

# Cofton Primary School

Wootton Road, West Heath, Birmingham, West Midlands B31 4ST

## Inspection dates

28–29 November 2017

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	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- In recent years, gaps in the leadership team and a high staff turnover led to a serious decline in academic standards at key stage 2.
- In the last two years, pupils have left Year 6 having made weak progress in key stage 2, especially in mathematics and reading.
- The checks that subject leaders, some of whom are new to their posts, make on teaching are not yet fully effective in improving provision.
- The effectiveness of feedback to pupils is variable. Teachers sometimes do not ensure that pupils learn by using the advice they are given.
- The quality of teaching is too variable. Teachers often do not plan work which is well matched to the needs of some of the least able pupils in the class and which challenges the most able.
- In some lessons, the pace of learning slackens because pupils complete too much repetitive or unchallenging work. Teachers sometimes do not check effectively on the progress pupils are making.
- External support for the school has sometimes not proved fully effective.

### The school has the following strengths

- Governance is strong. Governors are very knowledgeable about the school and its community, and probe thoroughly the impact of leaders' actions.
- Current senior leaders have identified priorities for improving teaching in English and mathematics. Guidance and training for staff are now clear. As a result, the quality of teaching is rising.
- Behaviour at social times and in the large majority of lessons is good. Pupils rightly feel safe in the school.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of subjects, and good opportunities outside the classroom.
- Good leadership and teaching in the early years result in children making strong progress.
- Starting in the early years, school leaders have forged an effective partnership with parents.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that all teachers:
  - plan work in the medium and longer term which enables all groups of pupils to make strong progress
  - set tasks which challenge and interest pupils throughout the lesson
  - make sure that pupils benefit from teachers' feedback to address misconceptions and develop their ideas.
- Increase pupils' achievement at key stage 2 so that the progress measured by national tests at least matches the national average.
- Deepen the impact of leadership and management by:
  - making arrangements whereby effective teachers can share their practice with their colleagues
  - ensuring that the checks that subject leaders make are clearly focused on the school's priorities in developing teaching
  - making sure that future support for the school is well coordinated and fully focused on the areas of greatest importance.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, leaders and governors have not sustained a good standard of teaching, or maintained good outcomes for pupils, especially at key stage 2. A lack of capacity in the leadership of the school and a high turnover of teachers contributed to some weak teaching. Until recently, the headteacher's focus has been the day-to-day management of the school, rather than the strategic leadership of improvement.
- In the recent past, leaders have not put forward clear enough strategies for the improvement of teaching. Subject leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and their subsequent advice to teachers on how to improve have therefore proved only partially successful. The gap between the best teaching and the weaker teaching in the school has remained too wide.
- The governors succeeded in establishing a much more effective leadership team for the start of this academic year, and the benefits are already apparent. Leaders have begun to establish a greater consistency, for instance in the teaching of phonics. Teachers report that leaders' expectations are clear, and that training is proving effective in developing their skills.
- Teachers judge pupils' achievement using a number of assessments, most of which are standardised against the attainment of pupils nationally. Leaders have checked the accuracy of some of the school's judgements against those made in other schools. Leaders are currently working to ensure that they combine the results of different assessments to gain a more complete picture of progress across each year group.
- Leaders evaluate in detail the impact of their actions, and improvement plans are clearly based on the evaluation. They have an accurate view of the school. The headteacher has applied this thoroughness to the expenditure of both the pupil premium and the physical education (PE) and sports premium. As a result, both of these grants are being spent effectively to increase pupils' achievements and promote their well-being.
- Leaders have recently taken important steps to ensure that the school identifies reliably the particular needs of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, using the knowledge of experts when appropriate. Staff are working effectively to improve the communication of younger pupils with speech and language difficulties. Individual plans outline how teachers can best manage the learning of other pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, but some teachers do not implement the plans entirely effectively.
- Leaders have sought from the local authority and elsewhere a proportionate level of support. In general, this has been well focused and leaders have made effective use of it. Occasionally, advice has been contradictory or not targeted in such a way as to address the most urgent priorities.
- Pupils enjoy a varied curriculum. They study a broad range of subjects, and their classroom learning is enriched with trips and visits to places of interest such as the theatre. Older pupils benefit from a residential experience. Extra-curricular opportunities in sport and mathematics clubs are popular with pupils.

- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils understand the basics of democracy through elections to the school council and through the opportunity to put forward ideas for school improvement. They learn about a range of different cultures and beliefs, and the importance of treating other children and adults with respect. Pupils' command of fundamental British values is therefore strong.
- Parents think highly of the school. From the early years onwards, leaders encourage parents to take a close interest in their children's learning. For example, pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they are encouraged to read at home. 140 parents recently attended a workshop to learn about the school's personal, social and health education.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governance is highly effective. Governors make particularly effective use of their various professional skills.
- Governors know the school very well, and are ambitious for its future. In their meetings, they hold leaders to account for pupils' progress. They were acutely disappointed by the results of recent tests, and have made sure that they understand the reasons for the underperformance, and how leaders are addressing the issue.
- The governing body ensures that leaders keep children safe. They make sure that the school makes the necessary checks on staff when they are appointed, and that training on how to protect children is kept up to date. They are aware of any particular risks posed to pupils in the local community. A nominated governor checks regularly on the safety of those pupils most at risk. Governors monitor the safety of the school site effectively.
- Governors involve an independent adviser in the management of the headteacher's performance so that their decisions on her role are fairly judged. They examine the headteacher's recommendations about the pay and performance of other staff. Governors monitor the school's expenditure closely, including additional funds that the school receives to promote the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Through the school's membership of a local cooperative, governors have developed profitable links with local secondary schools. These have allowed teachers in the school to compare standards and expectations with their secondary colleagues.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's policies and procedures meet all statutory requirements. Leaders have made sure that all staff are familiar with child protection guidance, and have been trained to an appropriate level. Electronic records are kept safely.
- Staff are vigilant, and are aware of how to identify and report any concerns about a pupil's welfare. Leaders work effectively with parents and other agencies to help those pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable.
- In order to ensure that the school is always able to make a timely response to pupils'

needs, the school has engaged a part-time family support worker employed by a Birmingham children's charity. The worker provides advice and support in term time and during holiday periods.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because it is inconsistent. There is a noticeable gap between the quality of the good teaching in the school and the quality of the less effective practice. Leaders acknowledge that in recent years, this variability has led to some classes making disappointing progress.
- Teachers often do not plan well enough to provide for all the groups of pupils in the class. As a result, tasks set for the most able sometimes fail to stretch them sufficiently for them to make strong progress. Equally, the work set for the least able, and for those who have SEN and/or disabilities, is sometimes not designed carefully enough to build upon what they already know. As a result, they may struggle, or depend too heavily on adult support.
- Teaching does not ensure consistently that the tasks set within each lesson provide a good level of interest and challenge. Work is sometimes too repetitive. On occasion, teachers' questioning fails to establish the progress that pupils, or groups of pupils, have made so that the teacher can move pupils on or provide additional help. Pupils are therefore sometimes left towards the end of the lesson with little fresh work to do. In these circumstances, the concentration of a few boys slips occasionally and they become inattentive.
- The school has established clear procedures to enable pupils to learn from their mistakes and extend their understanding in response to teachers' feedback. However, teachers do not adopt these procedures consistently, because pupils have often failed to respond to the advice or additional challenge they have been given.
- Leaders have established clear expectations for the teaching of mathematics, reading and writing. In mathematics, pupils use a good range of physical equipment to support their learning. They regularly apply their knowledge to practical situations. Pupils learn to reason mathematically, although some record their reasoning only infrequently.
- The teaching of phonics is typically good. Although there remains a little variation in the quality of provision, teaching is well planned to build on the knowledge that pupils already have. Staff use a variety of imaginative techniques to reinforce the knowledge of letters and sounds, and as a result pupils are fully engaged. Leaders have identified the particular reading skills which older pupils require and how they will be taught. Inspection evidence showed that this has begun to improve reading standards in key stage 2.
- Pupils told inspectors that the teaching of writing has improved. They appreciate the consistent approach to building up longer pieces of writing. Pupils' books scrutinised by inspectors demonstrated that pupils' progress remains inconsistent. However, the majority of pupils are making steady progress in their handwriting, and in developing their vocabulary and grammar.
- Teachers display good subject knowledge, and use subject-specific terms accurately. The specialist teaching of computing makes a valuable contribution to pupils' readiness

for secondary school. Homework is an effective part of pupils' learning.

- Some teaching was skilfully planned to challenge all pupils in the class. Teachers often check effectively on the progress pupils are making, and adjust pupils' learning appropriately. In these circumstances, pupils' engagement in their work is impressive and they make strong progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- School leaders take good care to keep pupils safe. They have established a definition of bullying and how pupils should react that all pupils understand. Peer mentors and playground monitors help to develop pupils' confidence and ensure that they make friends. As a result, pupils told inspectors that they felt safe and that bullying was very rare or did not happen at all.
- The school teaches pupils effectively how they can manage their own safety. Pupils are well aware of how they can stay safe online both in school and outside. They learn how to swim. Visitors to the school, such as firefighters, explain how pupils should respond to fire and other emergency situations.
- School staff have built strong relationships with parents, including some who used not to be fully supportive of the school. Work with families has reduced the number of pupils who are absent persistently. This has ensured that some of the most vulnerable pupils are safe both during the school term and at holiday time.
- Teachers encourage pupils to respect themselves and other people, including those who come from different social or racial groups. Older pupils are astute and appreciative of recent improvements in the quality of teaching. In the classroom, the large majority of pupils are eager to learn, but a few remain somewhat less confident.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school is an orderly community focused on learning. Pupils move around the school sensibly, and line up promptly at the end of breaks. During breaks, pupils mix and play happily together. Adults, including the PE coaches employed by the school, structure some of the activities, while other pupils choose to chat or read a book. Inspectors witnessed no aggression or unpleasant behaviour during the inspection.
- Leaders keep a detailed log of behaviour, and this shows that the frequency of more serious incidents has declined over the last two years. They are now rare. The school has not excluded a pupil permanently in recent years, and made only one fixed term exclusion within the last 12 months.
- Most pupils' behaviour in lessons is consistently good. They follow teachers' instructions and settle down to work promptly and concentrate hard. Pupils display an appropriate level of independence, for example in using mathematical equipment or finding a dictionary. They collaborate conspicuously well, and are keen to help each

other learn. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, when one pupil ran out of counters to use in a calculation, another pupil spontaneously lent them her own.

- Leaders have worked hard to promote attendance, and this academic year the attendance of all pupils has been just above the most recently published national average. The attendance of vulnerable groups of pupils has also risen, although it remains a little below that of other pupils in the school and nationally.
- The large majority of pupils sustain their concentration even if the pace of the lesson flags a little. In a couple of classes, however, a few boys become restless in these circumstances, and their behaviour on rare occasions distracts others from learning.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics, the school's current pupils have recently made inconsistent progress. Their progress has been at or below that seen nationally, although there are clear indications that at least in some year groups it has begun to rise.
- Work scrutiny and lesson observation during the inspection showed that most pupils are currently working at a level appropriate for their age. The majority of pupils are making stronger progress, but the picture remains too variable, reflecting the inconsistency in the quality of teaching. Despite leaders' concerns, boys generally achieve as well as girls.
- In 2016, Year 6 pupils left key stage 2 having made progress which was significantly below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils who attained at a higher level in any of the three subjects was low. Provisional results for 2017 show that while there was some improvement in pupils' achievement in writing, attainment and progress for the most recent Year 6 cohort in reading and mathematics remained very weak.
- The proportions of pupils who attained at least the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 1 in 2016 were a little below those seen nationally. Provisional results for 2017 showed that the school made some headway in raising standards in writing, and a higher proportion of pupils achieved the higher standard in mathematics. The proportion of Year 1 pupils who have met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check has in recent years been average.
- The school has had some success in combating the main obstacles to academic achievement which many disadvantaged pupils face, particularly in the younger years. As a result, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils has been broadly in line with that of other pupils in the school. More needs to be done to help disadvantaged pupils catch up with other pupils nationally. Leaders have adapted their approach to work more intensively with particular pupils who have not yet fulfilled their potential.
- The achievement of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is still too variable. Information supplied by the school shows that many of these pupils are beginning to make accelerated progress in mathematics. However, the clearer identification of pupils' needs is yet to improve their achievement in English.
- Achievement in foundation subjects also presents a mixed picture. Pupils' work showed that some pupils had gained a good understanding of important skills, such as those

associated with scientific experiment, but that other pupils had worked at a more superficial level.

- In general, the school now promotes reading effectively. Pupils have good access to books. Weak readers are able to use a range of methods, including phonic strategies, to help them understand the text. The most able older pupils are able to read fluently and explain their reading tastes convincingly.

## Early years provision

## Good

- The majority of children enter the Reception Year with skills and abilities below those typical for their age, especially in speech and language acquisition. Leaders rapidly identify those pupils who require additional help, and organise specialist advice and support when required. As a result, these children generally catch up quickly, contributing to the good progress that children make overall.
- Leaders manage the early years provision effectively. They have an accurate view of the setting's effectiveness. Leaders use information about children's progress well to plan for the improvement of the provision.
- Leaders make sure that the staff plan collaboratively so that opportunities for the two Reception classes include all areas of learning. Leaders have made good use of training to develop their own skills and those of other staff. They ensure that their judgements about children's abilities are compared with those of teachers in other settings.
- From the outset, staff set a good example for children so that they develop strong attitudes to their learning. They quickly come to respect adults and each other. Behaviour in the early years is consistently good. Staff work effectively as a united team. However, on occasion during the inspection, the deployment of teaching assistants did not maximise children's opportunities to learn.
- Children learn well. Staff work closely with children to identify the next steps in their learning and to provide them with a broad range of opportunities. They encourage children to be independent, and to make their own learning decisions. Staff record children's progress in detail, and add their assessments to children's learning journeys.
- The teaching of phonics is effective because adults explain and demonstrate the different letters and sounds well using a variety of enterprising techniques. As a result, pupils are fully engaged. Staff encourage children to widen their spoken and written vocabulary. The learning environment promotes children's interest in reading and writing. Strong progress in developing their early literacy makes an important contribution to preparing children well for key stage 1.
- During the inspection, children had access to a wide range of materials, which contributed to the development of their fine and gross motor skills. Staff encourage children to make good use of the outdoor area to explore their ideas and develop their self-confidence.
- Leaders have forged a particularly strong and profitable relationship with parents. Staff visit children's homes, and welcome parents into school to discuss in workshops how children learn. Parents regularly contribute to the assessment and recording of their children's skills. Those who spoke with inspectors said that the staff provided good information about their children's welfare and progress.

- Inspection evidence showed that pupils' progress was accelerating across all areas of learning in response to clear-sighted planning and good teaching. The proportion of children who achieved a good level of development in 2017 nevertheless remained below the national average.
- The early years setting meets all welfare requirements. All staff are trained in paediatric first aid, and the safety of the outdoor area is checked daily.

## School details

Unique reference number	103315
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10043147

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Farrell
Headteacher	Deborah Dudt
Telephone number	0121 475 3374
Website	<a href="http://www.cofton.bham.sch.uk">www.cofton.bham.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiry@cofton.bham.sch.uk">enquiry@cofton.bham.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	27 September 2012

## Information about this school

- Cofton Primary School is a larger than average-sized primary school, and the school roll is rising rapidly. The school is part of a cooperative including Turves Green Girls' School, Alphabets @ Cofton early years provision, Bournville College and Worcester University. The cooperative makes two appointments to the governing body.
- The school runs a popular breakfast club.
- There has been very considerable staff turnover in recent years. The headteacher took up her post in October 2014. The deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2017, and the assistant headteacher assumed his current role in April 2017.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above average.
- Most pupils are White British. Few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The local authority has brokered support for the school from a local teaching school

alliance.

- In 2016, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of the most recent information about the PE and sports premium on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 23 lessons, and two extended learning walks. Three observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors watched the teaching of some smaller groups. The inspectors also observed breakfast club and pupils' conduct at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, other leaders, other staff, governors and representatives of the local authority and the teaching school alliance that has been working with the school.
- Three groups of pupils, two chosen at random, met with inspectors. Inspectors also spoke with many other pupils informally. One inspector listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' workbooks in lessons, and scrutinised a good number of books in greater depth. Inspectors considered a range of information about pupils' recent and current academic performance.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, both electronically and on paper. These included: development plans and evaluations of the school's performance; minutes of meetings held by the governing body; policies; reports to parents on pupils' progress; and anonymised information showing how the headteacher manages the performance of teachers. Inspectors scrutinised in detail records showing how the school supports vulnerable pupils.
- The inspection team also took account of the 57 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and comments made using the free-text facility. They spoke with several parents bringing their children to school on the second day of the inspection. Inspectors also considered the five responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Bandfield	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Blackburn	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

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](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2017