

Northfield Road Primary School

Northfield Road, Netherton, Dudley, West Midlands DY2 9ER

Inspection dates

18–19 September 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Pupils' outcomes have been and are too low. By the end of key stage 2, pupils make significantly less progress than their peers nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Turbulence in leadership and inadequate teaching over time have caused standards to decline rapidly since the previous inspection.
- Governors have not challenged leaders on pupils' progress and, as a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Pupil premium funding is not used effectively. Leaders and governors do not evaluate the impact of their use of pupil premium funding. Disadvantaged pupils do not make the progress they should.
- Leaders now know what they have to do to improve the school and they plan for improvement. However, their actions have not yet sustainably improved pupils' outcomes.
- The use of assessment is weak. Leaders do not have an accurate understanding of how well pupils are doing and therefore cannot intervene when necessary.
- Subject leaders do not make checks on the quality of teaching and learning in the subjects they are responsible for.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not make effective use of what pupils have learned previously to plan appropriate next steps to move pupils on in their learning. As a result, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not regularly plan tasks that challenge the most able pupils. Work set for the most able is often too easy.

The school has the following strengths

- The safeguarding procedures of the school are exemplary. Attendance has improved significantly.
- Pupils are friendly and courteous as they move around the school. Pupils feel safe in school.
- Children in the early years receive a good start to their education. They enjoy learning and are well prepared for Year 1.

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - governors robustly challenge leaders and hold them to account for the performance of pupils and the progress they make across the school
 - pupil premium funding is used effectively to help disadvantaged pupils achieve well
 - leaders evaluate effectively the progress of all pupils, especially the disadvantaged and the most able, so that staff are held to account for pupils' outcomes
 - subject leaders are able to assess how well pupils are achieving in the subject areas that they lead
 - leaders and governors set high expectations for the achievements of all pupils
 - leaders have an accurate understanding of how to measure pupils' achievements across the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school in order to improve outcomes at the end of key stage 2 by ensuring that:
 - all staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in reading, writing and mathematics
 - teachers plan tasks that challenge the most able pupils so that they achieve well in all subjects
 - teachers use assessment information from previous learning to plan sequences of learning to meet the needs of pupils
 - teachers' subject knowledge is improved to establish a whole-school and consistent approach to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics
 - teachers understand and use more effectively the assessment and tracking procedures across the school.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Since the previous inspection, staffing turbulence and the resulting inconsistent quality of teaching have caused outcomes across the school and at the end of key stage 2 to decline significantly. Leaders have not ensured that the previously good quality of education provided by the school has been maintained and built on.
- Leaders have begun to take action to improve outcomes for pupils. However, these initiatives are at a very early stage and have had little effect on improving pupils' progress.
- Until very recently, the identification of priorities for school improvement has been weak. Priorities have not focused sufficiently on outcomes for pupils. As a result, strategies for improvement over the past few years have failed to address the significant decline in standards.
- In the past, there has been insufficient focus by school leaders on checking the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress. Current leaders have implemented effective procedures to monitor the quality of teaching in the school and this is providing some support to developing consistency in teaching and learning.
- Leaders' use of the pupil premium funding has not been effective. Leaders do not have an accurate understanding of the impact of the funding and do not use the money received effectively to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils across the school.
- Leadership is fragile at all levels. Recently appointed leaders, who understand they must bring about rapid and significant improvement, are spread too thinly. These leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have implemented new initiatives to improve teaching. These are beginning to have an impact in key stage 1.
- Recently appointed subject leaders have generated detailed action plans on how to develop consistency of teaching and learning in their subjects. However, they have not had the opportunities to embed these changes or monitor their impact. The recent initiative of raising the profile of reading across the school is beginning to have a good impact on pupils' reading for pleasure. Pupils regularly use the school library at lunchtimes and they commented that they now read far more frequently and enjoy reading a range of texts.
- The school's use of procedures for monitoring the progress of pupils is weak. Consequently, leaders do not have an accurate understanding of the performance of groups of pupils. Training has been planned as a matter of urgency for all teaching staff so that they become more adept at using assessment information to plan work and check pupils' progress.
- Leaders have correctly identified that the systems for managing teachers' performance are weak. The procedures do not help teachers to improve their professional practice.
- The leader responsible ensures that pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported and that their achievement is tracked. Poor teaching sometimes limits the effectiveness of this support.

- Effective use of the sports funding has had a positive impact on pupils' eagerness to participate in sport and has improved their knowledge of how to stay healthy.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum pupils experience has breadth and balance. Teachers plan activities that enable pupils to develop a wide range of skills and attitudes. This work is supported well by activities for pupils at lunchtime and after school.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are offered opportunities to make a positive contribution to their community. Pupils enjoy taking on roles of responsibility. School councillors are elected by other pupils. This helps pupils to understand democratic processes.

Governance of the school

- While the governing body has high aspirations for the school, governors have been too slow to respond to the decline in the school's performance. Governors recognise that staffing and leadership instability has resulted in the significant decline in outcomes for all pupils in key stage 2. However, they have not taken effective action to secure improvement.
- Governors do not check carefully enough on the impact of pupil premium spending on the learning of disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, they are unaware that the money is not having the intended effect.
- The governing body does not hold leaders to account well enough. Governors have been too accepting of what they are told and have not provided adequate challenge.
- Governors do not have a strategic approach to monitoring the school's priorities. The information they gather on visits to the school does not always help them to gain a clear picture of what is happening in school.
- Governors have a thorough understanding of their statutory duties regarding safeguarding and ensure that the safeguarding ethos and culture are a high priority throughout the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding leaders are suitably trained and have ensured that systems to monitor and support pupils who are in need of support are effective. Meticulous records are kept.
- Staff know pupils well as individuals. As a result, adults are able to meet pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs effectively.
- Staff keep appropriate records about pupils and families who need additional support. These records demonstrate that leaders monitor pupils and families carefully, referring them to the appropriate agencies when needed.
- All staff are up to date with safeguarding procedures, including those who have recently joined the school. Staff know the procedures to follow should they have a concern about the safety or welfare of pupils.
- Pupils understand what constitutes bullying and the different forms that it can take.

The majority of pupils are adamant that incidents of bullying are infrequent and that, when they occur, they are dealt with by staff. Pupils spoke knowledgeably about how to stay safe, including when on the internet. Pupils said that safety issues are regularly covered in assemblies and through visits from the fire service and other organisations.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate because, over time, teaching has been weak and pupils have not been challenged. As a result, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- There are significant inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across year groups and subjects. Too many teachers do not plan tasks that are suitable for the needs of the most able pupils.
- Instability in teaching, particularly in key stage 2, has caused many pupils to have significant gaps in their knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics. This has had a significant negative impact upon pupils' progress.
- Recent initiatives introduced to improve the quality of teaching in reading and mathematics have contributed to some improved teaching in key stage 1. Outcomes for these pupils have improved, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are not consistently high enough. Some teachers accept poorly presented work and do not address repeated misconceptions. Consequently, pupils make the same errors over time and this slows down progress.
- Subject leaders have implemented new schemes of work for teaching mathematics and writing this year. Staff are not yet confident in delivering these programmes and, consequently, there is no impact noted to date.
- Too often, pupils rely too heavily on the support given to them by adults because they do not have the confidence, skills and knowledge to tackle new work independently. The least able pupils are particularly reliant on additional support to access their work.
- The teaching of writing is particularly ineffective. Teachers do not have the subject knowledge to help pupils improve their writing. As a result, pupils are reluctant to write at length.
- Assessment across the school is weak because teachers lack a secure enough understanding of how to support the learning of key groups of pupils. Teachers are unfamiliar with the expectations typical for different pupils' ages in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers do not use assessment information well enough to support pupils' learning and help them to build on what they already know and can do.
- The teaching of phonics has improved in recent years and pupils develop a secure understanding of the phonics sounds. In key stage 1, teachers and teaching assistants skilfully support pupils to sound out words so that they are able to spell unfamiliar words and apply them in their independent writing.
- The positive, caring relationships that teachers and teaching assistants have established with their pupils mean that the majority of pupils feel well supported and

many, but not all, have a good attitude to learning.

- Where teaching is more effective, pupils are encouraged to use a range of vocabulary to help develop their writing. Pupils are keen to persevere with tasks and show determination to achieve. For example, Year 5 pupils were challenged well to describe a setting by using a range of descriptive language. By the end of the lesson, most pupils were describing the setting with a range of sophisticated language.
- Where teaching is stronger and expectations of what pupils can achieve are higher, pupils flourish. Where this is the case, pupils are confident and understand how to learn well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Some pupils take pride in their work but this is not consistent across the school. Where teachers' expectations for the quality and presentation of work are high, pupils respond well.
- Leaders ensure that there is an ethos of care and mutual respect. All pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they feel safe. The youngest pupils in the early years spoke passionately about 'safe' strangers visiting the school. They could point out the importance of visitors wearing a visitor's badge to enter the school.
- The school ensures that pupils know how to stay safe online. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the information that should not be shared when using the internet. They know they must not divulge personal information to strangers.
- Pupils report that bullying does happen in the school, but only rarely. They are confident that any misbehaviour will be dealt with firmly and fairly. They report that adults listen to them carefully and help them resolve any concerns that they might have.
- Pupils' leadership skills are developed well through their positions of responsibility on the school council and as prefects.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of British values and matters relating to equality. Assemblies and visitors make a good contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Pupils with whom the inspectors spoke said their feelings and views matter to staff. They feel staff listen to and respect them. The most vulnerable pupils are supported well by the nurture provision, which ensures that these pupils' feelings and well-being are developed well.
- Pupils behave well in the popular breakfast club. Staff ensure that the day gets off to a good start for these pupils, whose attendance, since joining the club, has improved.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Overall, most pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. However, where teachers' expectations are not high enough or pupils receive work that is not suited to their needs, some pupils become distracted.
- Pupils are polite to each other and to visitors. They respond quickly to instructions when required and their classrooms are generally calm places in which to learn. Pupils conduct themselves well as they move around school.
- When individual pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities display challenging behaviour, it is usually dealt with well, particularly by skilled teaching assistants. In whole-class situations, a few of these pupils struggle to cope and remain settled. The school's records show its policies and approach have had a positive impact on improving the behaviour of pupils with social and emotional difficulties. For example, pupils are allowed access to the nurture room at lunchtimes. This ensures that these pupils receive the support they need. This is a significant strength of the school, and local schools regularly visit the school to observe exemplary practice for vulnerable pupils.
- Attendance has significantly risen in the past year as a result of the deputy headteacher making it a priority. In the past, attendance was significantly below the national average. Most pupils now attend school regularly. The school's attendance procedures are rigorous. The attendance officer follows up and addresses lateness and persistent absence.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Results in the tests at the end of key stage 2 reflect the weaknesses in pupils' progress from starting points that exist for many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, currently in the school.
- The proportion of pupils who achieve the standard expected for their age by the end of key stage 2 has been very low for the past two years.
- In 2017, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was well below average and in the lowest 10% of schools nationally. In 2018, there was a further decline in pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Continuing low standards at key stage 2 have resulted in pupils' progress being poor. Pupils do not have secure foundations in English and mathematics on which to build future learning. Outcomes in writing for the most able pupils across the school are inadequate.
- The most able pupils underachieve. Too few reach the higher standards, including the small number of most-able disadvantaged pupils in the school. This is because expectations of what these pupils can achieve are not high enough.
- The gap between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally has widened over time and is not diminishing quickly enough.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1 are showing signs of improvement. Achievement in Year 2 is rising quickly for all groups of pupils. Stronger teaching and successful adult support are allowing pupils to make strong progress in reading and mathematics. Most-able pupils in key stage 1 are making stronger

progress and are achieving as well as pupils nationally in reading and mathematics.

- Recent improvements in the teaching of phonics mean that a higher proportion of pupils are on track to meet expectations in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive learning targets that are closely matched to their needs. However, the progress made by this group of pupils is inconsistent in different year groups and subjects.
- Work in books shows that current pupils in Years 2, 5 and 6 are making better progress in reading and mathematics than was the case in the past, but this is not yet consistent across the school in these subjects or in others.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children start school with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age. In recent years, the proportion of children who have moved into key stage 1 with a good level of development has been broadly in line with national averages. This is because the quality of teaching is good.
- While disadvantaged children achieve less well than other children, the difference between these groups is diminishing over time. Additional funding is used well to give disadvantaged children extra help to catch up in their learning.
- Most children make good progress from their individual starting points because teaching is planned well. Activities are exciting and capture children's interests. Teaching takes good account of individual learning needs. However, in writing, some of the most able children do not make the progress of which they are capable because activities lack challenge.
- The early years leader has a clear, ambitious vision and provides strong leadership. She has set high expectations for children and these are shared by the other adults working in the setting.
- There are strong relationships at all levels within the early years setting. Adults engage well with children, questioning and engaging them in learning. Children play well alongside one another in the well-resourced indoor and outdoor areas. Behaviour is good because adults establish routines well. Children develop strong social skills.
- Parents and carers are pleased with the provision and report that they feel they are well listened to and have a close relationship with the school staff, which they appreciate. They believe their children are happy and safe and have settled well into school life.
- Safeguarding is highly effective, and all adults are well trained to ensure that children are safe.

School details

Unique reference number	103775
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10047425

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Tracey Pearce
Headteacher	Mr Lee Regan
Telephone number	01384 818 710
Website	www.northfield.dudley.sch.uk
Email address	data@northfield.dudley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30–31 May 2014

Information about this school

- This school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- There have been significant changes in staffing and leadership since the previous inspection.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The governing body manages before- and after-school clubs on-site.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes.
- At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was off work.
- Some of the observations were carried out jointly with the deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' books, school assessment information, leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness and a range of relevant school documents.
- Inspectors scrutinised a large sample of books to see what progress pupils make across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors held discussions with groups of pupils. Inspectors also spoke informally to pupils in lessons, during breaks and at lunchtimes.
- Inspectors closely observed the work of the school and looked at the latest school performance information showing the progress pupils are currently making.
- Inspectors listened to a small number of pupils reading.
- Inspectors took account of the 71 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and of information gathered from discussions with staff during the inspection.

Inspection team

Ed Masterson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Maybank	Ofsted Inspector
Kirsty Foulkes	Ofsted Inspector

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