

Cotwall End Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103810
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	336165
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2010
Reporting inspector	David Driscoll

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	400
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bob Hickman
Headteacher	Nicole Anderton
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2006
School address	Cotwall End Road Sedgley Dudley
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The majority of their time was spent looking at learning, and they observed 24 lessons and 21 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, parents, staff and governors. They observed the school's work, and looked at records of pupils' progress, the school's development plan, records of checks on teaching, documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils, and the responses to 158 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress of the most able pupils in Years 3 to 6
- whether recent improvements in achievement are continuing
- the effectiveness of arrangements for the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

This very large school is situated in Sedgley, but draws its pupils from a much wider area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals has increased since the school was last inspected, and is now average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has more than trebled, and is also average. There are now significantly more boys at the school than there are girls. The school operates an after school club and opened its own pre-school facility for children in September 2007.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school that has shown significant improvement in all areas since it was last inspected because of the strong leadership provided by the headteacher and her deputy. Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate, and provides leaders with clear and appropriate priorities that are used to drive the school forward. More subject leaders and governors are now involved in monitoring the school's work, and it is well placed to continue its improvement.

Achievement continues to improve. All groups of pupils now make good progress because they are taught well. Many children join the school with speech and language difficulties. Although they make good progress, their attainment in English is still hampered by the delayed development of their speaking skills. Teachers do not always take the opportunities to encourage pupils to speak from an early age or correct their spoken grammar. Attainment in writing has improved considerably, because the school has put into place many whole-school initiatives that encourage pupils to write for different audiences and purposes. However, the same has not been done for speaking. Pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable often make better progress than others, because of the outstanding care, guidance and support the school provides. Not only does the school provide individual education plans for all those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, but all other vulnerable pupils also have their own plans to help them make the best possible progress. The school works exceptionally well with the parents and carers of such pupils, for example by arranging support groups where parents and carers can provide help for one another. However, it is the outstanding range of partnerships that the school uses that make the biggest difference. The school is able to call on a huge range of expertise to meet pupils' individual needs, and plays a leading role in the way the local network of schools provide mutual support and expertise when required. Teaching assistants are very well deployed to work with those who need extra support, but they also keep a close eye on the progress of middle attainers too. Just occasionally, the highest attainers are left to get on by themselves for too long without their progress being checked. This can lead to the teacher being unaware that the work they have been given is a little too easy for them, so they do not make as much progress as others.

Pupils' personal development is equally as good as their academic progress. They are polite and well behaved, with a good understanding of right and wrong. They have an outstanding knowledge of how to lead a healthy lifestyle, which shows in their eating habits. No unhealthy snacks at all were observed at the school, and the pupils could explain why by referring to the vitamins and minerals they need, as well as the fats and sugars they don't need. Overall, the pupils leave the school well prepared for the next

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stage of their education and later life, with above average attainment and good personal attributes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' speaking by:
 - taking every opportunity to encourage pupils to speak in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2
 - ensuring teachers correct errors in spoken grammar
 - developing whole-school initiatives that encourage pupils' confidence in speaking to a wider range of audiences and for different purposes.
- Ensure the highest attaining pupils always reach the standards of which they are capable by:
 - always providing them with work that is suitably demanding
 - checking the progress of higher attaining groups more frequently in lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils enjoy coming to school a good deal, because they feel safe and well looked after. Many say they feel safer in school than in the local area. They have many friends and get on well with each other. This helps them in lessons, where they cooperate very effectively when tackling problems such as drawing up timetables for a holiday or producing an argument as to whether the government should legislate on ghosts. Pupils are quick to settle down to work and most concentrate for the full lesson, although the highest attainers sometimes get sidetracked into working on perfecting presentation rather than the task itself. They are curious about the world around them and particularly enjoy activities where they can investigate things for themselves, which is one reason why attainment in science is a little higher than in other subjects. The standard of work observed in lessons was above average in Year 6, and progress was good across the school for all groups of pupils, regardless of background or ability. Calculations are presented well, so pupils can identify where they have made any errors. Written work is neat and accurate. Such accuracy is not always observed when pupils speak. They are often hesitant and very quiet speakers. Nevertheless, attainment is now above average in most year groups, reflecting pupils' improved progress since the school was last inspected.

Pupils play a strong role in the school community, particularly in helping others to lead healthy lifestyles. Pupils run a healthy tuck shop at breaks, for example, which is very popular. All do a minimum of two hours of physical education each week, and many take up the opportunities to participate in extra sport. Attendance has been above average in recent years, but has fallen to average over the past twelve months owing to illnesses such as chickenpox and swine flu.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The school offers exceptional care and guidance because all staff, including dinner supervisors for example, know the pupils very well and are fully committed to meeting their needs. The after-school club is an excellent facility with constantly changing activities that provide a highly stimulating and enjoyable environment for pupils, all of whom were fulsome in their praise. Pupils in Year 6 are excited about going to secondary school, because they have been so well prepared. They are also well informed about later life, because careers education starts in Year 3. In lessons, teaching assistants work closely with those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and make good use of high quality individual education plans. Teachers make good use of accurate assessments to place pupils in groups according to their ability, and to make sure that, for the majority, work is matched well to their needs. The pace of learning is maintained by frequent changes of activity, so that pupils do not become bored. Any whose attention wanders, or who start to fiddle with equipment, are quickly brought back on task with a quick reminder. Some lower attaining pupils do not always make the progress expected of them in lessons. They are quickly spotted and referred to one of the several extra sessions that are organised which are effective in helping them make up the ground they have lost. The arts are very strong in the school, especially music; this is reflected in the high quality of singing.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy have high expectations of staff, and all respond enthusiastically to the challenges they are given. The school has gone from strength to strength as the headteacher and her deputy have focused staff's efforts on where they can do the most good. As a result, the promotion of equality is good. Gaps in performance between different groups are smaller than usually seen, and pupils are taught to respect and value others. A good range of different methods are used to check the quality of provision, especially in finding out what parents and pupils think. The school has carried out a thorough audit of provision for community cohesion to identify where improvements need to be made. Pupils have a good knowledge of the local community, and the school has recently confirmed arrangements for pupils to engage with others from areas different from their own, including in other countries. Good practice is adopted in all areas of safeguarding. One governor visits the school every week to monitor safeguarding procedures, while others are now becoming more involved with checking learning. The school has been able to make considerable savings by using its exceptionally strong partnerships with other institutions. Foremost among these are the links with other schools in the area, which have allowed the school to share and learn from examples of the very best practice in order to improve areas such as leadership and management, teaching and assessment.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children love coming to school in the mornings. They look forward to lots of fun activities in a richly stimulating environment. The main corridor sets the scene, where children walk through a virtual fish tank that sparks their imagination and curiosity. The outside area is not quite as inviting, because there is no grass on the pre-school play area. In lessons, children enjoy good relations with adults who know them extremely well as individuals because of the strong lines of communication that are forged with parents and carers. Frequent and accurate assessments are used to plan activities that are well matched to individuals' needs. However, not enough use is made of unplanned opportunities to encourage children to speak or to reinforce their understanding of phonics. Children are quickly taught the importance of good behaviour, and routines are reinforced very well, so children learn to play and work happily and cooperatively. Children start Year 1 with standards that are average, which represents good progress given that they start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and understanding that are lower than expected for their age. The opening of the pre-school has meant that many children are getting off to a quicker start in their education, so more are joining Reception with higher standards than was previously the case. The school has recently formalised arrangements for the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, the temporary arrangements have had no detrimental effect, and the good quality of provision has been maintained since the school was last inspected. Managers, including governors, ensure a strong focus on keeping children safe. They are clear about what could be improved, and the actions needed to raise standards further, including better analysis of data.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are strongly supportive of the school's work, and the very large majority of those who responded to the questionnaire were positive about all aspects of provision and outcomes. They understandably cited the high quality of the music

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provision at the school. A few would like more information on their children's progress. The school has increased the number of reports sent home to parents of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and plans to consult with parents of pupils in other year groups over methods of reporting.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cotwall End Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 158 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 400 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	95	60	60	38	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	99	63	59	37	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	59	37	90	57	9	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	63	40	80	51	10	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	77	49	77	49	2	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	67	42	87	55	2	1	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	66	42	91	58	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	70	44	80	51	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	65	41	89	56	3	2	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	58	37	89	56	6	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	30	104	66	5	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	56	35	91	58	5	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	86	54	66	42	4	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



11 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cotwall End Primary School, Dudley, DY3 3YG

Many thanks for all the help you gave us when we visited your school. We found you to be well behaved and very polite. Your singing in assembly was superb.

Overall, you go to a good school. You learn more quickly than we often see, because your teachers give you interesting work to do. They are good at checking how well you are doing and giving you harder work or more help when you need it. Sometimes, the work is not hard enough for those of you who find learning relatively easy. So we have asked your teachers to always give you tasks that are difficult, but achievable if you work really hard at them. We have also asked them to check more frequently that you are working as hard as possible. You leave school with standards that are better than those we usually see. However, some of you are not very confident speakers. So we have asked your teachers to encourage you all, but especially the youngest ones, to speak more often, and to correct you when you do not speak properly.

You told us that you feel very safe at school, and we can see why. All the adults know you very well indeed, because they talk to your parents and carers a lot. They look after you exceptionally well. You get excellent advice, so are well prepared for moving on to secondary school. The school arranges for any of you who have particular problems to get all the help you need, by using one of the many specialists with whom they work in partnership. All this means that you feel happy at school and have very few worries.

Your school just keeps getting better and better. The headteacher and her deputy are very good at finding out what needs improving, and then doing something about it. You too can help, by always paying attention in lessons and working as hard as you possibly can

Yours sincerely

David Driscoll

Lead inspector

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