

Cottesbrooke Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103280
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	355354
Inspection dates	24–25 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Georgina Beasley

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	335
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janette Hill
Headteacher	Pearl Jones
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twenty-six lessons were observed and 14 teachers seen. Inspectors met with groups of staff, pupils and members of the governing body and spoke with parents and carers informally at the start of the day. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work, assessment procedures, lesson and curriculum planning, policies and procedures, monitoring reports and the school improvement plan. Seventy-six questionnaires were received and analysed from parents and carers, 70 from pupils and 13 from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Inspectors checked closely pupils' learning and progress in mathematics, especially girls.
- A key focus of lesson observations and scrutiny of teachers' marking was improvement since the previous inspection in how clearly learning objectives and feedback enable pupils to know what they are learning and improve their work.
- Checks were made on how well curriculum opportunities enabled pupils to apply literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in a range of subjects.
- When looking at leadership and management, inspectors focused on the rate of improvement to teaching and the curriculum, and how they are improving pupils' achievement.

Information about the school

This larger-than-average sized school serves a culturally diverse area. The majority of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average. A small number of pupils are learning English for the first time. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, and an average number has a statement of special educational needs. An above-average number are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has National Healthy Schools status, Activemark and the Foundation International School award. A breakfast club managed by the governing body runs every morning.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. The headteacher gives clear and decisive leadership which, with the support of staff, especially the deputy headteacher and subject leaders, has resulted in improvement in all aspects of the school's work. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Attainment is average and improving each year. Learning and progress are satisfactory and sometimes good. Year 6 pupils make good progress. The progress and learning of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and of pupils new to speaking English are good in reading and writing. The school's evaluation of its performance is accurate. Targeted and effective support is put into place quickly if the progress of individuals or groups of pupils slows. A careful analysis of pupils' progress noted the dip in girls' achievement in mathematics last year. Steps to rectify this have been effective, and girls are currently achieving as well as the boys.

Teaching is satisfactory. The proportion of good teaching is increasing. It is consistently good in Year 6 and stronger in English than in mathematics. In good lessons, teachers identify and teach the skills and knowledge pupils need in order to complete tasks successfully. The curriculum is interesting and teachers use a variety of ways to present learning. Nevertheless, methods and resources are sometimes still not varied enough to support all of the different ways pupils learn. Pupils research topics and write for a real purpose in English, but there are fewer opportunities for pupils to apply numeracy and ICT skills to real-life situations. Teachers plan learning that meets the needs of most pupils in lessons. In some mathematics lessons, higher attaining pupils do not receive enough challenge to enable them to make consistently good progress. Good assessment prompts in some lessons help pupils check their own work and make improvements independently. However, in some lessons teachers do not explain clearly what pupils will learn and why, and so pupils cannot complete the task without adult support. Feedback is clear in English but inconsistent in mathematics. As a result, pupils are more able to improve their own attainment in reading and writing than in mathematics. Satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection in teaching and pupils' achievement reflects the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

Improvement in pupils' personal development is good. Pupils make a significant contribution to the school's positive ethos. Pupils get on well together and behaviour is good. When asked what was good about the school, one pupil said proudly that, 'We all come from many different religions and cultures and get along together really well.' Parents and carers give good support to the school. Attendance has improved and is now average and most parents and carers are positive about their children's progress.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good teaching across the school so that learning and progress are consistently good by:
 - identifying and teaching the precise skills, knowledge and understanding pupils need to know and use in order to complete tasks in lessons
 - giving pupils more opportunities to apply new learning, especially in numeracy and ICT, to real-life situations
 - extending the range of activities and resources to address the many different ways pupils prefer to learn.
 - Improve assessment systems in mathematics so that:
 - pupils are always clear about what they are learning and why
 - are able to check their answers and so know how well they are doing and how to improve to reach the next level
 - higher-attaining pupils receive the challenge they need to make consistently good progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment when pupils start in Year 3 has been falling steadily for the last four years and is significantly below average this year. The current Year 6 started with average attainment. Learning and progress are satisfactory but improving, especially in reading and writing. Good learning and progress occur in lessons when pupils are clear about what they are learning and why. In a good English lesson in Year 6, pupils checked their writing against the skills and features being taught and made improvements that moved their attainment to the next level. In satisfactory lessons, all pupils complete the same task which limits higher-attaining pupils from extending their learning fully. For example, in a mathematics lesson about fractions, higher-attaining pupils had to complete the same work as other pupils, leaving less time for the more challenging extension task. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Those new to English make good progress because of the specific and targeted support they receive. While pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, they make good progress in reading and writing when working on specific tasks in small groups.

Pupils enjoy being involved in decision making through the school council, acting as prefects and house captains, running the school bank and being part of the Bike-It crew. Nearly all pupils feel safe. Pupils enjoy meeting with pupils from other year groups twice a week to discuss the importance of considering the feelings and beliefs of others. As a result, pupils have strong respect for different religions and cultures. Participation in extra-curricular sport is good and pupils make healthy food choices at lunchtime, although pupils admit that 'pizza and chips are still our favourite'. They are particularly proud of the badges they receive for walking to school. Pupils have satisfactory skills in reading, writing, numeracy and ICT skills to help them prepare for future life. Their positive attitudes to attendance and being punctual have contributed to steady improvement in these aspects.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

The school's system for including pupils in assessing work gives them satisfactory responsibility for reflecting on and improving their own learning. Sheets detailing accurate grammar and punctuation and the features pupils must use to complete different types of writing successfully, help them check that their writing is good enough to reach their individual targets. In mathematics, teachers do not always identify and so give pupils the opportunity to learn or recall the skills and strategies they will need to use to solve or investigate specific problems. Teachers do not always give higher-attaining pupils enough time to do the harder work they need to complete to extend their learning.

The curriculum responds well to pupils' interests and enables them to practise important reading and writing skills while learning in other subjects. There are fewer opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy and ICT skills to real-life situations. The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well, particularly their respect and consideration of each others' different cultures. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe and to lead healthy lives. As a result of this and pupils' good outcomes, the school has successfully achieved Activemark and Healthy Schools status. Good opportunities exist for pupils to learn about different communities in Britain and the rest of the world through history and geography topics, and Spanish lessons. Year 6 pupils have good opportunity to learn about the world of work through visits to local businesses

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including the Bull Ring shops and offices. The breakfast club promotes pupils' learning through its healthy menus and quiet, settled start to the school day.

Pupils new to speaking English receive well-targeted support that helps them make good progress in all subjects. Good support and guidance is helping pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make rapid progress in writing this year. Pupils know the current attendance target and are keen to be the class with the best attendance each week. Pupils in Year 3 settle quickly as a result of close links with the infant school, and mentoring by Year 6 pupils and the learning mentors. Staff follow procedures consistently for managing pupils' behaviour and keeping pupils safe. As a result, pupils know that an adult will listen if they have a concern and incidents of poor behaviour have reduced significantly.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has built a staff team focused on raising pupils' attainment with some success. As a result of interventions introduced since the previous inspection, improvement is satisfactory and is good in pupils' personal development. Weaknesses identified in pupils' achievement in writing and in the curriculum have been tackled effectively due to improvements in the quality of teaching and subject leadership. Satisfactory improvement is evident in pupils' satisfactory and sometimes good learning and progress and their enjoyment of school. When asked, most say that 'learning is fun.'

The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities satisfactorily. It receives regular reports from the headteacher which give it an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas requiring improvement. However, it does not have formal systems to seek actively the views of pupils and parents and carers directly to inform its role in challenging the school and holding it to account. The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures including health and safety is discussed at every governing body meeting to ensure pupils' welfare and that statutory requirements are met. Child protection procedures are robust and comprehensive. The site manager deals with any health and safety issue promptly.

The school monitors provision closely to ensure pupils are able to take part in all activities regardless of gender, ethnicity, ability or social circumstances. Differences in the achievement of boys and girls, and between different ethnic groups have largely been eradicated because of the school's detailed analysis of achievement and subsequent targeted support. Nonetheless, progress is not yet consistently good in all classes. The school tackles discrimination decisively. As a result, racist incidents are rare and the climate for learning is good.

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Partnerships and community cohesion are good. As a result of a detailed analysis of its religious, ethnic and social circumstances, the school has instigated numerous curriculum partnerships with schools and communities locally and most recently with a school in China. After receiving the Foundation International Schools award, the newly formed international committee are considering how to increase opportunities for pupils to learn about communities abroad. Parents and carers take part in a number of groups to help them support their children's well being and learning. The healthy cooking group promotes family health and English as a Second language classes help parents and carers new to the language learn to speak English. Close partnership with parents and carers has resulted in improved attendance for Year 3 pupils in the last two years.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Fewer parents and carers than average returned a questionnaire. Those who did and those who spoke to inspectors are generally pleased with the school. The inspection endorses parents' and carers' positive views that their children enjoy school and feel safe, and that the school helps their children lead healthy lifestyles. The biggest concern raised by parents and carers was the effectiveness with which the school manages behaviour and in particular whether the new arrangements for rewarding good behaviour and achievement are fair. Pupils who spoke to inspectors like the new arrangements and feel that they are fair. They say that 'behaviour is getting better and is mostly good'. The school is only just starting to check whether adults give out 'smiles' fairly and consistently because the system is so new.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cottesbrooke Junior 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 76 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 335 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	46	32	42	7	9	2	3
The school keeps my child safe	36	47	34	45	6	8	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	21	28	46	61	6	8	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	24	48	63	7	9	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	22	29	47	62	2	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	29	42	55	6	8	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	34	36	47	9	12	1	1
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)	17	22	43	57	10	13	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	17	47	62	11	14	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	18	38	50	15	20	5	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	17	47	62	7	9	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	16	21	47	62	4	5	3	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	22	50	66	3	4	4	5

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



26 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cottesbrooke Junior School, Birmingham, B27 6JL

Thank you for welcoming us to your school when we visited recently and for talking to us about your learning.

Cottesbrooke is a satisfactory school but there are some things that are good. You make a significant contribution to the success of your school. You behave well in lessons and this helps you to make good progress when the teaching is good. By following the rules, you are helping everyone to feel safe. We were impressed with how well you get along together. You are polite and respectful to adults and each other. You take your responsibilities seriously by acting as prefects, supporting a younger pupil in tutor groups or being a member of one of the many committees in school. You have a good understanding of the importance of being fit and healthy and should be rightfully proud of your 'walk to school' badges. Your achievement is satisfactory but improving, especially in reading and writing.

We have asked your headteacher and teachers to improve learning in lessons even more. In particular, we have asked them to teach you the skills you need to complete the tasks they ask you to do in the lessons successfully. You have good opportunity to practise your reading and writing in other subjects. We have asked that you practise your numeracy and ICT skills more often too. We have also asked them to think of even more exciting ways to help you learn. You all can help by telling teachers what helps you learn and when you find things hard to understand.

The learning tips in your new mentoring files help many of you to check your own work in English carefully so that you know what to do to reach your targets. We have asked your teachers to help you to do this in mathematics too. We have also asked them to give some of you harder work in mathematics so that you can reach even higher standards. You can help by making sure you always remember to use the checklists to check your work and to tell your teacher if you find the work too easy.

Thank you again for your warm welcome

Yours sincerely

Georgina Beasley

Lead inspector

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