

Coppice Junior School

Coppice Road, Solihull, West Midlands B92 9JY

Inspection dates

18–19 June 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- A slow start to tackling the weaknesses identified at the last inspection means that too many of the same issues remain. Leaders have not yet established a consistently good quality of teaching.
- Too often, the tasks that teachers set do not reflect what pupils of different abilities already know and understand. Teachers' planned activities do not contribute well enough to pupils' learning.
- Teachers check on pupils' understanding, but they do not make consistently good use of the information that they receive from the class.
- The academic potential of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is often underestimated. Leaders do not gain a good enough overview of SEND provision to plan for its improvement.
- In 2017 and 2018, Year 6 pupils' progress from their key stage 1 starting points in reading and mathematics was below the national average. Current pupils are making stronger progress, but it remains inconsistent.
- Pupils enjoy the breadth of the curriculum. However, curriculum content and coverage in some foundation subjects are limited. Consequently, attainment in these subjects is patchy.
- Although leaders have improved the reliability of teachers' assessments, these assessments do not yet provide a secure basis for planning future actions.
- Inattentive behaviour persists in some classes because teachers do not uphold the school's expectations of good behaviour consistently.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is taking effective steps to improve the curriculum and the quality of teaching in English and mathematics. Standards are rising.
- Since taking up his post in September 2017, the headteacher has gained the widespread confidence of the school community.
- Governors are effective in holding leaders to account. They are determined to improve the school and understand their role well.
- Staff provide good care for pupils. Safeguarding is effective.
- Most pupils have good attitudes to learning. The standard to which pupils present their work has improved.
- Leaders' evaluation of the expenditure of the pupil premium has led to the grant being spent effectively. Many current disadvantaged pupils make strong progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan and reshape tasks that contribute more effectively to pupils' learning
 - build successfully on the prior knowledge and understanding of pupils with different starting points.
- Deepen the impact of leadership and management on pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring that all teachers consistently uphold leaders' expectations for pupils' behaviour
 - establishing an effective model for leadership in the foundation subjects
 - strengthening the curriculum in those areas where achievement is inconsistent or weak
 - embedding recent improvements in the reliability of assessment so that leaders have an accurate view of pupils' achievement.
- Improve the progress of pupils with SEND by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of the academic potential of these pupils
 - ensuring that leaders use their evaluation of SEND provision to improve teaching, learning and assessment for pupils with SEND.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors were slow to take action following the previous inspection, and so valuable time was lost. As a result, some of the concerns raised in 2017 have not been fully addressed. In particular, some weaker teaching persists, when teachers set work that does not allow at least some pupils in the class to build upon what they already know.
- Current leaders have taken important steps forward. They have challenged ineffective teaching and provided clearer expectations for teaching, particularly in mathematics and reading. Leaders have ensured that pupils take a pride in their work. The headteacher has a realistic view of the school, and he has drawn up detailed plans for improving those aspects that require further work. The capacity for further improvement is good and is demonstrated in early signs of improvement in some key areas.
- The headteacher checks formally and informally on the quality of teaching, and provides teachers with detailed feedback on their work. Staff told inspectors that they had benefited from a range of relevant training. During the inspection, the headteacher's views on the teaching that was jointly observed aligned with those of inspectors.
- Leaders evaluate the impact of their actions. For example, the school adopted a new scheme for the teaching of mathematics. Leaders checked on the effectiveness of the scheme on pupils' progress, and found that some teachers had adopted it without sufficient regard to the characteristics of their pupils. They therefore provided further training to help teachers to adapt the scheme more closely to pupils' needs.
- Leaders identified that teachers' assessments of pupils' work were unreliable. Leaders introduced standardised tests, and gave teachers opportunities to check their judgements with those made by teachers in other schools. As a result, the accuracy of assessment has improved. However, there is a little way to go to provide an entirely reliable basis for making decisions about how to adapt provision to better suit pupils' needs.
- Leaders review the expenditure of the pupil premium well to identify those strategies which prove effective. They use the results to draw up the new plan. Actions are proving much more effective this academic year, and disadvantaged pupils are making much stronger progress.
- Leaders of the support for pupils with SEND check regularly on the impact of additional teaching for individual pupils. However, they do not look sufficiently at the overall impact of their strategies to help them plan for improvement. Some parents and carers believe that communication about their children's additional needs requires improvement. The headteacher has recognised the need to strengthen this aspect of the school's work and has adjusted the leadership structure accordingly.
- The school's curriculum is not well balanced. Some subjects, such as computing and art, receive insufficient attention. However, pupils enjoy the breadth of the school's curriculum, which is supplemented by visitors to the school and trips to places of

interest. For example, Year 6 had visited local terraced housing to inform their work on Victorian Britain. They and their parents appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities available in sport and the creative arts. Leaders spend the physical education (PE) and sport premium effectively in promoting after-school sport and house competitions.

- A significant turnover of staff has slowed the establishment of effective subject leadership. For some foundation subjects, leaders provide their colleagues with basic guidance about how to ensure that the work in each year group builds on what pupils have done before. They check on the quality of the work in each class. For other subjects, such support is currently missing.
- Current leaders enjoy the support of pupils, parents and staff. Stakeholders recognise leaders' success in creating a happy school community and their determination to improve the school. The local authority's rigorous scrutiny has been helpful.

Governance of the school

- Governors provide effective oversight of the school and help to drive improvement. They have made sure through their own training that they are fully aware of their strategic responsibilities and knowledgeable enough to carry them out. Governors check their judgements by looking at practice in other schools and at national comparators.
- Through the headteacher's report and the school development plan, governors are able to scrutinise the effectiveness of leaders' actions, and thereby hold them to account. Where they have considered that weaknesses remained, such as in the challenge to the parents of pupils who were frequently absent, they have successfully pushed for further work to be done.
- Governors check carefully on the expenditure of the additional money that the school receives to support groups of pupils. They have been instrumental in increasing the effectiveness with which leaders spend the pupil premium.
- The governing body makes sure that leaders keep pupils safe, including from the risk of radicalisation. Governors check that leaders follow the correct procedures, and store records carefully. They have ensured that issues concerned with the safety of the school site raised at the last inspection have been resolved.
- The board has recently appointed members who bring valuable expertise, but some vacancies remain.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a strong culture of safeguarding at all levels.
- Leaders ensure that staff are fully trained to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm, including risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. They provide staff with regular updates. Staff are vigilant and confident in checking on pupils' welfare. Leaders work effectively with parents, and other agencies that protect children, to safeguard those pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable.
- The school keeps well-ordered and detailed records of concerns and the additional

support they provide for individual pupils. Staff meet regularly to review the effectiveness of that support.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it remains inconsistent. In general, it is stronger at upper key stage 2 than it is in the lower years. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows that teaching is now improving as leaders refine the guidance they give to teachers.
- For some pupils, weak teaching in the past has led to gaps in their knowledge and understanding. This has heightened the need to help pupils fill these gaps while simultaneously acquiring new knowledge and skills. However, teachers sometimes set tasks that do not build upon what pupils already know and understand. For example, during the inspection, some pupils in one class did not have the mathematical skills to tackle the question put before them.
- The quality of teachers' planning is variable. On occasion, pupils are asked to complete activities which do not relate well to the focus of the lesson. As a result, they do not extend their knowledge and understanding as fully as they should do. For example, in a Year 4 lesson about spelling words in context, pupils became confused about how to complete a crossword.
- Teachers check on pupils' understanding. Sometimes they question individual pupils, and sometimes they ask pupils to write on small whiteboards so that they can see which pupils are able to answer correctly. However, teachers do not use this feedback reliably to tackle any misconceptions or adjust the pace of the learning.
- Work in pupils' books shows that teachers have become more proficient at meeting leaders' expectations about feedback. This has helped pupils to reflect on their work and correct their mistakes.
- Pupils are articulate, both in their discussions with their peers and in their answers to teachers' questions. Many are able to explain their ideas in detail. Teachers are a little reluctant to challenge pupils to extend and deepen their thinking further.
- In the teaching of mathematics, reasoning is now well established. Both written tasks and teachers' questions expect pupils to explain how they would find an answer or why they think as they do. Pupils' workbooks show that pupils study a good range of mathematical topics.
- Teachers give pupils the opportunity to write in a range of styles in different contexts. For example, pupils in Year 6 wrote factual reports on their imaginary visits to a Victorian workhouse. Pupils' workbooks showed that over the course of the current academic year, pupils have developed the ability to write at greater length. In general, pupils are now using more sophisticated language and better control of their writing. Some pupils' writing is held back by a lack of security in their use of punctuation, such as using capital letters and full stops.
- Teachers show a good knowledge of their subjects, and use subject-specific vocabulary accurately. Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong, although on occasion teachers do not insist that pupils listen carefully and concentrate on their work in accordance with the school's behaviour policy. Pupils told inspectors that homework

made a useful contribution to their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils greatly enjoy school. Parents commented to inspectors on how well staff care for their children, and how they help to overcome any anxieties or problems. Pupils' attitudes to learning are strong. In contrast to the findings of the last inspection, pupils take a pride in their work and present it consistently neatly. A high proportion of pupils take part in after-school clubs.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They told inspectors that pupils get along with each other well, and that bullying is now rare. Pupils would trust an adult to resolve any disagreement that arose. Pupils are able to recall in detail how to stay safe online. The school also teaches them effectively about how to stay safe on the roads.
- Pupils have good opportunities to take up positions of responsibility as prefects or school councillors. They consider that the school council has represented their views successfully, and they understand how it models a democratic process. Pupils were able to explain how they had learned to respect a range of faiths and cultures, and said that there was no racism in the school.
- Pastoral staff have worked effectively with the few pupils with social and emotional difficulties to develop their understanding of right and wrong. These pupils are increasingly able to see the consequences of their actions for themselves and others.
- The school has forged effective links with both the partner infant school and the secondary school to which most pupils transfer. Arrangements for transition are increasingly effective.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils sometimes become inattentive, and low-level disruption occasionally sets in. Pupils talk across the class discussion or fidget. To a large extent, these lapses in behaviour reflect the unwillingness of some teachers to apply the behaviour policy effectively. Pupils told inspectors that teachers' expectations differed, and that their concentration in lessons was sometimes affected by the actions of others.
- For the majority of the time, pupils behave well in lessons. When teachers make their expectations with regard to behaviour and to the outcomes of intended learning clear, pupils work hard and concentrate well.
- During the inspection, pupils' conduct at social times was good. They played happily together, using a good range of play equipment. Pupils told the inspectors that this behaviour was typical, and that unpleasant incidents are rare.
- The headteacher has excluded a small number of pupils this academic year. In each case, exclusion has been a proportionate response to an individual pupil's aggressive behaviour. Staff have then provided effective support for the pupil on return from

exclusion, and to date no pupil has been excluded twice. Leaders have not kept all the school's behaviour records fully up to date.

- The school has employed an external agency to help improve attendance and has provided additional training for staff to intensify work to improve attendance. As a result, attendance has risen recently, but remains below the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is further behind that of all pupils nationally and requires improvement.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement primarily because current pupils' progress in English and mathematics remains inconsistent. Furthermore, there was limited evidence of achievement in some foundation subjects.
- Published assessment information shows Year 6 pupils left the school having made progress in reading and mathematics that was below the national average in both 2017 and 2018. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in mathematics and by the combined measure was also below average. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils was disappointing.
- Information supplied by the school suggests that there is a considerable variation in current pupils' attainment and progress between subjects and between classes. However, an extended scrutiny of pupils' work provides a better picture, and shows that across the school, pupils are making stronger progress than previously, especially in Year 6. Inconsistencies remain, however, so that in English and mathematics, progress is not yet consistently strong.
- Observations of disadvantaged pupils' learning and a scrutiny of their work showed that they are making better progress this academic year. Many are now making strong progress. Teachers are paying closer attention to their particular needs in class, and additional teaching on a one-to-one basis is helping them to catch up.
- The progress of pupils with SEND is more mixed. Pastoral staff have helped pupils with social and emotional difficulties to control their behaviour and take a calmer and more constructive approach to their studies. However, some staff do not have sufficiently high expectations for the academic progress that these and other pupils with SEND should make. Leaders do not check carefully enough at a strategic level the impact of their actions on the achievement of pupils with SEND.
- Leaders have recognised the importance of establishing a strong reading culture in the school. Reading records show that most pupils read at home regularly, and staff listen more frequently to those who do not. A reading scheme underpins the development of reading skills for those pupils who enter the school at a lower standard. Most pupils can read fluently, and enjoy reading fiction of their own choice.
- Pupils' work shows that in some foundation subjects, they develop secure knowledge and understanding. In science, pupils gain a sound appreciation of how to conduct experiments and learn scientifically. They acquire relevant knowledge in history and geography, and demonstrate increasingly advanced skills in researching and analysing information. However, in other subjects, including art, design and technology and computing, there was little evidence that pupils have built up their knowledge and

understanding progressively.

- Pupils' enjoyment of a broad curriculum is helping to prepare them for secondary school. However, it is most important that their progress continues to strengthen and that, where necessary, teachers help them to fill any gaps in their understanding of important concepts.

School details

Unique reference number	104041
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	10088477

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Bromige
Headteacher	Mark Knowles
Telephone number	0121 705 3504
Website	www.coppicejuniorschool.co.uk
Email address	office@coppice.solihull.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 March 2017

Information about this school

- Coppice Junior School is a little smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club, for which it charges parents.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average.
- The headteacher and the assistant headteacher took up their posts in September 2017.
- The chair of governors assumed her role in September 2018.

Information about this inspection

- Three quarters of Year 6 pupils and three teachers were absent from school on a residential visit during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups except Year 6. Three observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher. The inspectors also observed pupils' conduct at social times.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, other leaders, staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Two groups of pupils, chosen at random, met with the inspectors. Inspectors also spoke to many other pupils informally. An inspector listened to pupils in Years 3 and 5 read.
- The inspectors scrutinised, in depth, work produced by a number of pupils from all year groups. Their sample included the work of some disadvantaged pupils, and some pupils with SEND. The inspectors considered information about pupils' current performance.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, both electronically and on paper. These included: development plans; external reviews of governance and the expenditure of the pupil premium; records of how leaders check on teaching; details of pupils' attendance and behaviour; records of visits made by officers of the local authority; minutes of governing body meetings; policies; and records showing how the school supports vulnerable pupils.
- Inspectors took into account the 44 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 38 comments made using the free-text facility. They spoke to several parents bringing their children to school on the second day of the inspection. Inspectors also considered the 13 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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

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