

Dawley Brook Primary School

Dubarry Avenue, Valley Fields, Kingswinford, West Midlands, DY6 9BP

Inspection dates

18–19 September 2018

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	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since their appointments, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have rapidly addressed the key weaknesses that were in the school. Their highly effective actions have improved the school significantly over the last year.
- The governors have an incisive understanding of the school's strengths and where further improvements are still needed. They are highly skilled and have been instrumental in providing stability to the school through some challenging periods.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is now good. The majority of teachers plan carefully to meet pupils' learning needs. However, on occasion, teachers do not challenge pupils enough, which limits their progress, especially in mathematics.
- As a result of previous weak teaching, some pupils across key stage 2 have not made the progress they should in reading, writing and mathematics. While current pupils are now making better progress, with gaps in their learning closing, some pupils in key stage 2 continue to underachieve. Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 improved last year.
- Parents recognise and appreciate the significant improvements in the school over the last year. They are now overwhelmingly supportive of the leadership and staff.
- The English curriculum is carefully planned, and teachers build on pupils' prior learning, which is helping them to make better progress in reading and writing. However, teachers do not address basic mistakes in grammar, punctuation and spelling well enough so pupils repeat these mistakes.
- Middle leaders show a strong understanding of their areas of responsibility and have contributed well to school improvement. They are continuing to develop these leadership skills.
- Children in the early years are confident and happy. The early years is led exceptionally well. However, there remains considerable variability in the quality of teaching and learning so some children, especially the most able, do not make the progress they should.
- All staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. The school is highly inclusive, and a strong community spirit permeates across the school. Pupils show a great pride in their school and behave extremely well. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe.
- Leaders have redesigned the curriculum to develop learning in all subjects. However, the plans are at an early stage of development and are yet to be fully implemented.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress across key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve the provision in the early years by:
 - developing the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that children, especially the most able, make the progress of which they are capable.
- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
 - raise expectations and the level of challenge for all groups of pupils, especially in mathematics
 - use information about what pupils can do to plan work that is matched to their learning needs
 - address basic misconceptions in grammar, punctuation and spelling so mistakes are not repeated.
- Further develop the quality of leadership and management by:
 - making sure the curriculum is planned to build securely and progressively on previous learning in all subjects
 - providing middle leaders with further opportunities to enhance their leadership skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed at Easter 2017. Their appointments followed a period of significant instability and turbulence within the school. They lost no time in identifying the key weaknesses across the school and took decisive and swift action to stem any further decline in the school's performance. The headteacher's and deputy headteacher's highly effective actions over the last year have led to rapid improvements in all areas of the school's performance. However, these leaders have a very clear understanding of where further developments are needed and are tackling them at pace.
- A notable strength of the school is the strong and cohesive staff team, which leaders have developed over the last year. The headteacher has successfully nurtured staff, many of whom are new to the school, and has gained their trust and respect. Staff really appreciate the help, guidance and support they receive to help them improve their practice. The headteacher has high expectations and ensures that teachers receive regular and highly effective feedback to drive further improvements in the quality of their teaching. This has successfully eradicated inadequate teaching and raised the overall quality of teaching significantly in a short space of time.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have also been very effective at developing the quality of the middle leaders. These leaders contribute well to school improvement. For example, the English curriculum is now well planned to ensure that pupils' learning is built upon from one year to the next. The headteacher recognises the strengths of these middle leaders and where further support and development are needed to enhance their contribution to school improvement even more.
- The leadership of special educational needs (SEN) has also developed extremely well over the last year. The leader ensures that the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are accurately identified so that the right support can be put in place to help them make progress. The leader ensures that teachers set clear targets to help these pupils make strong progress. The school has a highly inclusive ethos and pupils with very specific needs benefit from being part of a highly supportive and welcoming school community. The school works with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that pupils' complex needs are met. Leaders use the additional funding received to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities appropriately. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make strong progress.
- Leaders carefully review the needs of disadvantaged pupils and then plan bespoke support to meet these needs. They use the additional funding received for these pupils in a variety of ways to help them make progress academically, but also to support their social and emotional needs. Consequently, these pupils make strong progress and confidently participate in all aspects of the school's life.
- Leaders also use the physical education (PE) and sport premium funding well. For example, teachers have received professional development to help them improve their PE teaching skills. Pupils have more opportunities to take part in extra-curricular sporting activities and there are also more opportunities for pupils to participate in competitive sporting competitions. This encourages pupils to be more active.

- On their appointment, the headteacher and deputy headteacher recognised that parents had very significant concerns about the school. They quickly developed strong communications with parents to ensure that they receive detailed information about their children's education and feel fully included in the life of the school. All staff now liaise closely with parents and strong relationships have been rebuilt. The vast majority of parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.
- The local authority has worked closely with the school over the last two years and facilitated some interim leadership prior to the appointment of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. This helped provide some stability during this period. The local authority has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and continues to provide valuable support where needed.
- Leaders have planned the curriculum to ensure that pupils' knowledge and skills are built upon progressively from one year to the next in all subjects. However, these plans are still relatively new and are not fully embedded across the school. Leaders recognise that there is further work to be done to ensure that pupils receive a fully broad and balanced curriculum throughout their time at school. One aspect of the curriculum that is developed well is pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are prepared well for the next stages in their education and life in modern Britain.

Governance of the school

- Governors are a key strength of the school. They have led the school through some turbulent and challenging periods. During this time, they remained resolute and determined and secured a strong and stable leadership team. This has resulted in significant improvements being made across the school in a short period of time.
- Governors have a variety of skills which collectively make them a knowledgeable and highly effective governing body. They have a detailed and incisive understanding of the school's strengths but also know where further improvements need to be made quickly. They hold leaders to account for all aspects of the school's performance and check carefully that leaders' actions to improve the school are working. However, governors are also highly supportive of the leaders and seek every opportunity to ensure that they have the right guidance and help where needed.
- Governors take their responsibility to safeguard pupils seriously and have ensured that the updated safeguarding guidance has been implemented quickly to keep pupils as safe as possible. They check that leaders use the additional funding received to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils effectively to help these pupils achieve well and make good progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have pupils' safety as their highest priority. They carried out a comprehensive review of all safeguarding procedures following their appointment in 2017. All safeguarding policies and procedures were updated and are now fit for purpose. Staff have received full training on all aspects of how to keep pupils as safe as possible. Staff know what to do if they have a concern and report any concerns quickly to leaders.

Leaders respond to these concerns swiftly to ensure that any pupil who needs help and support receives it quickly.

- Pupils have a range of opportunities to learn about how to keep themselves safe through the curriculum. E-safety is promoted well, and leaders respond quickly if they feel further work is required in this area. For example, leaders held a 'short notice meeting' with parents when concerns arose about the use of social media. Parents appreciate this strong communication to help them keep their children safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Following considerable improvements over the last year, the overall quality of teaching and learning is good in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers now have a clear understanding of what must be taught in each year group and what pupils should achieve by the end of the year.
- Teachers use questioning carefully to check pupils' understanding, giving pupils time to explain their learning. This means that teachers can spot and address any misconceptions quickly. In addition to this, the majority of teachers now have higher expectations of what pupils can do, and also of pupils' behaviour. This means that learning time is maximised and helps pupils to make better progress.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils' learning. They have positive relationships with pupils and a secure understanding of what help pupils need. They encourage pupils to learn, using questioning well to help them work out the answers to questions for themselves. This further supports the improved progress pupils are now making.
- Leaders have completely revised the school's reading scheme and pupils have access to high-quality texts which are appropriately matched to their skills and abilities. Pupils say that the new books are exciting and interesting, and they are enthusiastic readers. Teachers check that pupils read a range of different texts and that the texts are suitably challenging. Teachers also ensure that key reading skills are taught regularly. As a result, pupils' achievement in reading is beginning to improve.
- The revised English curriculum ensures that pupils are taught how to write in a range of different styles in their English lessons. Teachers also provide pupils with opportunities to practise their writing skills in subjects such as history and science. The carefully planned English curriculum ensures that pupils' skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling are built upon from one year to the next. However, teachers do not address basic mistakes in grammar, punctuation and spelling well enough, which leads to pupils repeating the same mistakes. Consequently, pupils do not make as much progress as they should in writing.
- Teachers ensure that pupils have access to a variety of apparatus to support their mathematical learning where needed. Pupils also apply their mathematical skills in science, which helps to deepen their learning. In most classes, teachers provide pupils with a high level of challenge in mathematics, through mathematical problems which require pupils to think more deeply about their learning. Nevertheless, some teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient challenge in mathematics which limits their progress.

- Teachers now use the new assessment systems more accurately to review what pupils can do and then plan work which meets their learning needs. This is enabling pupils to make better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, some teachers do not use these systems consistently. This means that they provide pupils with work that is either too easy or too hard. As a result, these pupils do not make the progress they should.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils at Dawley Brook Primary School are exceptionally proud of their school. They value the strong community feel across the school and are eager to share their learning and achievements.
- Pupils say that bullying is very rare, but they are confident that there would always be someone to help them if needed. Anti-bullying ambassadors are appointed, and these pupils help to promote positive relationships between all pupils.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school, saying that their school is 'fun' and 'a good place to be'. All pupils say that they feel safe in school and that staff care for them. Pupils learn about, and show a strong understanding of, how to keep themselves safe. They can explain why you must not talk to anyone you do not know over the internet and why not to share their personal details.
- Pupils also have a range of opportunities to learn about different faiths and cultures. They particularly enjoy discussing other religions and demonstrate a high level of respect for the different cultures and religions they learn about.
- Pupils enjoy attending the breakfast club. They are well cared for in the club and enjoy the activities provided. The club provides pupils with a positive start to the day.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils across the school are polite and respectful to one another and to all adults, both inside the classroom and outside. A calm atmosphere pervades across the whole school, with pupils smiling and acknowledging their friends, staff and visitors warmly. Pupils say that it is difficult to talk about any behaviour issues because they do not think there are any.
- There are very few behaviour incidents to record and exclusions are rare. However, when any incidents of poor behaviour do arise, leaders act swiftly and appropriately to address and improve the behaviours. Pupils have a very clear understanding of the school's behaviour systems but are also fully involved in developing the new behaviour policy to make them even more effective.
- Pupils' love and enjoyment of school is reflected in the very high attendance rates. Leaders work effectively with parents to promote the importance of good attendance.

Where issues do arise with lower levels of attendance, leaders work with a range of agencies to help support families and pupils to improve their attendance. Many parents commented in the Ofsted 'free-text' comments that their children want to attend school even when they are ill.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils have made weak progress at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics over the last four years. This is as a result of historically poor teaching. Leaders have successfully addressed the significant issues in teaching and learning and have eradicated inadequate teaching. Pupils across key stage 2 are now making stronger progress. However, some pupils are yet to catch up to reach the standards of which they are capable and so continue to underachieve.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 was broadly in line with, or better than, the national average. However, the progress these pupils made from the end of key stage 1 was significantly below the national average. Pupils at the end of key stage 2 in 2018 have also made weak progress from the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment at the end of key stage 2, in 2018, was similar to that in 2017.
- Leaders have only recently developed skills and knowledge progression across the curriculum to enable pupils to build on prior learning year on year. Teachers are beginning to check pupils' understanding in a range of subjects, but they do not have a clear understanding of what learning has taken place in previous year groups. As a result, it is unclear how well pupils are achieving in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the required standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 has risen over the last four years and in 2017 was in line with the national average. This proportion rose again in 2018.
- In 2017, attainment at the end of key stage 1 in reading and mathematics was just below the national average. The proportions of pupils achieving the greater depth of learning were also below the national average in these subjects. However, attainment in writing was in line with the national average and the number of pupils who achieved the greater depth of learning was above the national average. In 2018, attainment at the end of key stage 1 rose substantially in reading, writing and mathematics. Notably, there was a considerable rise in the number of pupils who achieved the greater depth of learning in all three subjects.
- There are low numbers of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities in each year group. Therefore, in the interests of confidentiality, it would not be appropriate to report on specific outcomes for these groups. However, across the school, these pupils receive effective support which enables them to make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning across the early years is not consistently good. Some staff have weak questioning skills which does not enable them to establish what children can do. As a result, they do not plan activities which develop children's learning across the early years curriculum. Additionally, some staff do not intervene in children's learning quickly enough to ensure that they develop new skills and understanding. This limits the progress children make, especially the most able.
- Children enter the early years with skills and abilities broadly typical for their age. While the majority of children reach the standards of which they are capable by the end of the early years, some children do not achieve as highly as they should due to the inconsistent quality of teaching. This is especially so for the most able children. At the end of 2017, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the early years was just above the national average. This proportion fell slightly at the end of 2018.
- Where teaching is stronger, warm and positive relationships exist between staff and children. Children are nurtured, well cared for and come into school confidently and eager to learn. Staff support children's learning well, allowing them to explore learning for themselves, but also providing further guidance when they spot children who need extra support or extra challenge. Staff plan carefully to cover all aspects of the early years curriculum, which ensures that children engage in rich and varied learning activities. Consequently, Reception Year children are well prepared for the challenges of Year 1.
- The early years is led exceptionally well. The leader has a clear and incisive understanding of the strengths and areas for development across the early years. Actions to improve the quality of the provision are detailed and carefully targeted to address the key priorities within the early years. The leader provides staff with highly effective feedback and support to develop their practice and this has enabled some staff to improve their teaching skills quickly. However, the full impact of this support and guidance is yet to be seen to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good across the whole of the early years.
- Leaders and staff work closely with a wide range of agencies to support children's needs. Services such as occupational therapy and speech and language therapists are fully engaged in providing additional support and guidance to help children with additional needs achieve well.
- Staff work closely with parents to prepare children for the start of school. Parents receive a range of information, including about what their children will be learning, prior to starting school. Staff visit nurseries to meet children and parents, and children are given the opportunity to visit school before starting. This helps children to settle quickly into the school routines. Children enter school as happy and confident learners. Parents are also encouraged to contribute to their child's learning. Parents provide school with 'wow' moments where they share their child's achievements at home. Staff add these achievements to children's learning journeys to ensure that their learning both inside and outside school is celebrated.

School details

Unique reference number	103781
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10047449

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	221
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Morgan
Headteacher	Lisa Maskell
Telephone number	01384 818770
Website	www.dawley.dudley.sch.uk
Email address	lmaskell@dawley.dudley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 February 2014

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed. There have also been a significant number of changes to the teaching staff.
- The local authority facilitated interim leadership support to the school from September 2016 until the appointment of the new leaders at Easter 2017.
- Dawley Brook Primary School is an average-sized school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is in line with the national average.
- The school runs a breakfast club for its pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups. Some of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the early years leader.
- Inspectors met with pupils, heard a selection of pupils read, and observed pupils in the breakfast club, at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the leader of provision for SEN, the early years leader and senior leaders with subject responsibilities. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and three members of staff.
- A range of pupils' books from all year groups and a range of subjects were looked at.
- Several documents were considered, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. Inspectors also considered information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety.
- Inspectors took account of 55 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to parents before school. There were no responses to the online pupil questionnaire. Inspectors also considered the comments made in 53 free-text responses and a hand-delivered letter. Inspectors reviewed eight responses to an inspection questionnaire returned by staff.

Inspection team

Ann Pritchard, lead inspector

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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