

Netherbrook Primary School

Chester Road, Netherton, Dudley, DY2 9RZ

Inspection dates 26–27 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, other school leaders and governors have made improving teaching a priority. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved, progress is becoming more rapid and standards are rising.
- The restructured governing body provides effective support and challenge to the school. Governors have a good understanding of the school's performance and its priorities for improvement. They provide effective strategic guidance.
- Pupils behave well in and around school. They enjoy learning and respect their teachers. They are proud of their school.
- Pupils are safe in school and say so. Their parents endorse their children's positive views. Relationships between adults and children are good. Bullying and other incidents of unkindness are swiftly dealt with.
- Teachers are keen to do their best for their pupils. They plan learning carefully and make sure that their classrooms are lively and attractive places in which to learn.
- Teaching is good overall and expectations of what pupils can achieve are usually high. Teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural life well and prepares them effectively for life in modern Britain.
- The early years provision is good. The range of learning opportunities is well planned to take account of children's skills and develop them further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress, while good and improving, has not yet accelerated to the point where standards are consistently above average.
- Pupils' limited vocabulary sometimes slows progress in reading and writing. Pupils, including the most able, do not have the skills they need to interpret more complex texts.
- Pupils' mental mathematical skills are not strong enough.
- Teachers at all levels, including leaders of subjects, are not making best use of the information about pupils' progress to plan or provide support for any who are at risk of falling behind.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 23 lessons and were accompanied by the headteacher or deputy headteacher during four of these observations.
- Inspectors observed morning playtime and lunch breaks and looked at the way pupils behaved as they moved round the school.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, and many other pupils were spoken with during lessons and informally at break times.
- Inspectors met members of the governing body, spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone and had meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other key managers in the school.
- The 47 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account. The inspectors also took account of the views of the parents that they met at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work, including in at English and mathematics books alongside the English and mathematics subject leaders. They heard pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- The 41 responses to the staff questionnaire were analysed.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents including: school improvement plans; achievement data; the school's data on pupils' current progress and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Mary Le Breuilly, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Westall	Additional Inspector
Stuart Pearson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Netherbrook Primary School is much larger than the average primary school.
- The school has two part-time Nursery classes and two full-time Reception classes.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- A broadly average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. This is additional government funding given to the school to support pupils eligible for free school meals and children in the care of the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 6.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a change of headteacher and a new Chair of the Governing Body has been appointed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the use of information about how well pupils are making progress so that all teachers, including those who lead subjects, can use it to tackle weaknesses where pupils are not doing well enough.
- Accelerate progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - improving pupils' mental mathematical skills
 - extending and enriching pupils' vocabulary
 - developing pupils' skills of interpreting more complex texts, especially among the most-able pupils.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear vision for the school and a strong focus on improving standards. Their ambition is supported by all members of the school community. As a result of this energetic leadership, pupils' achievement has improved and there is a culture of optimism where both teachers and pupils are keen to improve.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders know the school well and are aware of its strengths and weaknesses. They work together well as a team to promote school improvement and see the development of outstanding teaching as their first priority. Staff support the range of improvements taking place.
- The leadership of teaching is strong. Leaders' checks on teaching are effective in improving the quality of classroom practice. School leaders use the information gained from observing teaching and learning in lessons to improve performance. The school places a high value on developing teaching and provides different training for teachers of different levels of experience. Subject leaders play an important part in helping teachers improve the teaching of specific aspects of English and mathematics. Teachers are keen to improve and wish to do their best for their pupils.
- The curriculum is developing well to meet the most recent requirements of the National Curriculum. It is enriched by clubs, visits and residential activities. These, together with assemblies and opportunities for reflection, contribute to pupils' understanding of life in, and the values of, modern Britain. The range of different cultural and spiritual opportunities in which pupils take part effectively promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, the spectacular dance from the dance club to celebrate Chinese New Year was supported by a range of displays about the festival.
- Displays around the school provide important reminders about key values, such as respect and care for others and honesty. Their constant messages foster good relationships and challenge any discrimination very well.
- The school uses the additional funding from the pupil premium to ensure that disadvantaged pupils have additional individual attention through smaller classes, work in small groups and one-to-one tuition. This action is promoting the good progress of disadvantaged pupils. Additional investment from the pupil premium in the outdoor area for Nursery and Reception classes, designed to improve the skills of disadvantaged pupils, is only just being completed and has yet to have an impact.
- The school makes very good use of additional primary sport funding to promote sport and to provide activities that encourage pupils to be physically active at break times and after school. At lunchtimes, this is very evident, with a range of activities led by adults or older pupils and equipment available for pupils to play with. This arrangement has helped pupils become more active and healthy and has made playtimes more harmonious, with improved behaviour.
- The leaders responsible for English, mathematics, special educational needs and the early years provision are playing an increasingly important role in improving teaching and progress. Assessments of pupils' work and their progress are regular and robust. Leaders are beginning to use information about pupils' progress to good effect. However, they are not using their analysis of this information to drive their plans for further improvements. Teachers do not always make effective use of assessment data to adjust their teaching to meet the needs of individual pupils and groups of pupils.
- The local authority provides some support for the school in making sure assessments of pupils' performance are accurate and in reviewing the school. The school found the recommendations of the local authority useful in helping their planning.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. The governing body has a very clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of

the school because governors study the information it provides carefully, and confirm the leaders' analyses with their own evidence and observations. They are adept at using information about attainment and progress to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

- The governing body has ensured that effective management of teachers' performance is in place. Governors know what the quality of teaching is and are insistent that pay increases are only awarded if teachers' performance is at least good.
- There are close checks on the use of funding, including that aimed at disadvantaged pupils, and the governing body holds the school to account for the impact of this funding. The monitoring of safeguarding is effective.
- Governors are well informed and have a good range of skills to help them carry out their roles. They undertake regular training and have used the outcomes of a recent review of governance to restructure the way they carry out their roles. This review has increased their effectiveness and helped the governing body focus more effectively on different aspects of the work of the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons, around the school and on the playground. They generally concentrate on their tasks well, show positive attitudes to learning and only occasionally disengage from learning.
- Pupils attend regularly and say they enjoy coming to school. Positive relationships between adults and pupils are well established and have a beneficial effect on pupils' behaviour, motivation and achievement. It is clear that pupils like their teachers and respect them. Staff provide positive role models for their pupils.
- Pupils told inspectors that behaviour is generally good. They said that when misbehaviour occurs it is swiftly dealt with by the school. Records of behaviour confirm that there are few incidents of poor behaviour in lessons or around the school.
- Pupils are keen to take responsibility and to help others. For example, they act as members of the school council, as playground leaders or 'buddies' and as members of the eco-group which helps improve the school environment.
- The pupils are friendly and confident towards visitors, welcoming them warmly and opening doors. Pupils are clearly very proud of their school and wish to share their experiences with other people.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and their parents agree with them. Pupils are safety conscious and are aware of different risks and how to deal with them, for example, road and fire safety. There is a good emphasis on safety online and pupils learn how to stay safe when using the internet and are aware of how to deal with cyber-bullying.
- Attendance rates are above average and the school has clear procedures for reducing absence. It is tenacious in following up any absences.
- Safeguarding procedures are well established, effective and supported by appropriate policies. Staff are well trained in aspects of child protection and there are good partnerships with outside agencies. Care is taken to ensure the school site is safe and secure. The careful vetting of staff and the robust child protection procedures ensure that pupils are well cared for.
- Pupils work together constructively on shared tasks in lessons. They generally get on well together so that instances of bullying and racism are rare. Any such incidents are quickly tackled. A small number of parents indicated on the online questionnaire that they thought that there was bullying in the school, but these views are not endorsed by inspection findings.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good because teachers provide interesting activities that engage pupils, challenge them to learn well and secure good progress. They take a lot of care to make classrooms lively and colourful places to learn.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. For example, pupils are reminded of the key aspects of sentence construction or calculation in resources displayed in classrooms. Teachers make very good use of accurate grammar so that pupils understand exactly how to construct sentences and how to improve their writing.
- Many teachers ask questions that encourage pupils to think and deepen their understanding. Pupils respond eagerly to these questions and are keen to contribute to class discussions. They work well individually and in pairs or groups.
- Marking usually provides pupils with useful suggestions about how they can improve their work. Pupils appreciate the time taken and the effort their teachers make in marking their books and they say that following their guidance is helping them to improve.
- Teachers plan and structure learning well so that it helps pupils make progress and stimulates their interest. They make good use of resources to engage pupils in learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 were looking at a range of artefacts relating to the Second World War and found handling the objects made the subject much more real than only using books or watching films. As a result, they showed a real thirst for knowledge about the history of that period.
- Teachers work closely with teaching assistants to plan effective lessons. They work well together in most classes to give targeted support where it is most needed, particularly to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively, value pupils' efforts and sustain strong relationships to underpin good learning. Pupils are eager to please their teachers and usually try their best.
- In some mathematics lessons, the pupils' ability to carry out simple calculations in their heads was not strong enough. When this happened it slowed the pace of work because they were not secure in addition or their knowledge and use of times tables. For example, pupils had to use aids to help them multiply and had to count on fingers rather than recall easy additions.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children joining the school's early years provision have significant weaknesses in several areas of development, and particularly in communication and language. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes and enter Year 1 with skills and knowledge that are a little below expected levels.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1. The phonics (linking sounds and letters) screening check at the end of Year 1 shows that pupils are learning to read well and that the teaching of phonics has improved. In the last phonics screening check in 2014, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard was above the national average, a big improvement on the previous year. By the end of Year 2, pupils are working at standards that are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' standards in writing at the end of Year 6 have been similar to the national average since the last inspection and in 2014 pupils made better progress than was seen in most schools. Standards in mathematics have improved and are now close to the national average. Pupils made good progress in mathematics. Standards in reading were below the national average and, while pupils made good progress during their final year, this was not reflected in their test results in reading.
- The school has taken action to ensure the dip in reading standards in 2014 does not happen again. Teachers have had additional training about the teaching of reading and extra help is given to pupils who are finding reading difficult. As a result, some pupils have made very rapid progress in reading and most

pupils currently in the school, in Year 6 and in other years, are making at least the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and an increasing proportion are doing even better. This represents an improvement on previous years and is leading to higher standards. Inspectors' checks on pupils' books and listening to children read show that the school's assessments are accurate and that pupils' current progress in reading, writing and mathematics is at least good.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are given good support that is suited to their specific needs by teachers and teaching assistants. They are currently making good progress from their individual starting points.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils leaving Year 6 had made better progress than other pupils nationally but were about two terms behind them in reading and mathematics and one term behind in writing. They were about a term behind other pupils in the school in reading and writing and nearly two terms behind them in mathematics. From their starting points, the progress these pupils make in school is slightly better than that of other pupils and the attainment gap is narrowing.
- The most-able pupils make similar progress to that of other pupils in the school. School assessments for the pupils currently in school show that more pupils are expected to reach the highest standards at the end of this year than in previous years, and that their progress in reading, writing and mathematics is at least good and sometimes better.
- Standards and progress in reading and writing are sometimes adversely affected by pupils' limited vocabulary. Reading is also affected from time to time by pupils' limited ability to read deeper meaning into more complex texts and to deduce the author's intentions. This is particularly the case for most-able pupils.

The early years provision

is good

- On entry to the Nursery, children have limited skills and knowledge in several areas of learning, particularly in language and literacy. They make good progress in both the Nursery and Reception years and, by the time they enter Year 1, many have caught up and reached a good level of development.
- Teaching is good. Staff in the Nursery and Reception classes have an astute understanding of how young children learn and provide a rich range of activities to promote children's learning, especially in language, literacy and numeracy.
- Both inside the classroom and outside, children are provided with well-planned activities to develop key skills, to foster reading and to develop mathematical understanding. Children enthusiastically talk about the 'Forest School' area, and their enjoyment of learning outside was evident. Staff know just when to intervene to provide guidance and extend children's learning.
- Children behave well in the Nursery and Reception classes and warm, constructive relationships between adults and children are evident. Adults know the children well and take good care of them, helping them to stay safe. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that children love coming to school, that there are smiles and laughter everywhere and that children enjoy learning.
- Parents are encouraged to become involved in their children's learning and are given helpful information about their children's progress.
- The early years provision is well led and managed. Teamwork is strong and helps to ensure effective strategic planning to improve children's development, accelerate progress and ensure their safety.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	103824
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	456278

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	498
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Arthur Thompson
Headteacher	Phil Rawlings
Date of previous school inspection	06 December 2011
Telephone number	01384 818415
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