
- Children in Reception Year get off to a good start in school. Adults have high expectations of them. As a result, all children are keen to learn.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is not as strong as it is in reading. Sometimes teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to use their knowledge to solve problems or explain their answers.
- The school's work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effective. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Parents support the school and are pleased with the way the school has improved. They appreciate the opportunities to be involved in the life of the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching of reading further by ensuring that pupils are provided with books and texts which are appropriately challenging.
- Ensure that pupils make good progress in mathematics by providing more opportunities for them to use their mathematical skills to reason and solve real-life problems.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher provides strong direction and is committed to securing the continued improvement of teaching, learning and assessment. Since the last inspection the headteacher and governors have responded quickly and with determination to the issues identified for improvement. As a result, teaching is now good across the school.
- The headteacher and governors share a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. All staff who completed the questionnaire said they are proud to be a member of staff at this school, and all strongly agreed that the school had improved since the last inspection.
- Partnership among first schools in the local authority is effective. Staff make good use of links with local schools to observe good practice elsewhere and agree assessment judgements about writing. Consequently, the outcomes in writing have improved across the curriculum, including in history, geography and science.
- The school has made good use of additional sports funding. Pupils benefit from a specialist sports coach and dance teacher. As a result, pupils enjoy sport and understand the importance of sport in staying healthy.
- Pupil premium funding has been used effectively to develop positive behaviour for learning and support pupils with communication needs, resulting in the pupils making good progress.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Staff have worked to develop a curriculum that creatively links themes together to make sense of learning and provide greater depth in all subjects. Each term starts with a memorable experience, a 'stunning start', and ends with a 'fabulous finish'. The curriculum provides rich opportunities for pupils to develop the art of public speaking through presentations, performances and debates. As a result, pupils are excited by learning. Pupils are confident and articulate when talking to visitors.
- Curriculum visits are used effectively to enhance learning opportunities. For example, Years 1 and 2 visited the National Space Centre in Leicester as part of their project on 'To the end of the Earth'. Pupils anticipate the visits and visitors with excitement, and particularly look forward to an annual residential visit to Malvern in key stage 2.
- The school offers an extensive range of after-school activities. Pupils and parents said how much they enjoy and appreciate the activities, including magic, balloon modelling, French, choir and a wide range of sporting opportunities. These activities enhance the curriculum by providing choice and new experiences.
- The headteacher regularly checks the quality of teaching, learning and assessment through lesson observations and by reviewing assessment information each term. As a result, standards in the teaching of English and mathematics are improving. Procedures for managing staff performance are in place for all staff. Staff have clear targets which are closely linked to improvement plans.
- Leaders promote healthy eating and healthy living well through the curriculum and also make good use of the school grounds to grow vegetables.

- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. Pupils are fascinated by the world around them and they are inquisitive learners. Through assemblies and the curriculum, the school fosters pupils' knowledge and understanding of British values. Pupils have a good understanding of democracy. They also have a strong sense of responsibility and maturity, as demonstrated through the wide range of leadership roles they take on in all year groups. Pupils show tolerance of others and an understanding of different faiths. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- Parents actively support the school. They especially value the nurturing ethos of the school, which enables the pupils to thrive. Parents highlight their appreciation of the parent forum, which affords them an opportunity to receive information as well as share their views. Parents report that their views at the forum are taken seriously and they are updated on changes made to the school as a result of their feedback.

Governance of the school

- Good governance contributes effectively to school improvement. Governors understand the strengths and areas for development in the school. Governors care about their school and are proactive in their roles. Governors audit the skills they have and actively recruit governors with skills to enhance the governing body.
- Governor training is effective. Governors use the regular updates from the local authority to keep their knowledge up to date. Governors have a good understanding of the targets set for staff and how these are linked to pay progression.
- Governors provide support and challenge to the headteacher in governing body meetings and through regular visits to the school. All statutory duties are fulfilled, including safeguarding arrangements, which meet requirements.
- The budget is managed effectively. Good use is made of additional funding for the sports premium and to support disadvantaged pupils. Governors know how funding is spent and the impact it is having, for example on pupil participation in sport and on the progress of disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a strong culture of care. The headteacher prioritises the safety of the pupils and staff are diligent in monitoring the safeguarding of pupils. Systems for safeguarding and procedures are robust and up to date. The headteacher works well with other agency professionals to support pupils and their families.
- Staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding. All staff understand their roles and responsibilities. Recruitment of new staff is thorough, with well-documented checks made on their suitability.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good across the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this well to plan lessons which engage the interests of all groups of pupils.
- Teachers are particularly effective when questioning pupils. Teachers skilfully match

questions to the different abilities of the pupils. Relationships between teachers and pupils are positive. As a result, pupils are keen to respond to the challenging questions teachers ask. All staff promote a positive climate for learning.

- Standards of presentation in books are high across the school. Handwriting skills are taught consistently throughout the school. Teachers set high expectations of presentation in all subjects and pupils rise to the challenge.
- Writing has been a focus for development since the last inspection. Teachers plan creative opportunities for pupils to write, not only in English lessons but across many areas of the curriculum. Teachers provide support for pupils to use newly acquired spelling and grammar skills in their writing. As a result, pupils are making faster progress in writing.
- Pupils enjoy learning because teachers make lessons interesting. An example of this was seen in Years 3 and 4 when the pupils responded creatively to a letter received from Mr D Ragon, inviting the pupils to write a dragon hunter's guide. Pupils were highly motivated by this stimulus for writing.
- The teaching of phonics is effective and provides pupils with strategies to read unfamiliar words. All staff promote a love of reading. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are enjoying reading 'George's Marvellous Medicine' following a whole-school visit to the theatre to see a live performance of this story. Home reading is promoted through a good range of books in the library and electronic books. As a result of effective teaching, pupils read with fluency. However, sometimes the books pupils read are too easy and do not provide a good level of challenge.
- Teachers meet regularly with the headteacher to discuss the progress and attainment of pupils. Particular attention is given to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and any pupils who may be falling behind. Teaching assistants know the pupils well and they provide effective support for these pupils.
- Pupils have targets in writing and mathematics, so they are clear about their next steps in learning. Teachers work closely with staff in a local cluster of first schools to check the accuracy of their teacher assessment judgements.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved since the last inspection through staff training and whole-school approaches to the teaching of calculation. This is resulting in pupils showing greater confidence with basic calculations in number. However, sometimes teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills. As a result, pupils are not consistently challenged to reason mathematically, think more deeply or apply what they know to real-life problems.
- Homework extends pupils' learning. Pupils have the opportunity to complete regular homework. The majority of parents agree that their child receives appropriate homework for their age.
- Pupils say that they enjoy the opportunities to learn about history, geography and science because learning is interesting and fun. They know what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils use the targets in their books to improve their writing and review their progress in learning.

Personal development and welfare

Outstanding

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. The school's aims of building confidence and self-esteem, and encouraging self-discipline and independence, are strongly evident in the exemplary conduct of the pupils.
- The school is a warm, welcoming and inclusive school where the needs and the talents of individuals are valued. As a result, the pupils are confident and articulate. Pupils show high levels of respect for each other. They show tolerance, understanding and high levels of care for each other. As they move through school, pupils show consideration for the youngest children in the school.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons. Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. As one pupil said, 'We are proud of our work because we always try hard.'
- Pupils are proud of their school and of their achievements. Across the school there are many opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles. For example, the eco team, known as the green team, is proud of its recent Green Flag award. Pupils talk confidently about how they led a 'Waste Less Live More' week at the start of term. The eco team is active in saving energy in school, raising awareness of issues.
- Pupils feel safe and know how to stay safe. They show a good understanding of how to stay safe when using technology. The pupils appreciate the work that the school does to teach them about safety. As a result, pupils' understanding of road safety, water safety and e-safety is very strong. Pupils say that if there are any issues on the playground they are sorted out promptly by teachers. Pupils show a good understanding of anti-bullying in school, and they know what to do if they have a concern.
- British values are promoted effectively. As a result, pupils have a strong sense of democracy and equality. Pupils told the inspector that there are elections for the eco team, sports crew, school council, pupil forum and play leaders. They feel that this is fair as everyone has a chance to lead in the school. Minutes from meetings are displayed for all to see in school. Pupils have a good understanding of diversity and a knowledge and sensitivity that different faiths celebrate in different ways.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Behaviour is a real strength of the school because all staff have high expectations of pupils.
- Pupils are highly polite, respectful and courteous as they move around school, both indoors and on the playground. They are self-disciplined, thoughtful and respectful in their responses to each other.
- This is an inclusive school where pupils show empathy and sensitivity to the needs of others. Pupils welcome new pupils to the school. One pupil described this succinctly when they said, 'Everyone here is welcoming to people who are new.'
- Records on behaviour are maintained with great care. The school is highly effective in responding to any behavioural issues. Staff know the pupils well and individual programmes of support are in place to help pupils with behavioural needs.
- Attendance is above the national average. School systems to manage attendance are

robust and effective. Staff work well with families to improve attendance for the small number of pupils and families who need additional support.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupil outcomes have improved since the last inspection. Most pupils are now achieving well across a range of subjects because teaching has improved. Work in current pupils' books and displays around school illustrate the depth and breadth of work in reading, writing and other subjects, especially science, history, geography and religious education.
- Pupils currently in Year 2 are making good progress. In the past some pupils have not achieved as well. The number of pupils joining the school at times other than the start of Reception Year has increased over the past two years. With small cohort sizes, this has had an impact on school data when compared to national data. The headteacher and teachers have focused on catch-up programmes for pupils. Consequently, differences in attainment between those who did not meet expected standards at the end of Year 2 and their classmates are starting to diminish.
- The most able pupils achieve well across the school. Pupils from high starting points at the end of Reception Year are making rapid progress, enabling them to reach standards of greater depth by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The daily teaching of phonics is having a positive impact on pupils' fluency in reading. Pupils enjoy reading and have access to a wide range of reading materials in the school library. However, there are occasions when the reading books lack sufficient challenge to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they possibly can.
- School records show that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress. Pupils are well supported, work is planned carefully and additional support is reviewed regularly to ensure that it is responding to their needs.
- There has been a strong focus on raising standards of calculation in mathematics since the last inspection. As a result of this, pupils' calculation skills are improving. However, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to use their mathematical skills to reason and solve real-life problems.
- There are too few disadvantaged pupils to make meaningful comparisons about their performance with others nationally. School information shows that the small number of disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in line with their peers in school and nationally.
- Work in books shows that pupils are making good progress in science and history. The quality of pupils' singing is high and pupils enjoy music in the school.
- Pupils are making good progress in Years 3 and 4. The majority of Year 4 pupils are working within age-related expectations or at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics. They leave school well prepared for their middle-school education.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years provision is well led. The learning environment both indoors and outdoors is stimulating and exciting, providing children with access to a range of interesting resources and equipment that supports learning well.
- Most children start Reception with skills that are typical for their age. Children make good progress because of the good teaching they receive.
- In 2015 the proportion of children reaching a good level of development rose considerably and was above the national average. While the proportion of children reaching a good level of development in 2016 was below the national average, high mobility into the school and small cohort sizes had an impact on this data. Children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Children settle into Reception class quickly because adults have high expectations of children and routines are clearly established. Children's behaviour is exemplary.
- Children are confident in the Reception classroom environment; they are keen to talk about their learning. Through skilful adult questions and prompts, children make good progress. Children enjoy learning, and as a result they are motivated, inquisitive learners.
- Teaching engages the children's interests and captures their imagination. For example, during the inspection a group of children shared their interest in building the Leaning Tower of Pisa. They planned their construction, drawing out their ideas. When building the towers and getting the balance of a leaning tower they squealed with delight. Children complimented each other on their work. They show pride in their own work and the work of others.
- Procedures to keep children safe are robust. As a result, children feel safe and secure. All welfare requirements are met.
- Effective systems are in place to monitor the progress of children. Learning journeys are shared regularly with parents. Partnership with parents and local nurseries is strong. Parents particularly enjoy the opportunity to join their children in the Reception classroom when their child becomes the teacher for the afternoon.

School details

Unique reference number	116670
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10020017

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	71
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Daniel Taylor
Headteacher	Lisa Parkes
Telephone number	01527 831569
Website	www.dodford.worcs.sch.uk
Email address	office@dodford.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 October 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in three classes: Reception, a mixed-age Years 1 and 2 class, and a mixed-age Years 3 and 4 class.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is well below the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is twice the national average. The proportion of pupils who are supported by a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below that found nationally.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited all classrooms at least twice to look at teaching and learning and talk to pupils about their work. In the majority of these visits, the inspector was accompanied by the headteacher.
- The inspector listened to readers, and looked at work in pupils' books and on display around the school.
- The inspector attended a carol service rehearsal, a 'fabulous finish' presentation to parents and observed pupils at break and lunchtime.
- The inspector took account of the views of pupils in the online questionnaire and through formal and informal discussions with pupils.
- The inspector talked to parents at the start of the school day and examined the 29 responses to Ofsted's Parent View and those of six members of staff who completed the online questionnaire.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including those on the school's website, minutes of governing body meetings, the school self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, information on the progress and attainment of current pupils and documents relating to keeping children safe.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, curriculum leaders, the chair of governors and two other governors. A telephone conversation took place with the local authority school improvement partner who has been supporting the school.

Inspection team

Pamela Matty, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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