

Coton-in-the-Elms CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112812
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	378565
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Daniel Brown
Headteacher	Matthew Baxter
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited 15 lessons taught by five teachers. They also met with staff, parents and carers, groups of pupils, and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including teachers' planning, the school improvement plan, assessment, monitoring and evaluation records, records for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and safeguarding policies and procedures. Inspectors also analysed the responses to the questionnaires for pupils and staff, and the 73 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- Is writing promoted at every opportunity, is it marked properly and is the gap in attainment between reading and writing continuing to close?
- How well is information gained from marking and assessment used to adjust learning so that teaching supports all pupils of all ability levels?
- What impact have leaders and managers had on securing more consistently good teaching throughout the school?

Information about the school

In this smaller-than-average-sized school, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, as is the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. There is a small number of pupils from Traveller families. All proportions vary from year to year because of the small numbers in each year group. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes up to Year 4, and in single age classes in Years 5 and 6. The school has achieved national Healthy Schools status, the Music Quality Mark and the silver Artsmark.

There is a Sure Start Children's Centre adjacent to the school, which is inspected separately.

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 where all pupils achieve well. The school is successfully led and managed, teaching is good, and strong teamwork among the staff facilitates the sharing of good practice. Leaders and managers have successfully improved teaching and learning, and this is helping the school to move forward even more. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and its priorities are securely founded on improving outcomes for the pupils. However, in the school development plan, the criteria through which success is measured are not sufficiently related to those outcomes. Nevertheless, robust monitoring and evaluation, effective response to pupils' individual learning needs, and the good improvement since the previous inspection, all demonstrate that the school has good capacity for sustained improvement.

Children start Reception with skills that are below those expected for their age, most notably in literacy and numeracy. Outstanding provision ensures that they learn and develop exceptionally well. The strong focus on improving writing and mathematics permeates the excellent curriculum for all age groups. This is evident in the high quality displays around the school and in pupils' books, all of which show that writing in particular is promoted exceptionally well in topic work. Pupils' high quality art work adds to the school's very attractive learning environment.

Attainment is above average in Year 6. Standards in reading and writing have improved in the past three years. Initiatives to improve pupils' writing are accelerating progress for all groups. Very occasionally, more-able pupils are not moved onto independent writing tasks quickly enough in lessons, or there is not enough difference between their work and that of other pupils, and this limits their progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good and sometimes excellent progress, often ensuring that they reach nationally expected levels in Year 6. The school is vigilant in ensuring that pupils who join it at different times, including those from Traveller families, are supported well and make good progress from the moment they start.

Behaviour is excellent. Pupils are very proud of their school and they have an exceptionally well developed understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. The excellent care, guidance and support the school provides for them and their families contribute to this. Pupils speak very highly of the staff, saying they are 'one of the best things about the school', and they trust them implicitly to help with any concerns. The school's excellent partnership with parents and carers is captured in the comment that, 'Every year we demand more of this school – better progress,

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more information, and the committed staff always deliver.’ The high degree of parental involvement and the excellent links the school has forged with other schools and external agencies contribute directly to pupils’ good progress and personal development. Pupils leave this school as mature, well-rounded youngsters, effectively prepared for their future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more-able pupils always have challenging work, and that they are moved on to more demanding writing tasks sooner in lessons.
- Sharpen the effectiveness of school development planning by focusing measures of success on the impact the priorities are expected to have on outcomes for the pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching the nationally expected level for their age in both English and mathematics was significantly above average in 2011. Pupils work with enthusiasm and high levels of concentration, producing well-presented and grammatically accurate writing. Careful choice of topics ensures boys and girls are equally motivated to write in different styles for different purposes and they engage their audience well. For example, by Year 6, pupils can write effective formal and informal letters and know which vocabulary and techniques to use to create suspense in narrative. Pupils use information and communication technology well to support their learning. They understand the dangers associated with using the internet and how to avoid them. Pupils also demonstrate good mathematical skills, select relevant ones to solve different mathematical problems, and readily explain how they arrive at their answers.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make consistently good progress. Their learning is based securely on their individual needs and they receive good quality support from well-briefed teaching assistants and from their teachers.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning. They persevere well and appreciate the importance of acquiring good basic skills for later life. They use those skills in different ways in different subjects, for example, writing reports in history and science, or recording scientific investigations in graphs and charts. Pupils know their targets and the levels they are at. Confident in their own ability, they check and assess their own and others’ work, often commenting astutely on how to improve.

Pupils work and play with a real sense of joy and purpose, mindful of and respectful towards others and their environment. They use their imagination and creativity well as they learn to appreciate the world around them, and they are reflective and caring. They have a very well developed sense of right and wrong, and an excellent range of social skills. These are demonstrated clearly at breaks and lunchtimes and in

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the high levels of collaboration seen in lessons. For example, the way pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 worked together on science investigations greatly enhanced their learning. Pupils are very interested in different communities at home and abroad. However, opportunities for them to meet people from different cultures first hand, although developing, are somewhat limited. Nevertheless, pupils readily accept others, regardless of background, ability or ethnicity, and they have a strong sense of what is fair and just.

Parents and carers are confident that the school keeps their children safe and, pupils themselves say that they feel very safe in school. They and their parents and carers say they know of no bullying, and that, should any untoward behaviour occur, it would be dealt with very quickly. Pupils fully understand the benefits of healthy eating and regular physical exercise, and readily participate in the many sporting activities available to them. Their families cooperate with the school by ensuring packed lunches are healthy. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community. School councillors have been instrumental in acquiring playground equipment. Older pupils look after younger ones, hear them read, and help to run the well-attended infant art and craft club. In the wider community, pupils raise money for various charities at home and abroad, contribute to church events, and distribute harvest parcels in the village. Attendance is above average.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

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	1
Pupils’ behaviour	1
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	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum is exceptionally well planned to meet the needs of pupils in mixed-

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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age classes, while remaining flexible in response to their changing learning needs. It enables discrete skills to be taught in the different subjects included in topic work, and provides an avenue for the further development of basic skills. This has helped to raise standards, especially in writing, and to improve progress in recent years. High quality displays show the considerable breadth of the curriculum and the excellent range of really well attended additional activities that enhance pupils’ learning and personal development. Staff are mostly skilled at adjusting learning to meet pupils’ individual needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Support staff are exceptionally well deployed to work with different ability groups at different times. Marking gives pupils good guidance on how to improve and pupils are increasingly being given time to respond to it. Teachers are skilled at showing pupils how to build on what they learned previously to help them with new learning. Almost all lessons proceed at a brisk pace, ensuring no learning time is lost. Occasionally, however, pupils’ learning slows because teaching is concentrated on one group, and other groups are not visited to ensure learning is proceeding as planned.

Pupils are very well known as individuals. All are adamant that they are exceptionally well cared for. Their parents and carers agree, and praise the school for its excellent communication with them. They feel confident that they can help their children learn better because of this and readily become involved in the ‘Brainbuilder’ projects designed to encourage parents and carers to work with their children. The needs of pupils with behaviour difficulties are very well catered for, resulting in these pupils being fully absorbed into the school’s ways of working, and enabling them to make good progress. The school works closely with the Traveller service to ensure Traveller children attend school as regularly as possible. Excellent links with the several secondary schools to which pupils transfer ease transition and good transition arrangements within school help to ease the move from one class to the next.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The high expectations that senior leaders have of staff and pupils are driving improvement by ensuring the commitment of all staff to securing the pupils’ best possible progress. Robust checks on teaching and learning, and meetings to discuss pupils’ progress, are making staff ever more accountable for how well each pupil is doing. This has secured the pupils’ good learning, progress and personal development.

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The governing body is effective. It uses its good knowledge of the school to determine its strategic direction. It gains information at first-hand through regular visits and discussions with pupils, staff, parents and carers. Safeguarding procedures, including those for child protection, are good. The school goes the extra mile to support pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable, for whatever reason. Parents and carers recognise this. The governing body uses its expertise well to ensure that the school environment is safe, secure and healthy.

The school promotes equality of opportunity well by closing gaps in progress between different groups of pupils, breaking down stereotypes, and ensuring that all pupils have equal access to everything the school has to offer. This manifests itself in the pupils’ attitudes that, ‘We are all equal, no matter where we come from or what colour of skin we have.’ The school’s good promotion of community cohesion contributes to this. The school has a very secure understanding of its own and the local community. Developing links with schools in different localities in this country and abroad, although not fully established, are beginning to develop pupils’ understanding of different national and global communities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	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	1
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
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Outstanding leadership and management, recognised externally, ensure that a vibrant, exciting curriculum meets the needs of every child. Every activity has a clear learning purpose, and staff are skilled at checking learning and moving it on, almost imperceptibly, through questioning, supporting independence and encouraging initiative. The children’s participation in creating a story with their teacher was a joy to behold. As they offered ideas and movements to accompany the story, children

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made great strides in understanding that a story has a beginning, a middle and an end. They also learned that using exciting vocabulary makes a story more interesting. They used all of this extremely well when they wrote and told their own stories later due to very good teaching.

Children’s learning is assessed, tracked and recorded meticulously, and the information is used very effectively in planning. The children’s learning journals contain notes and annotated photographs that illustrate this really well. Their writing and number books are well marked, showing the increasing degree of independence with which the work is done. They also show that children have made excellent progress this term and are once again well on course to exceed the expectation for their age by the end of the year. Excellent links with parents and carers ensure that children’s learning is recognised wherever it occurs, and that the school builds on children’s interests as well as addressing their learning needs.

Behaviour is excellent, and most children are gaining good levels of confidence as they speak to each other and to adults. Children listen carefully to instructions, follow advice and guidance, and interact well with each other and with adults. They follow the well-established routines, for example, putting their coats on and fastening them when they want to go outside, and washing their hands before eating, and after going to the toilet. Children’s health, safety, welfare and well-being are paramount at all times.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

A high proportion of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire. All expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the school. This was reflected also in inspectors’ discussions with them. Comments such as ‘children go from strength to strength’ in a ‘safe, nurturing environment’ where they ‘grow and learn and become an asset to society’, were typical of the many positive comments received. Parents and carers also say that ‘staff are approachable’, that the school ‘is always willing to listen to them’, that ‘staff will put themselves out to work with families’. There were very few negative comments.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Coton-in-the-Elms CofE 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 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 130 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	71	21	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	73	19	26	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	49	67	21	29	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	70	18	25	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	56	77	14	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	46	63	24	33	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	54	74	19	26	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)	47	64	22	30	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	50	68	22	30	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	66	23	32	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	63	25	34	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	56	77	17	23	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	57	78	16	22	0	0	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 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



30 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Coton-in-the-Elms CofE Primary School, Swadlincote, DE12 8HE

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school and for talking to us about what you do there. You and your parents and carers are clearly very proud of the school and you clearly enjoy everything you do. We can understand this, because we found that yours is a good school where you make good progress, and where all adults care for you exceptionally well. Children get off to an extremely good start in their Reception year due to the high quality teaching they receive. You told us that the teachers were the best thing about your school because they make learning fun for you. We could see how much you enjoy school, and how you join wholeheartedly in everything it offers you. Your excellent behaviour, the way you work with each other in lessons, and play together in the playground, all ensure that you help to make your school a happy place where you can all learn well. We know that your school is working hard to become outstanding, and have suggested two things that will help it to do this. They are to:

- ensure that those of you who are capable of producing high quality writing are given the opportunity to do so much sooner in lessons.
- set out some clear guidelines to check how well the school is doing in improving your progress and in helping you to reach higher standards in your work.

You can all help to improve your school by continuing to work hard, listening to your teachers and following the very good guidance they give you. We hope you will continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now, and we wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell
Lead inspector

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