

# Cottam Primary School

Haydocks Lane, Cottam, Preston, Lancashire, PR4 0NY

**Inspection dates** 13–14 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' progress in both key stages, especially in writing, is not fast enough to ensure that they achieve well over time.
- In some of the teaching, lesson plans do not fully meet the needs of pupils, especially those who are of average and higher ability, and particularly in writing.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to practise writing across different subjects but these are not effectively used.
- Adult support is not consistently used effectively in lessons.
- Homework has minimal impact on improving skills, particularly in writing, as pupils do not always receive feedback on how to improve.
- Modern technology is underused as a tool to improve learning.
- Pupils are not always sure of their learning targets, especially in writing.
- Subject leaders have not yet made the best possible impact on improving achievement.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, together with the governing body, is beginning to drive forward improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement, especially in reading and mathematics, because more teaching is good than before.
- Leaders have the right plans put in place to bring about good improvements.
- Children in Reception make a good start.
- Some groups of pupils, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those receiving additional funding through the pupil premium, make good progress in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils behave well and have respectful attitudes towards their learning, peers and adults around them. They feel safe and are happy to come to school. Attendance is above average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Inspectors made a number of shorter visits to other lessons. Inspectors also listened to pupils read and jointly scrutinised their work with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils and informal discussions with other pupils. Inspectors also held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, senior leaders and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at documents relating to safeguarding, the performance management of staff, the tracking and assessment of pupils' attainment and progress, records on behaviour and safety and the monitoring of teaching and learning. They looked at the school's spending of the pupil premium funding.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 28 parents and carers in the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own surveys of the views of parents and carers. The views of parents and carers were sought at the start of the school day. Inspectors scrutinised 18 questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Zahid Aziz, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ian Wellens

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Cottam Primary School is a smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families) is below average. There are no children who are looked after by the local authority or children of service families.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. A well-below average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language and few are at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good across the school by ensuring that:
  - assessment information is used consistently to plan lessons which fully match pupils' needs, so that activities challenge and interest all pupils, including those that are of average and higher ability, especially in writing
  - pupils and teachers make greater use of modern technology in the classroom as tools for learning
  - teachers provide all pupils, especially older ones, with clear targets for improvement, particularly for writing and in their homework.
- Raise pupils' standards of attainment, particularly in writing, by:
  - ensuring that writing skills are developed in a systematic manner across different subjects as pupils move through the school
  - support staff are used effectively in the classroom to support individual pupils during teaching sessions.
- Further improve leadership and management in order to have more impact on pupils' achievement and quality of teaching by:
  - developing the skills of subject leaders in monitoring progress in their areas and ensuring that leaders at all levels check pupils' progress regularly
  - ensuring that monitoring provides a sharper focus on weaknesses in teaching and learning.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- As pupils move up the school, they progress at different rates due to inconsistent teaching; as a result, pupils' overall achievement requires improvement. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils do not yet progress at a fast enough rate to ensure that they achieve well. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average but this is not high enough, given that children's skills when starting school are broadly as expected for their age.
- Until recently, weaknesses in teaching in Key Stage 1 did not consistently sustain the good progress that children make in the Reception Year. This resulted in pupils' attainment being erratic across subjects over the past three years. Currently, it is broadly average. Although improvements in teaching are now more evident, it has yet to have marked impact on pupils' overall achievement.
- Slower progress is especially evident in writing in Years 3 and 4. In these classes, and others, individuals' progress is not checked thoroughly enough and, as a result, information about how well pupils are doing is not used effectively in planning future work. This slows pupils' progress.
- The progress of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language requires improvement. Like other pupils, they do not make as much progress in writing as in reading and mathematics.
- School data and checks of pupils' books show that some groups of pupils have started to make faster progress. For example, in Year 1, pupils' work in writing shows they are making better progress because of good teaching. In Year 5 and Year 6, pupils' progress is also improving due to well-planned lessons and good use of marking and feedback.
- Most pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. The phonics screening check of 2012 indicated that standards in Year 1 were above average. The older pupils show a good understanding of books they were reading and are able to articulate their thoughts about the meaning when reading the books.
- The progress of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those pupils receiving additional funding through the pupil premium is improving and they now make good progress in reading and mathematics because of the effective deployment of staff to support them. The gap in attainment between those receiving the pupil premium and other groups in the school is narrowing as measured by their average point scores, although some gap remains in writing.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Due to rigorous monitoring of lessons, the quality of teaching across the school has improved and there is no inadequate teaching. During this inspection, much of the teaching seen was good but overall teaching requires improvement. The work in pupils' books also shows that teaching requires improvement because some teachers do not plan lessons which meet the needs of all pupils.
- While teaching is becoming more effective in meeting the needs of more-able pupils in mathematics, leading to faster progress, this is not yet the case in writing.
- Support staff are not always consistently deployed effectively, especially to provide support to individuals during whole-class teaching.
- Some teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards. However, others miss opportunities to use modern technology to improve their teaching and pupils' learning, particularly for those pupils of lower ability and those with special educational needs.
- The marking of pupils' books is improving across both key stages and pupils check their own work often. As a result, they know better than previously what they need to do to improve. However, comments in pupils' books do not always routinely refer to pupils' learning targets or linked with learning outcomes and, consequently, they do not know if they have achieved them.

- Pupils receive regular homework. However, although this is well prepared by teachers, they provide insufficient feedback on the work to suggest the 'next step' for improvement linked with pupils' learning targets.
- The teaching of the links between letters and sounds (phonics) is effective from the Early Years Foundation Stage upwards, especially for lower-ability pupils, because letter sounds are well taught and one-to-one support is very effective. As a result, almost all pupils make good progress in reading.
- Teaching of mathematics has improved both in Year 1 and Year 2, with more regular checks on progress and the use of a wider range of learning strategies. As a result, more pupils are able to solve mathematical problems and learn how to read the time correctly.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good in the lessons where teaching engages them. Although behaviour is good overall, pupils are not unreservedly positive about the quality of behaviour in the school and a few pupils still find self-discipline hard to achieve both in class and out in the playground.
- Almost all pupils behave well and respectfully towards each other and adults throughout the school, and in the playground they get on well together. For example, older boys playing football self-manage their behaviour.
- Pupils enjoy school and feel safe there. Pupils know what to do if they are worried and who to approach for help. They understand the rules of road safety such as car parking around the school. Most parents report that they are confident that their children feel safe and happy at school and are well looked after.
- Pupils are aware of different types of bullying but say it is rare and that it is dealt with promptly when it does occur. Pupils have a clear understanding of the dangers of using the internet and cyber-bullying.
- The school keeps full records of any incidents, such as a log of any racist incidents, and the records show that such incidents are rare.
- Pupils take on their responsibilities very seriously such as being members of the school council. They consult with their peers and help to improve pupils' well-being such as improving the menu for the lunch. This has gone down well with the pupils who say the quality of the food has improved.
- New pupils to the school settle down quickly because adults and pupils support them effectively. As a result, they are happy, enjoy school life and are keen to learn.
- Attendance has further improved since the previous inspection and is still above average. Pupils are punctual to school and lessons because the school has worked very well with parents to ensure their children attend school regularly and on time.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- The headteacher has high expectations and has resolved most issues such as improving teaching since the previous inspection. The overwhelming majority of staff indicate their full support for her drive for improving standards and this view is shared by parents and governors. However, the school's leadership and management are not yet good because subject leaders have still to fully develop their roles.
- The headteacher has made an accurate assessment of what the school must do to improve further. Together with senior leaders, she has formed a strong, whole-school team. The staff are trained together and as a result, new actions are introduced across the school such as in mathematics and this is improving pupils' progress.
- There are rigorous systems to check on the quality of teaching and there is evidence that more

teaching is now of good quality rather than requiring improvement. However, the senior leaders have yet to strengthen the role of the subject managers so that they consistently monitor, provide support for and challenge teachers so that good teaching is embedded across the school and pupils' achievement improves.

- The performance management targets set for individual teachers are tackling weaker teaching. The thorough use of such targets has been a key reason why teaching has been improving. Improvements since the last inspection demonstrate the school's capacity to improve further.
- The curriculum gives opportunities for pupils to improve their knowledge and experience of the wider world, through topic work. Work seen in topic books indicates that pupils have opportunities to use their writing skills across other subjects. However, teachers do not always capitalise on these opportunities to help pupils develop their writing skills in a systematic manner.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is well rooted through activities that promote cooperative learning and highlight moral dilemmas such as the importance of forgiveness when someone has been bad to you.
- Equality of opportunity is the key to the school's work and staff go the extra mile to meet pupils' differing needs. However, there is more work to be done to ensure that all pupils make the good progress of which they are capable.
- The local authority provides frequent and effective support, especially in raising the quality of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors give good support to the school's leaders. They are well informed and bring a wide range of professional expertise and skills, for example, from education, industry and financial management. The recent restructuring of the governing body has helped to better focus on further improvement, through setting up the strategy committee to measure the impact of new policies and plans that have been put in place. Governors' knowledge of what happens in the school helps them to challenge school leaders effectively, but these efforts are recent and have not had time to make a marked impact on pupils' achievement across the school. Governors make sure that appropriate safeguarding and child protection procedures are in place to keep pupils safe. They have received a wide range of relevant training which has equipped them with skills and knowledge essential for performing their duties. Through scrutiny of school finances, governors are now aware of how pupil premium money is used to support learning. Since the previous inspection, governors have acquired skills to review data and identify the strengths and areas of the school's performance that require improvement. They are well informed about the quality of teaching and have supported the headteacher very well in eradicating inadequate teaching. Governors check that salary awards are only allocated when targets linked to their performance are achieved.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131720
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	402501

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	199
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jon Wright
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lindsay Timms
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 727053
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