

Cutthorpe Primary School

School Hill, Cutthorpe, Chesterfield, S42 7AS

Inspection dates 19–20 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress as they move through each key stage. The progress they make in developing reading and mathematics skills is particularly strong. Attainment in reading and mathematics are above average at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils are well prepared for the next phase of education.
- The quality of teaching is good and improving. As a result, all groups of pupils achieve well.
- The school operates in a caring atmosphere. Partnerships with families are particularly strong.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they enjoy coming to school.
- Attendance is above average and continues to improve.
- The leadership and management of the school are good. Effective management of teachers' performance has successfully addressed past weaknesses in teaching.
- The range of subjects taught is broad, balanced and meets pupils' needs well.
- Although the school's overall effectiveness is no longer outstanding, obstacles have been successfully overcome since the last inspection. Consequently, pupils' achievement is rising again and the school is improving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' achievement in writing is less strong than in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers do not always check work frequently enough in lessons to make sure that the level of challenge is just right for each pupil.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons but do not always fully engage in learning.
- The school's procedures to use information to identify improvement priorities are not as streamlined as those in the very best schools.
- The governing body supports and challenges the school well but does not engage frequently enough in first-hand monitoring of the school's work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, taught by six teachers, three of which were held jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and other school leaders, two groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work, heard pupils read and scrutinised pupils' work. He looked at a number of documents, including the school development plans, safeguarding arrangements, attendance data, minutes of the governing body meetings and school monitoring and assessment data.
- The inspector took account of the 37 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). He also spoke informally to parents and carers on the school playground as they brought their children to school.

Inspection team

Jeremy Spencer, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cutthorpe Primary School is smaller than other schools of the same type.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium) is well below average.
- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed. The headteacher has a class teaching commitment for two days of each week.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs are above average.
- Pupils are organised in four mixed-age classes: the Early Years Foundation Stage with Year 1, Year 2 with Year 3, Year 4 with Year 5, and a separate Year 6 class.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress of pupils in English and mathematics.
- The school has achieved Healthy Schools status and the Eco-Schools and Investors in People awards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement, particularly in writing, by ensuring there are more frequent, sharply focused opportunities to practise writing skills across different subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers check individual pupils' learning more frequently in lessons to identify more rapidly when further support or challenge is needed
 - generating the highest levels of pupils' engagement and commitment to learning in each lesson by ensuring that all pupils understand exactly what they are learning to do, and how they will be able to measure their progress.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders' analyses of pupils' achievement data more efficiently lead to agreed actions to tackle identified weaknesses
 - members of the governing body become more actively involved in monitoring the impact of the school's work on pupils' improved achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children begin the Reception class with variable skills; however, these are typically at least in line with expected levels for their age. They demonstrate personal, social and emotional development above expected levels. Children make good progress in the Reception class, particularly in developing calculation and reading skills. This is because they are happy and secure in their environment, settle into routines quickly, and teachers and staff understand their needs well.
- Different groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those supported through the pupil premium, make good progress as they move through Key Stages 1 and 2. This is due to good teaching and an appropriate range of intervention strategies. Teaching assistants work well with class teachers and provide good support to individuals and groups of pupils. Pupils make stronger progress in reading and mathematics than in writing.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, including attainment in reading, is above average. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is above average overall, but not high. It is well above average in reading and mathematics but only average in writing. Pupils' achievement is not outstanding because although pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education, they do not develop a wide range of writing skills.
- More-able pupils are often challenged well by teachers, and, as a result, some make outstanding progress, particularly in mathematics. However, in some lessons, teachers do not check pupils' work frequently enough, which can lead to slower progress as work is not matched exactly to pupils' needs.
- Pupils' broader understanding of the world is developed effectively. This has been supported well through visits to meet representatives of different cultures and faiths. Pupils develop very good social and personal skills. School tracking documents and work in pupils' books indicate that they do not just make good progress in English and mathematics but in other subjects too.

The quality of teaching is good

- Effective teaching ensures that different groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well over time. The pace of learning in lessons is good and pupils are given frequent opportunities to improve their understanding through discussions with peers. Teachers demonstrate excellent questioning skills which successfully deepen pupils' understanding.
- Teachers routinely share learning objectives with pupils at the beginning of lessons. However, on some occasions, these represent more of a description of what children are doing rather than what they should be learning. On other occasions, the language used by teachers in sharing learning objectives is too complex for pupils to understand. Consequently, pupils do not always engage in learning as well as they could do because they do not understand exactly what they are learning to do and how they will be able to measure their success and progress.
- In the mixed Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 class, teachers skilfully plan lessons to ensure that pupils from both phases are able to fully access the curriculum. Very good use is made of imaginatively organised classroom and outdoor learning spaces. Teaching assistants play key roles in supporting and facilitating learning opportunities. Children enjoy learning and develop confidence quickly. During the inspection, children working in the role-play area

enthusiastically engaged the inspector in helping them to write down imaginary telephone messages.

- Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and pupils' above average attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 confirms the success of the school's teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make).
- Teachers use pupils' assessment information and knowledge of prior learning to plan learning activities at the right level for different groups of pupils. However, as lessons progress, teachers do not always check pupils' learning and progress as frequently as they could do. This means that, on some occasions, pupils' misconceptions are not identified and addressed as efficiently as they could be. Similarly, some opportunities are missed during lessons to further stretch and extend the learning of more-able pupils.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly aware of their individual targets, which identify the next steps they need to take in learning. Discussions with pupils indicate that they understand the value of reading, writing and mathematics targets and believe that these will further support their learning. Teachers mark pupils' work thoughtfully and effectively, and this supports their good progress.
- Good teaching effectively promotes pupils' enjoyment of learning. During the inspection, pupils in the Year 4 and 5 class showed great excitement in a topic lesson, as they made Anderson shelters from pieces of card. They then worked in groups to design experiments to test how well the shelters would survive impact from falling tennis balls. Pupils made good progress in their learning as the lesson developed and were able to talk in detail about differences in structural designs and how these related to strength and durability.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. Different groups of pupils, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, demonstrate impeccable manners towards adults and care for each other very well. They are also extremely proud to play their part in helping the school to run smoothly, for example as members of the school council or the 'eco-school' team.
- During the inspection, pupils were observed behaving very well in classrooms, in the dining hall, on the playground and in other areas of the school. Discussions with pupils, and parents and carers, indicate that the inspector's observations represent a typical picture of behaviour at the school.
- Pupils are highly motivated by a range of school rewards. The school's 'Super Student' scheme successfully encourages pupils to become well-behaved learners and members of the school community. Pupils glow with pride as they talk about their achievements in securing bronze, silver and gold awards.
- The school's attendance promotion strategies are highly successful. The attendance of different groups of pupils is above average and continues to improve strongly. Pupils feel very safe and they thoroughly enjoy coming to school.
- Pupils understand very well how to keep themselves safe in a broad range of contexts. Older pupils demonstrate an excellent and well-developed understanding of the safe use of information and communication technology and the internet.

- All parents and carers who responded to the online Parent View questionnaire at the time of the inspection believe that the school makes sure its pupils behave well and deals effectively with any cases of bullying. There have been no exclusions or racist incidents reported at the school in recent years. Cases of bullying are extremely rare.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is very well respected by parents and carers, staff and pupils and staff report that they feel valued and well-challenged. As a result, staff morale is high and there is a strong belief that the school can continue to improve.
- School leaders' self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate. Performance management systems are effective in driving improvements to the quality of teaching. Appropriate training and development opportunities for staff underpin the good teaching in the school.
- Pupils' achievement was judged to be outstanding at the time of the last inspection, but assessment data indicate a decline in pupils' attainment in writing in recent years. The latest unvalidated data indicate that leaders' actions have been successful in halting this decline and in maintaining above-average attainment in reading and mathematics.
- School leaders can point to marked improvements in the curriculum through their introduction of an improved range of visitors to the school and school visits, including a residential trip for pupils in Key Stage 2. The strategic development of the school grounds since the last inspection has also been particularly successful in promoting further opportunities for pupils to learn outdoors. Pupils proudly told the inspector about their 'growing area' and the excellent strawberries harvested for the school kitchen, and about the willow sculptures in their outdoor learning area. Although some opportunities are planned for pupils to develop writing skills in different subjects, these are not frequent or sharply focused enough to ensure pupils' outstanding progress in writing.
- Leaders' development plans accurately identify areas requiring further improvement and are well understood by staff and members of the governing body. However, the delay between leaders' analyses of pupils' assessment data and the identification of new improvement priorities through action planning is longer than it could be. This slows the school's rate of improvement from that seen in the very best schools.
- School leaders have successfully addressed the key issues outlined at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are now more aware of their individual targets and there are appropriate systems to track pupils' progress in foundation subjects. This indicates the school's good capacity to continue to improve.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the online Parent View questionnaire at the time of the inspection indicated that they believe the school is well led and managed. Partnerships with parents and carers are positive and productive. Parents and carers add greatly to their children's curriculum experiences by raising funds and by giving time to support their children's learning.
- Leaders successfully ensure that discrimination is tackled and that all pupils have an equal opportunity to do well in their learning. The effective curriculum and caring atmosphere ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Consequently, all pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- is enthusiastic, committed to school improvement and offers challenge and support to school leaders in equal measure
- accurately understands the school's strengths and weaknesses
- has successfully ensured that safeguarding requirements are met in full
- has successfully ensured that improvements have been made to outdoor learning environments
- has ensured that performance management systems in the school, including the performance management of the headteacher, are effective
- appreciates that it now needs to become more involved in first-hand monitoring of the impact of the school's actions against pupils' improved achievement, to support an even deeper understanding of the school's work.

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	112513
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	395692

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	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Featherstone (Acting Chair)
Headteacher	Jonathan Brookes
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2008
Telephone number	01246 234585
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