

Dovecote Primary and Nursery School

Greencroft, Clifton, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, NG11 8EY

Inspection dates

27–28 February 2019

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| 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 | 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, leaders and governors have brought significant improvements to the quality of education provided by the school.
- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 has shown marked improvements from the previous inspection.
- A broad and balanced curriculum meets pupils' needs well and ensures that they learn well across a range of subjects.
- The large majority of teachers use questioning and assessment successfully to develop and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- The quality of leadership, teaching and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a strength of the school. These pupils make strong progress from their starting points.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding is effective.
- Pupils' behaviour in the majority of lessons and their conduct around school are good. Staff promote positive relationships which ensure that pupils make good use of their time in lessons.
- Children make strong progress as a result of effective leadership and teaching in the early years. They are well prepared to move to Year 1.
- Standards of attainment in key stages 1 and 2, in reading, writing and mathematics have been consistently below the national averages over time.
- Occasionally, where teaching is weaker, pupils lose focus in lessons and their learning slows.
- Leaders' restructuring of curriculum leadership is not yet complete. That aspect of leadership is not consistently strong across all subjects.
- The outdoor learning environments, in both the Nursery and Reception classes, do not promote children's learning and development as well as they might.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that subject leadership is equally strong across all areas of the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that the remaining pockets of weaker teaching are eliminated so that the quality of teaching is consistently strong across all classes.
- Improve outcomes by raising standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2 to be at least in line with the national averages.
- Improve the quality and use of the outdoor learning environments in the early years so that they effectively support children's learning and development across all areas of learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the last inspection, senior leaders and governors have taken steps to improve all aspects of the school's work. The positive impact of their actions can be seen in the improved quality of teaching and strong rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2.
- The headteacher, supported by senior leaders, has raised expectations for staff and pupils. Leaders have established a strong culture of aspiration for the school, exemplified in their school motto, 'Children first'.
- Middle leadership is strong and subject leadership is improving. This means that there is strong potential for the current improvements to be sustained.
- The school has become more outward-looking. For example, there are effective partnerships with the Nottingham Schools Trust and the Transform Teaching Schools Alliance. These links have brought benefits of support, training and the sharing of good practice.
- The senior leader with responsibility for coordinating provision for pupils with SEND provides creative and innovative leadership. She regularly checks the quality of teaching and support for pupils, continually looking to find new ways of meeting the increasingly complex needs of pupils and their families. For example, the quality of teaching in the school's 'Butterfly House' is highly effective. As a result of strong leadership, teaching and support, pupils with SEND make progress in reading, writing and mathematics that is often stronger than that of their peers.
- A significant proportion of pupils are eligible for support through the pupil premium funding. Leaders have ensured that the funding is used effectively to support pupils' learning and personal development. In 2018, disadvantaged pupils made strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2.
- The additional funding for physical education (PE) and sport is used effectively. Pupils receive a good range of opportunities to improve their health, well-being and physical fitness through the activities on offer.
- Staff say that leaders pay due regard to their well-being and workload. Teachers and support staff feel proud to work at the school, saying, for example, 'we really believe in the school now'. Some also described how the school has 'moved on massively' since the last inspection. Staff are well motivated and value a range of opportunities for training and development.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of the school's work. For example, there are many opportunities for pupils to experience a wide range of cultural opportunities, such as learning French and Spanish, as well as learning about a range of faiths and cultures. Personal achievements are regularly celebrated, and the house point system provides an effective motivation for effort. Pupils enjoy taking on roles of responsibility, such as through the 'jobs team' and the school council. In discussion, pupils spoke confidently about their understanding of fundamental British values such as respect and tolerance.

- Leaders and staff have given considerable thought to reviewing the school's curriculum. This has resulted in the development of a concise overview of the opportunities for pupils entitled 'The Dovecote Promise'. This overview sets out a broad and balanced range of activities and experiences, linked to themes such as 'economic well-being' and 'outdoor learning', as well as individual subjects. Participation in extra-curricular and enrichment activities is encouraged, as well as a range of life skills such as learning to cook, ride a bike, swim and learning basic first aid. A curricular strength is music, whereby all pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are taught to play a brass instrument alongside their teachers.
- The work to review the leadership of the curriculum is not yet complete. Subject leadership is not in place across all areas of the curriculum and, as a result, leaders do not have a consistent overview of the quality of teaching in all subjects.

Governance of the school

- Members of the governing body have a realistic understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This knowledge enables them to provide effective support and challenge and to hold leaders to account for the school's performance.
- The experienced chair of governors provides strong direction and has a keen interest in pupils' learning and progress. In discussion with the lead inspector, it was clear that he has made sure that roles are shared across the governing body in such a way as to ensure close oversight of the school's performance.
- Governors have an accurate and up-to-date view of the purpose and impact of the school's spending because of the accurate information they receive.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The assistant headteacher has a wealth of skill and experience with regard to safeguarding, both within and beyond the school. In her role as designated senior leader, she uses her expertise effectively to coordinate a large team of deputy leaders. Each of these deputy leaders has oversight of a particular aspect of the school's work in making sure pupils are safe. This has resulted in a strong and cohesive culture of care and vigilance.
- Record-keeping is thorough. Leaders make sure that any welfare concerns are followed up promptly, including liaison with external agencies where appropriate. Staff training is regularly updated and covers the full range of issues.
- Parents, carers, pupils and staff agree that the school is safe. In discussion, pupils stated strongly that the adults in school take good care of their needs and are available to listen and take appropriate action if pupils have any worries or concerns.
- Governors know and carry out their statutory duties regarding safeguarding effectively.
- All of the school's employment checks are in place and are in line with statutory requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Strong relationships between teachers and pupils, in almost all classes, promote positive attitudes to learning. This enables pupils to focus and learn well in almost all lessons.
- Pupils follow well-established routines and respond readily to teachers' instructions and expectations. Teachers make sure that good-quality resources are available to support learning.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. The adults' use of assessment and questioning, in the majority of lessons, enable pupils to develop and deepen their knowledge. Pupils respond increasingly well when asked to reflect on their learning and assess how well they have challenged themselves.
- The teaching of reading and writing has improved because of a whole-school focus on these subjects over the past two years. The positive impact of this work can be seen in the improved outcomes at the end of key stages 1 and 2, and in the quality of work in pupils' books. Across a range of subjects, pupils' books show pride in their work and evidence of teachers' high expectations.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Skilled, consistent teaching and good use of assessment enable pupils to learn with enjoyment as they become confident readers and writers. Pupils who read with inspectors used their phonics knowledge skilfully to read unfamiliar words.
- The teaching of mathematics is increasingly effective. This is a current area of focus for the school. Strong leadership and a well-coordinated approach to teaching are having a positive impact on pupils' mathematical confidence and knowledge. The school's latest assessment information and the work in books show that standards in mathematics are improving across the school. Pupils are encouraged to view mistakes in their work as steps to success. This enables pupils to develop as resilient learners.
- In a small proportion of classes, teachers do not set work that is closely matched to pupils' needs and are less skilled in managing pupils' behaviour. In such instances, pupils lose focus and there are occasional lapses in their attention.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils across the school show positive attitudes to learning. This has led to improved rates of progress, sustained over time.
- In discussion, pupils expressed pride in their school. Typical comments from pupils were, 'this is a good school' and, 'we enjoy the challenges that make us think'. They spoke readily about the subjects that interest and challenge them, especially mathematics, art, science and English.
- Relationships across the school are strong. Pupils who spoke with inspectors stated, emphatically, that bullying is not a problem because they have received effective

teaching and understand how to recognise the signs of bullying. They confirmed that they know what to do if they have any concerns.

- Pupils appreciate and enjoy opportunities to take on extra responsibilities. The 'jobs team' and the school council carry out their duties with conscientious pride.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their conduct throughout the inspection was orderly. In lessons, pupils' behaviour for learning, in the majority of classes, is good. Pupils respond readily to routines and expectations. Leaders are aware of the instances where behaviour in lessons lapses and have ensured that support for teaching is in place.
- At lunchtime, there was a relaxed and happy social atmosphere in the dining hall and pupils' behaviour outside was well supervised. There are a range of facilities in the outside spaces to support pupils' health and well-being. A range of strategies, including training for midday staff and staggered dining times, have had a positive impact on lunchtime behaviour.
- The school provides effective support for pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs through the 'Tree House Hub'. The trained staff tailor the teaching and support to pupils' specific learning and behaviour needs so that pupils maintain good progress and attendance.
- Records show that the number of fixed-term exclusions has reduced significantly from the equivalent period in 2017. This is because staff have taken a consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour, including liaison with external agencies when required.
- Rates of attendance are improving. The gap between disadvantaged pupils' absence and that of their peers is reducing. Leaders have put in place a wide range of strategies for managing and reducing absence, including rewards and incentives for pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 have improved significantly over time. In 2018, progress in mathematics improved to be in line with the national average. Progress in reading was above the national average and, in writing, well above. This consistent picture of improvement applies equally to the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2 have also improved over time, at both the expected and higher standards. However, these standards are still below the national averages.
- As a result of the effective support they receive, pupils with SEND make strong progress from their starting points.
- The proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has improved over time and, in 2018, was just below the national average.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership and teaching in the early years are good. On entry, children's skills are often below, or well below, those typical for their age, especially regarding communication and language and personal and social skills. As a result of effective teaching and support, children make good progress and, by the end of the Reception Year, an increasing proportion achieve a good level of development.
- The early years leader has established high expectations for teaching and assessment. The introduction of the children's 'special books' enables staff to have a clearer overview of children's progress, especially in writing. Evidence from their current books shows that all children have made progress from their starting points.
- In the Nursery classes, adults provide a range of activities to encourage the development of children's vocabulary and general language skills. In the Reception classes, staff build effectively on these skills by skilfully adapting their questions and conversations to the individual needs of children. This approach supports strong progress.
- Warm and positive relationships are evident across the early years. Safeguarding is effective and children are well cared for so that their social skills flourish. There is a happy and cooperative atmosphere across the provision.
- Parents and carers speak highly of the care which they and their children receive on entry to the school. Leaders and staff use many different means of engaging with parents and families, including frequent conversations, invitations to attend workshops and by supporting parents to contribute to their child's 'special book'.
- The quality and use of outdoor learning in both the Nursery and Reception classes are in need of further development. Some of the resources are poorly maintained and uninviting. Activities are not set up in a consistently purposeful manner in order to promote children's learning and development across the areas of learning.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 134841 |
| Local authority | Nottingham |
| Inspection number | 10057653 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 434 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Edward Williams |
| Headteacher | Andrew Jenkins |
| Telephone number | 0115 9152953 |
| Website | www.dovecote.nottingham.sch.uk/ |
| Email address | admin@dovecote.nottingham.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 27–28 September 2016 |

Information about this school

- Dovecote Primary and Nursery School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school runs a daily breakfast club which is overseen by the governing body.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The school works in partnership with the Nottingham Schools Trust and the Transform Teaching School Alliance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 36 lessons or part-lessons, some jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors visited the school's three 'Hubs' which provide teaching and support for pupils' learning, social and emotional needs, and their special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Inspectors looked at work across an extensive range of pupils' books and considered the school's assessment information on the progress and standards achieved by current pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked with them about their reading.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils from key stage 2 and spoke with pupils informally in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors observed a whole-school assembly.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and leaders with responsibility for mathematics, English, the early years and pupils with SEND. Inspectors met with those responsible for safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, bullying and exclusions, the curriculum, disadvantaged pupils and the sport premium. Inspectors also spoke with a range of other teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair.
- The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of both school days. The inspectors considered the 37 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the responses to the online staff and pupil surveys.
- The inspectors considered a wide range of documentation, including the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation summary, minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's current information on pupils' attainment and progress, attendance records, behaviour and bullying logs, external reports on the work of the school, monitoring and evaluation records, and a range of documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Christine Watkins, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Clare Cossor | Ofsted Inspector |
| Jason Brooks | Ofsted Inspector |
| Janis Warren | Ofsted Inspector |

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