

Cottesbrooke Infant School

Yardley Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham, B27 6LG

Inspection dates 30–31 January 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.

- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where they make good progress.
- Teaching across the school is consistently good, with some examples where pupils' learning in lessons is outstanding.
- All groups achieve well, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 2, many reach standards that are above the national average in English and mathematics.
- The school is a happy place where pupils feel safe and enjoy learning. They behave well in lessons and as they move around the school.
- Pupils from different backgrounds get on well with each other. They are confident, polite and friendly.
- Since the last inspection, the headteacher and the governing body have brought about many improvements in the school, including in teaching, pupils' achievement and pupils' attendance.
- School leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching and on the progress that pupils make. They quickly take any action that is needed.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Chances are missed in the Early Years Foundation Stage for children to learn by exploring and investigating without adult help.
- Some teachers use a limited range of ideas and resources in teaching literacy. This slows the progress that some pupils make.
- Teachers' marking in mathematics does not give pupils, parents and carers a clear idea of how work can be improved.
- Adults other than teachers are not always used well in lessons to help pupils learn, especially when the teacher is talking to the whole class.
- The targets for improvement set by leaders for teachers are not linked directly to the progress made by the pupils they teach.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 part lessons, six of which were jointly observed with school leaders. Inspectors also made a number of shorter visits to observe other aspects of the work of the school, including observing the provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Meetings were held with members of staff including senior leaders, subject leaders and other teachers with positions of responsibility. Inspectors held meetings with two groups of pupils, and spoke informally to a number of pupils at break and lunch time. The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority and with a group of governors.
- Inspectors took account of the 15 responses to Ofsted’s online Parent View questionnaire, and looked at the results of a larger survey of the views of parents and carers carried out by the school. They also spoke to a small number of parents and carers in person. Inspectors considered the 33 completed staff questionnaires they received in making their judgements.
- Inspectors looked at pupils’ books and at teachers’ planning. They also looked at school documents, including information of pupils’ current progress, plans for improving the school, records on pupils’ behaviour and attendance, and at how the school keeps children safe.

Inspection team

Michael Phipps, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Derek Gardiner

Additional Inspector

Brenda Jones

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cottesbrooke Infant School is larger than the average-sized infant school. It has Early Years Foundation Stage classes for Nursery and Reception-aged children.
- Over two thirds of its pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is a much higher proportion than is found nationally. The largest groups are pupils of Pakistani and of Indian heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is slightly higher than national figures. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than is found nationally.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or with a parent in the armed forces.
- The school does not make use of any off-site alternative provision for its pupils.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - providing more chances for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to learn by investigating and exploring with less adult guidance
 - encouraging teachers to use a wider range of teaching techniques and resources to promote children's literacy
 - making sure that teachers' marking in mathematics gives pupils a clear idea of how to improve their work, and helps parents and carers to support their child's learning
 - making best use in lessons of adults other than teachers to help children to learn, especially when the teacher is teaching the whole class.
- Make sure that the targets set by leaders for teachers' improvements are more directly linked to the progress made by the pupils they teach.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills below those which are typical for their age. They make good progress in Nursery and Reception and catch up well so that, by the time they join Year 1, their skills and knowledge are line with those of pupils nationally.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1. Standards at the end of Year 2 are rising rapidly. Pupils leave school by the end of Year 2 with attainment which is above average. In 2012, pupils were the equivalent of around a term ahead of the national average, although their attainment was a little higher in writing and mathematics than in reading. This represents good progress.
- Pupils' progress and standards are good in writing. Pupils frequently write with confidence and at length. They talk about their writing before they start, so they are clear about their ideas.
- Pupils' progress in reading skills is consistently good because teachers build pupils' reading skills systematically year on year. Pupils understand how to link letters and sounds, so they can tackle new words with confidence. As a result, they enjoy books and read regularly.
- Pupils' mathematical skills are well developed. Pupils make good progress in learning about numbers, shapes and counting in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their mathematical understanding is planned and developed carefully through Key Stage 1. As a result, pupils enjoy mathematics and achieve well.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported and achieve more highly than similar pupils nationally.
- The school spends the additional funds from the pupil premium on extra staffing for small-group work in literacy and numeracy, a 'nurture group' for vulnerable pupils, and a home/school support worker. This funding is effective: the achievement of these supported pupils is better than that of similar pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are more than a term ahead of similar pupils nationally, and the gap between these pupils and their classmates is narrower than in most schools.
- Pupils of Pakistani or Indian heritage, and those who speak English as an additional language achieve more highly than similar pupils nationally.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now consistently good across all areas of the school.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. Teachers provide many opportunities for speaking, listening and working together, so pupils' social skills, thinking skills and confidence are well developed.
- Teachers use questions well to help pupils think more deeply. An example of this was in an outstanding Year 1 mathematics lesson in which the teacher's skilful questions made pupils think hard, and prompted them to discuss their ideas enthusiastically in groups.

- The best learning takes place when work is well matched to pupils' abilities. For example, in a Year 2 lesson in which pupils were writing a letter, tasks were carefully suited to each group of pupils, with extra help for lower ability pupils and extra challenge for the more able. This meant that all pupils made good progress.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is good, with the development of children's early writing skills a particular strength. Teachers plan a range of stimulating activities which cover all areas of learning, both indoors and outdoors. Teachers carefully take note of children's achievements so that they can plan the next steps in children's learning. Resources are not always provided, however, which allow children to explore and investigate for themselves, and to develop their own ideas without their learning being directed by adults.
- Reading and writing is taught well. The teaching of letters and sounds is very well structured and builds children's skills and confidence. At times, this structure limits teachers' freedom to use more imaginative approaches to develop pupils' literacy. For example, in a Year 1 literacy lesson, the writing of more-able pupils was limited by the task which was set and by the space available in their booklets for them to write.
- Teachers' oral feedback to pupils in lessons is good. Teachers praise pupils frequently, and make it clear what they have done well. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is generally thorough, but marking is better in English than in mathematics, where it is not always made clear to pupils what they have to do to improve their work, or how parents and carers can support their child's learning.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported by other adults, who run a number of small-group and individual sessions to help pupils who risk falling behind. However, teachers do not always use teaching assistants well in lessons. They sometimes do little more than observe in those parts of lessons when teachers are teaching the whole class.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school is a happy place where pupils enjoy learning. They want to do well in lessons, so they work hard. Pupils know what the school expects, so they behave well in lessons, in the playground and as they move around the school.
 - Pupils from different backgrounds get on well with each other. They co-operate and share well. Pupils are confident, polite, articulate and friendly.
 - Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. Lessons are rarely interrupted by poor behaviour, although the school does have a small number of pupils with behaviour difficulties. Exclusions are rare and only used as a last resort.
 - Pupils say that bullying is rare, and school records confirm this. Pupils understand the different kinds of bullying, and how to report it. They are confident that if they tell an adult, any bullying will stop.
 - Parents have confidence that their children will be well looked after and will be kept safe. They say their children are happy in school, and they have very few concerns about pupils' behaviour.
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- Pupils' attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now at national average levels. The school has taken firm action to encourage parents to send their children to school, and employs an effective home/school support worker. Pupils clearly understand the importance of coming to school regularly.
- The school's 'nurture group' provides valuable and effective support for vulnerable pupils and helps them to develop their basic skills, to learn how to get on with others and to settle well into school.
- Pupils are well looked after in the school's before-school and after-school clubs.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are not outstanding because a small number of pupils lose concentration in lessons at times when their attention is not fully engaged by the teacher.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and governors have built a strong and effective leadership team, with well-defined roles. They have clear ideas on how to improve the school and good plans for how to achieve this. As a result, significant improvements have been made since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved and with it pupils' achievement.
- School leaders at different levels regularly check the quality of teaching. Teachers are set targets to improve their practice that are linked to training, and which affect their salary progression. However, these targets are not directly linked to the progress made by the pupils they teach.
- Regular checks on pupils' progress identify pupils who are falling behind and extra help is quickly given. As a result, these pupils soon catch up.
- Leaders are committed to equality of opportunity and ensure that discrimination of any sort is not tolerated. They make sure that all groups of pupils achieve well in school.
- The school provides a good range of subjects and experiences for pupils, including trips and visitors. Checks on pupils' topic books show that they use what they have learned in literacy in their other subjects.
- The school develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well. Pupils are very sociable and work together well. They have a good understanding of right and wrong, and the school celebrates fully the rich range of pupils' backgrounds and cultures.
- The school makes good use of the light level of support provided by the local authority. This has included training to improve the quality of teaching, and using support from local schools to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- The school's accurate self-evaluation, its good plans for improvement, and its strong record of recent improvement shows its capacity to make further improvements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are experienced and know the school well. They are regular visitors to the school,

so they gain first-hand experience of the quality of teaching and have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They provide good support for the school but, as a result of regular training, are also able to challenge the school to improve further. Governors are fully involved in teachers' performance management procedures and their salary progression. They authorise the spending of pupil premium funding and know what effect this has on pupils' achievement. They discuss the school's performance regularly with the headteacher and understand how the school's performance compares to that of all schools nationally. Governors ensure that all safeguarding requirements are understood and met.

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	103323
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	404868

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	343
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Jones
Headteacher	Luciana Allsopp
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2011
Telephone number	0121 7062742
Fax number	0121 7644313
Email address	enquiry@cottesbrooke-inf.bham.sch.uk

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