

Inspection of Dovecote Primary and Nursery School

Greencroft, Clifton, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG11 8EY

Inspection dates:	15 and 16 October 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The school wants the best for all its pupils. It has implemented many improvements recently. However, the quality of education that pupils receive is not yet good enough. Many pupils do not achieve what they should in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they reach the end of key stage 2.

Pupils are safe. There are strong relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils say that the teachers make them feel good about themselves. Pupils know that staff will listen to them if a problem arises. There is high-quality pastoral support available if pupils need it, such as 'The Treehouse'.

Pupils like earning rewards for working hard and behaving well. They are proud when they receive the 'star of the week' award. Pupils and staff recognise that behaviour is improving. However, some pupils lose concentration quickly and distract those around them. Pupils are not always kind and respectful. Poor behaviour hinders pupils' learning and affects their enjoyment of school.

Pupils enjoy tending to the 'secret garden'. They describe it as a unique, calming and special place where they get to grow their own produce and enjoy the benefits of the natural world.

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

The school recognises that pupils have not achieved well enough in reading, writing and mathematics in recent years. It has made improvements to the curriculums for these subjects. In English, for instance, pupils now have time to practise the grammar and punctuation skills that they need before going on to write their own texts. In mathematics, there is now a much sharper focus on pupils' being able to recall important number facts quickly and accurately. However, many of these changes are new. They have not had enough time to improve pupils' outcomes.

The school has set out the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils must learn in each subject. Exploring new words is a key feature of most lessons. Staff use visual aids well to help pupils know what new words mean. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from this approach. Modified materials and additional resources allow pupils with SEND to access the same learning as other pupils.

Some pupils do not have a secure understanding of the important information they need to remember. This is because the work that teachers give pupils is not always well matched to the aims of the school's curriculum. Sometimes, it is too easy. Other times, it is too hard. Learning does not always build on what pupils already know. In the early years, there is not always a clear purpose behind some of the activities. There are too-few checks on how well pupils learn the curriculum. Teachers do not identify or resolve gaps in pupils' knowledge well enough.

The school's oversight of how well pupils progress in phonics has improved. Staff provide additional support straight away if any pupil falls behind. The school has adopted a new approach to the teaching of reading in key stage 2 to develop pupils' vocabulary, fluency, prosody, and comprehension. However, the tasks that teachers design do not always allow pupils to achieve the aims of the reading curriculum. In some classes, for instance, pupils do not often complete work to help them understand the hidden meaning in texts. Pupils enjoy the books that they read together in class. They recall these stories fondly and take life lessons from them.

Serious incidents of misbehaviour have declined. However, staff do not always have high enough expectations of pupils' behaviour. Some staff do not deal with incidents of low-level disruption well enough.

The school has recently improved its systems for securing high attendance. It now works closely with families to understand and overcome the cause of any low attendance. However, even though it is falling, absence remains too high.

Pupils enjoy a range of clubs to develop their talents and interests in sport and music. However, the school's personal development provision is not preparing pupils well enough for life in modern Britain. Pupils have little knowledge of important British values or the differences between people.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They recognise and appreciate improved support for their well-being and workload.

Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They have clear plans in place to bring about the necessary improvements. The school benefits from working alongside another school within the Nottingham Schools Trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Too many pupils do not achieve the standard expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 2. This leaves them unprepared for secondary school. The school must embed the recent improvements it has made to the core subjects, ensuring that pupils attain well in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Learning is not always well matched to the aims of the school's curriculum. Sometimes, the work given to pupils is too easy and sometimes it is too hard. Learning does not always build on pupils' prior knowledge. Consequently, pupils do not always gain the knowledge and skills that they need. The school must ensure that all staff implement

the school's curriculum effectively so that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

- The school does not check closely enough on how well pupils are learning the curriculum. In some subjects, there is little assessment of what pupils do and do not know. Teachers do not always pick up on pupils' misconceptions in lessons. As a result, pupils do not always have a secure understanding of the important curriculum content that they need to remember. The school must ensure that any gaps in pupils' learning are identified and resolved swiftly.
- Some staff have low expectations of pupils' behaviour. They do not always deal with disruptive and disrespectful behaviour well enough. Poor behaviour hinders pupils' learning and affects their enjoyment of school. The school must ensure that staff's behaviour expectations are consistently high, so that they deal with low-level disruption effectively and encourage all pupils to develop positive, focused and respectful attitudes to learning.
- The proportion of pupils absent from school is falling, but remains too high. By missing out on important learning, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. The school should embed its new attendance systems so that pupils attend school more often.
- The intended learning outcomes for some of the activities in the early years are not always clear. As a result, children gain little knowledge from some of these activities. The school must ensure that children are engaged in meaningful learning throughout the early years setting.
- Pupils have limited understanding of the fundamental British values and the differences between people. Consequently, they are not prepared well enough for life in modern Britain. The school should review its personal development provision to ensure that pupils develop their understanding of equality and diversity appropriate to their age.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium](#)

[funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	134841
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	10347503
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	314
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Clare Colmore
Headteacher	Ruth Guy-Clark
Website	www.dovecote.nottingham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	27 and 28 February 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is part of Nottingham Schools Trust which is overseen by the local authority.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science, history and art and design. For the deep dives, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered pupils' learning in some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders, teachers and support staff. Inspectors also met with leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents relating to behaviour, attendance and governance, as well as the school improvement plan and leaders' self-evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils from Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4 read. Inspectors met with groups of pupils from different year groups.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. He also spoke with the school improvement partner from Nottingham Schools Trust.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the results of Ofsted's online staff survey.

Inspection team

Shaun Carter, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sally Wicken	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Wilson	Ofsted Inspector
Justine Roberts	Ofsted Inspector

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