

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Cotwall End Primary School

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

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 February 2025

Outcome

Cotwall End Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Cotwall End Primary are happy and welcoming. They demonstrate the school's values in their learning and when interacting with others. These values are self-belief, kindness, bravery, happiness, wisdom and honesty.

The school has high expectations of all pupils, and pupils respond well to these. Pupils achieve well by the time they leave the school. In lessons, pupils are keen and eager to learn. They listen carefully and enjoy learning together. Around school and in the playground, most pupils behave considerately. Pupils know that adults will listen to them and resolve any rare incidents of misbehaviour quickly.

The vast majority of parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. One reflected the views of many when saying, 'the team provides a warm and nurturing environment'. Pupils feel safe and secure in school. They actively support their peers to be safe. For example, the well-being warriors show kindness by supporting their classmates.

Pupils benefit from taking part in a broad range of clubs, including dance, football and gymnastics. The school's 'citizenship award' encourages pupils to go above and beyond. Pupils are proud of the contribution they make in the community, such as volunteering to become a dementia friend and holding music concerts.

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

The school has designed a well-sequenced curriculum that makes clear what pupils need to learn from the early years to Year 6. This curriculum helps pupils to secure the knowledge they need. Over time, pupils achieve well as they move into secondary education. Pupils are encouraged to be creative as they learn. For example, children in

the pre-school explore different techniques for fastening materials to make their space rockets. Similarly, Year 2 pupils learn about different mechanisms when designing a rainforest themed pop-up book.

Staff make effective use of images and practical equipment to explain new ideas to pupils. They also use questions successfully to check and strengthen pupils' understanding. Pupils are keen to talk about and share their work. However, expectations of pupils' handwriting are not consistently high. Some pupils do not write fluently and accurately. As a result, the quality of pupils' written work is variable.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. The school has effective processes in place to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. It works closely with a wide range of external agencies to ensure pupils get the help they need. Staff make effective adaptations to activities and help pupils with SEND to learn successfully.

Well-trained staff teach early reading well. Pupils soon become confident and fluent readers. Children begin the phonics programme in the pre-school. They enjoy making 'soup' with sounds and joining in with songs and rhymes. This prepares them well for phonics sessions in Reception. Pupils who need extra help with their reading catch up quickly because of the targeted support they receive. The outdoor reading shelters, the school library and the book vending machine are just some of the ways that the school promotes a strong reading culture. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading a range of books, including stories and non-fiction texts.

The mathematics curriculum helps pupils to build up their knowledge of concepts systematically. The teaching of number facts is particularly strong. In contrast, some pupils are less confident at explaining the strategies they have used to answer more complex questions. This is because in a few classes some pupils do not get enough time to develop and practise their reasoning and problem-solving skills during lessons.

The school makes sure that parents understand the importance of their children attending school each day. It offers support to families and rewards classes in fun ways. Pupils can, for instance, swap their teacher for a lesson. This work is leading to improving rates of attendance and a reduction in persistent absence.

The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. Pupils learn to stay safe and be responsible by taking on leadership roles. They learn about different religions, develop respect and value differences. Highly effective pastoral support helps pupils who are experiencing traumatic life events, such as bereavement. The vast majority of pupils behave well. The few who struggle with their behaviour are supported well.

Governors, leaders and staff are proud to be part of the 'Cotwall family'. Staff appreciate the support and training they receive. Governors use their expertise well to support and challenge the school. Governors and leaders know what the school does well and what needs to improve. Everyone works together well to bring about the necessary improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Expectations of the quality of pupils' writing are inconsistent. As a result, some pupils do not learn to write accurately. The school should ensure that its expectations of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of work are implemented consistently.
- In some mathematics lessons, not all pupils have opportunities to practise their reasoning and problem-solving skills. This means that some pupils are not secure in how to solve more complex mathematical questions. The school should make sure that all pupils have enough time to practise reasoning and problem-solving.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in 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 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	103810
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10343767
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	417
Appropriate authority	Governing body
Chair of governing body	Christopher Skitt
Headteacher	Claire Williams
Website	www.cotwall.dudley.sch.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 December 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the head of school, deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, a group of teachers, the business manager and the pastoral leader.
- The inspector met with the chair of the governing body and two other governors. The inspector also met with a local authority representative inspector.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector listened to a range of pupils read. The inspector observed catch-up interventions to learn how staff provide extra support to pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector 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.
- The inspector considered a range of documents including leaders' self-evaluation and plans for improvement. The inspector checked records of attendance and behaviour.
- The inspector also observed pupils' behaviour at playtime and lunchtime and talked to them about different aspects of the school's work.
- The inspector considered the responses to the pupil and staff surveys.
- The inspector took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Usha Devi, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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