

Inspection of a good school: Cotwall End Primary School

Cotwall End Road, Sedgley, Dudley, West Midlands DY3 3YG

Inspection dates:

3–4 December 2019

Outcome

Cotwall End Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are well cared for, feel safe and enjoy school. 'As much as we focus on education, we also have fun', said one pupil. This comment captures what many pupils and parents think.

Behaviour is super, and the school day runs smoothly. There is a calm, purposeful atmosphere in lessons. Pupils are taught how their words and actions affect others. They know how to look out for bullying. Some pupils are trained as anti-bullying leaders and help to sort out any upsets. Pupils say that staff would stop bullying if it happened. Staff are caring and treat pupils fairly. They notice and reward good behaviour.

There are a wide range of clubs and the take-up is high. Pupils are proud of their many sporting achievements. They enjoy visits and special events that bring their topic work to life. Pupils also organise charity events and have many opportunities to perform.

School leaders set high standards and staff say they feel valued and supported. The school team goes above and beyond to create a stimulating learning environment that celebrates pupils' work and achievements.

Parents, staff and governors have all noticed the changes put in place by the headteacher to create a united school community.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

This school teaches pupils to read well. Phonics lessons start in pre-school. Pupils' reading skills improve quickly and most pupils are reading fluently by the end of key stage 1. Anyone who finds reading difficult gets extra help to keep up. Books are matched to pupils' progress in early reading and later to reading ability. Pupils achieve well as a result.

Reading is promoted throughout the school. Everyone reads in class. There are reading

areas full of books in classes. Eye-catching corridor and classroom displays promote books and recommend authors. Teachers regularly read to pupils and pupils say that they enjoy this.

Pupils can earn reading points for reading at home. This encourages them to read and they look forward to exchanging points for gifts at the school's colourful 'swap shop' stall.

Music is a strength. The music curriculum engages and inspires pupils. Progression of musical knowledge and vocabulary is evident between year groups and throughout the school. Pupils develop a love of music and say that they are looking forward to continuing with music at secondary school.

Every pupil is given the opportunity to learn the recorder and drums. In addition, there are many other musical instruments for pupils to play. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the orchestra and choir, which enable them to play together and perform. The enjoyment of music and performance is valued and given a sense of occasion. On the last day of term before Christmas, for example, hot chocolate and mince pies are served and staff and pupils sing along to carols with parents and the community.

Teachers plan lessons that give pupils the knowledge they need to succeed in school and later life. Careful planning ensures that pupils build up knowledge and vocabulary over time. Visits to different places and a range of interesting visitors to school help pupils to see the relevance of their learning. In Year 6, for instance, a recent visit from a local businesswoman inspired pupils to design and produce their own T-shirts using designs based on their classroom work. They then went on to set up stalls at a school fayre and were proud of the money they raised for the school.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities get timely support. Needs are picked up quickly and expert help from visiting specialists is provided. School staff are well trained and have the right resources and knowledge to support pupils.

The pupils helped to choose the school's values and know what they mean. They understand how these values help them to behave well and do the right thing.

Staff have put a lot of effort into creating a stimulating and interesting early years environment. Children respond well to this. They settle into school quickly and are kept very busy with lots of purposeful activities. They learn a lot and are well prepared when they move up into Year 1.

Teachers' checks on how well pupils are doing in mathematics vary from one class to another. This makes it more difficult for leaders to spot quickly pupils who are doing well or falling behind. Currently, there are several mathematics leaders and no one leader has a complete overview across the whole school. Nevertheless, leaders do know that the focus on practising rapid recall in Years 5 and 6 is stronger than in other parts of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. This is a positive environment where children flourish and feel safe. Any concerns are followed up quickly by staff and the appropriate people are involved. If any pupil is not in school, staff check where they are, and attendance registers are kept correctly.

Staff training is up to date, governors fulfil their roles and the school site is safe. Pupils and families who have problems can get help at the school. If pupils are worried about anything, staff encourage them to let an adult know.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- Currently, there are several mathematics leaders and no one leader has a complete overview of the curriculum and how it is delivered across the whole school. This makes it difficult for leaders to spot pupils who are doing well or falling behind. To improve this, the school should make sure that mathematics leadership has a whole-school overview. This will help all leaders to understand the end goals and check pupils' progress across the school.
- The focus on pupils' mathematical fluency is more evident in Years 5 and 6 than it is lower down the school. This does not assist smooth progress through the school. To improve this, the school should continue to focus on improving pupils' mathematical fluency in all year groups.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Cotwall End Primary School to be good on 12–13 May 2015.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school. If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	103810
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10088549
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	408
Appropriate authority	Governing body
Chair of governing body	Chris Skitt
Headteacher	Claire Williams
Website	www.cotwall.dudley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 May 2015

Information about this school

- The school provides before and after-school childcare.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection focused on the following subjects: reading, mathematics and music. The inspector visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, examined teachers' plans and talked with pupils and staff about the way these subjects are planned and taught. The inspector also looked at work from other subjects in less detail and spoke with pupils and staff about the school curriculum.
- External performance data about the school, school documents and the website were examined.
- The inspector talked to pupils, staff, leaders and governors about safeguarding arrangements and routines at the school. The record of employment checks on school staff, other school records and the school site were scrutinised.
- Pupils' behaviour in class and at other times during the day was considered. The inspector spoke to staff, pupils and governors about behaviour.
- Formal meetings were held with the headteacher, other leaders, a local authority education adviser, five governors, teachers, lunchtime supervisors and pupils. The

inspector also talked informally with pupils and staff to gather information about school life.

- The 58 recent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for pupils and staff were considered.

Inspection team

Diane Pye, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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