

Dothill Primary School

Severn Drive, Wellington, Telford, TF1 3JB

Inspection dates 16–17 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Standards have risen and pupils are making good progress in mathematics and English. Achievement is now good.
- Pupils get off to a good start in the Reception year and make good progress, so that they are ready for Key Stage 1.
- The teaching of reading and writing is much improved because the reading scheme is being implemented systematically.
- Most teaching is now good and leaders have eradicated inadequate teaching.
- Teachers' marking helps pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- Pupils behave well. They enjoy learning and say they feel safe in school.
- Pupils' positive feelings about school are reflected in their high levels of attendance.
- School leaders have improved the rigour with which they check all aspects of the school, including teaching and pupils' achievement. As a result any weaknesses are addressed more quickly and effectively.
- Governors know the school well and provide a good balance of challenge and support to school leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not consistently check on how well pupils have understood the work before they move on. They do not always adapt their lessons when pupils do not understand fully.
- Pupils are too reliant on their teachers and are not helped to think deeply and to become independent learners.
- Teachers do not make enough use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support and extend learning.
- Recently appointed subject leaders, whilst ambitious and committed, lack experience in carrying out their roles.
- There are not enough examples of outstanding teaching.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 28 lessons, including four observed jointly with the Principal and headteacher. They looked at work in pupils' books, listened to pupils read, visited an assembly and observed playtime and lunchtime activities.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, headteacher, members of the governing body, a local authority representative, key staff and pupils.
- Documents looked at included the school's self-evaluation summary, minutes of governing body meetings, information on pupils' progress, and documents relating to safeguarding, school management and the curriculum.
- Parents' and carers' views were taken into account through the 84 responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View), meeting parents and carers on the playground and the school's most recent survey of parents' and carers' views. The inspection team considered responses to a questionnaire by 26 staff.

Inspection team

Mary Le Breuilly, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michael Onyon

Additional Inspector

Geoff Timms

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Dothill Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action level is average, as is the proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is in a trust partnership with the local secondary school and the Principal of Dothill Primary School is also the Principal of the secondary school. There are separate governing bodies for each school. The Principal has overall responsibility for Dothill Primary School and the headteacher leads the school on a day-to-day basis. Close partnerships exist between the two schools and expertise is shared between them.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more of it is outstanding and increase pupils' rate of progress by:
 - using searching questions to check pupils' understanding and adapting lessons according to how pupils respond
 - providing opportunities for pupils to develop deeper thinking and independence in their learning, particularly for the most-able pupils,
 - developing the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to help pupils learn and develop skills across the curriculum.
- Provide support and development for subject leaders and leaders of other aspects of the school so that they are able to secure and build on improvements in their areas of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment and progress have improved steadily since the last inspection. Standards have risen in the past three years. The school's progress information shows that pupils' progress has now accelerated as a result of improvements in teaching. Work in books and the school's information confirms that current pupils are on track to make nationally expected levels of progress by the summer and that a good proportion will exceed them.
- Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children start school in the Reception year with skills that are generally lower than those typical for their age. Good progress means that their attainment at the end of the Reception year is broadly average. Children are well prepared for the more formal learning in Key Stage 1.
- Standards in reading and mathematics have increased each year in Key Stage 1 for the past three years. Pupils make good progress over the key stage in both English and mathematics. The systematic teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) helps most pupils to learn to read quickly and accurately. Nearly three quarters of the pupils reached the nationally expected level in the Year 1 phonics screening check, a sharp increase on the previous year. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are keen to learn; they try their best, and this helps them to succeed.
- The progress of pupils in Key Stage 2 is now good in both English and mathematics. It is particularly strong in writing. Standards in English and mathematics rose in 2013 and were above the previous year's national average. This represents an improvement over the past two years.
- Pupils eligible for additional support from pupil premium funding make good progress because of the additional attention they receive. They leave school just under a term and a half behind other pupils in English and less than a term behind in mathematics. This is a narrower gap than that seen nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in both English and mathematics. This is because the school provides effective support to help them succeed.
- The school is justifiably proud of the levels of achievement in sports and has gained the Kitemark Gold Award for sport. Additional sports funding for primary schools has just been received in school and has been set aside for equipment and staff training.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good. Lessons seen during the inspection were mostly good and work in books confirms that pupils are making good progress.
- The school's records show that teaching has improved. The Principal and the headteacher have made the improvement of teaching and learning a high priority for the school, and teachers and teaching assistants have risen to the challenges they have been set. As a result, pupils' progress has improved.
- Marking in books gives guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work. Pupils say they

find these comments helpful.

- Teachers in the Reception year are effective in planning activities and choices that allow children to explore and improve their knowledge and skills. Children learn both indoors and outside and have opportunities to visit places such as the local supermarket to put this learning into different contexts.
- Pupils have good opportunities to develop basic skills of English and they have opportunities to write across many subjects and to develop their mathematical skills in different contexts. However, pupils have too few opportunities to develop their skills in ICT in a similar way or to use technology to support their learning in a range of subjects.
- The school has invested in a commercial reading and writing scheme and leaders have implemented this systematically and are monitoring it carefully. This is providing consistency and rigour to the teaching of early reading and writing, and progress has consequently accelerated.
- Pupils engage well with learning. They look up to their teachers and are keen to please them. They work well in groups and pairs. However, teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop the skills of independent working.
- Teachers sometimes ask pupils searching questions that deepen their understanding and make them think but this is not yet established consistently across the school. As a result, pupils are often too reliant on their teachers and are not given enough opportunities to think and learn for themselves. This is particularly so for the most-able pupils.
- In some lessons, teachers carefully tested out what pupils had understood and adapted the activities they had planned to make sure that learning was secure. This was not consistent in all classes and, on occasions, teachers stuck too rigidly to their lesson plans and moved on without checking pupils fully understood what they had been taught.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. Teachers manage behaviour well and teaching assistants make a strong contribution to both the good behaviour and the progress of pupils.
- The school has a good balance of rewards and sanctions. Pupils report that the sanctions are used fairly. When pupils do get into trouble, there is good support to help them manage their behaviour and avoid further problems.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They reported that bullying and any incidents of unacceptable behaviour are infrequent and are dealt with effectively when they occur.
- Pupils are able to develop responsibility and to demonstrate their care for each other in a number of ways; for example, through the school council, in sports leadership and older pupils acting as reading tutors to younger pupils. They show respect for each other and for adults in school, and they are helpful and welcoming to visitors.
- Attendance is above average and has been so for several years. This is an indicator of pupils' positive attitudes to school and to learning.

- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to learn how to stay safe in a range of contexts, including how to stay safe when using the internet.
- The school pays very good attention to equality of opportunity by keeping a close eye on the progress and well-being of every child, whatever their circumstances. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal, headteacher and governors have a very clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They use this information to put in place effective plans for improvement.
- Since the previous inspection, the Principal and headteacher have made teachers more accountable for the progress of pupils in their classes and have improved the monitoring of teaching and other aspects of school life. They are quick to follow up anything that needs development and, as a result, the school has improved. Teachers are appraised for their performance against targets which include how much progress pupils make and the standards they reach.
- Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Provision for pupils in the Reception year is well thought out and the curriculum meets the needs and interests of children, including those who need to catch up. Careful planning of activities and close monitoring of pupils means they make good progress.
- Many of those who are leading subjects or aspects of the school are relatively new to their roles. They demonstrate a clear sense of direction for their areas of responsibility. These leaders have not yet had the support and training they need to help them develop their roles, particularly in monitoring their areas of responsibility and in leading staff in new developments.
- The curriculum meets legal requirements and provides good opportunities for pupils to learn and make progress in a range of subjects. Much thought is given to how experiences can be made more relevant through trips and visits. For example, during the inspection, some pupils built a 'Tudor house' in the grounds under the guidance of a visiting expert to support their topic work about the Tudors.
- Training for staff is linked to their individual needs and to the school's priorities. Teachers feel that the school is helping them to improve and they feel well supported.
- Most parents are very happy with the school. They are confident in the school leadership, feel that their children are making progress. One group of parents described the school as 'coming on in leaps and bounds'.
- The local authority has provided some effective support for this improving school. It recognises the improvements that have been made recently and, consequently, is withdrawing this support as the school's leadership capacity strengthens.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and they play an active part in the life of the school and interpret data about standards accurately. The governing body provides a good balance of support and challenge for the school and holds it to account for

pupils' achievement and personal development.

- Governors know what the quality of teaching is. They link teachers' pay increases to their performance and they have adopted appropriate policies to ensure this applies to staff across school. They have acted to support the Principal and headteacher in dealing with issues of staff performance when this has been a cause for concern.
- Governors take their roles seriously and regularly attend training. Health and safety concerns, finance and pupils' progress are carefully monitored through meetings, visits and reports. The governing body ensures that all safeguarding requirements are met. Governors are aware of the use and impact of additional funding such as that for the pupil premium.

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	135496
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	427028

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Ward
Principal	Nick Renshaw
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2011
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