

Copthorne Community Infant School

Rodgers Lane, Alfreton, DE55 7FF

Inspection dates 24–25 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Pupils make good progress to reach above average levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- Teaching is good. Exciting activities are well planned and matched closely to pupils' needs.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because the school caters extremely well for them.
- Pupils behave well. They enjoy school, try hard and want to do well. They feel safe in school and help each other at playtime and in lessons.
- Good leadership from the headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body has ensured that the school continues to improve.
- Leaders and governors keep a close focus on pupils' progress and teaching, which has ensured that all pupils do well.
- Relationships throughout the school are very positive and pupils' personal skills are well developed.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Recent improvements that have been made to the teaching of reading and writing have not ensured that attainment in these subjects is as good as in mathematics.
- Pupils' understanding of letters and the sounds they make is not yet high enough.
- Teachers do not always make clear to pupils how to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed parts of 10 lessons. Six were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, the headteacher, a senior leader, pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read.
- Account was taken of the school's information about pupils' attainment and progress, its self-evaluation and plans for future improvement. The inspector also looked at documents and policies concerning school management, including minutes of governing body meetings and information on keeping pupils safe.
- Consideration was given to the 12 responses to the online survey (Parent View) and the 18 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Sue Rath, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average-sized infant school.
- There are four classes in the morning, one for Reception, two for Year 1 and one for Year 2. In the afternoon, there is one class for each year group.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and a very small proportion speak English as an additional language.
- Almost all pupils who join in the Reception class continue their education at the school until they leave at the end of Year 2.
- The percentage of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for particular groups, in this case those known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is average. The percentage who have a statement of special educational needs, or who are supported at school action plus, is below average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all teaching is good or better by:
 - making sure that marking in books helps pupils to understand how they can improve their work
 - giving pupils more guidance on what they are expected to learn, so they know when they have finished a task successfully.
- Strengthen the drive to improve achievement in reading and writing by:
 - ensuring a continuously rigorous approach to the teaching of the letters and the sounds they make (phonics)
 - making full use of the recently introduced teaching methods so that reading and writing improves
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to think independently when writing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children's skills and knowledge when they start in Reception are below those expected for their age especially in their ability to communicate and use language. However, the level of skills on entry varies year on year. For example, some pupils in the present Year 1 had skills and knowledge that were well below those expected nationally when they joined the school.
- Children make good progress in Reception. The range of resources and opportunities for children to explore and investigate enables them to get off to a good start. By the time they join Year 1, their skills and knowledge are broadly in line with those expected nationally.
- This good progress is built upon as pupils move through the school. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, attainment in reading and writing is not as high as in mathematics.
- Pupils enjoy reading and have frequent opportunities to read within school. Recent changes to the way that reading is taught are starting to make a difference to the progress pupils make.
- In the Year 1 national check of pupils' understanding of the sounds that letters make (phonics) last year, results were below average. Changes have been made to the way that pupils are taught phonics. Present information on how well pupils are doing shows that progress has improved and the pupils due to undertake the check this year are likely to do better.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those at school action plus and those with a statement of educational needs, make the same good progress as other pupils and do better than similar pupils nationally.
- In 2012, those pupils in Year 2 who were eligible for pupil premium funding were about a year behind other pupils. However, their attainment was above that of similar pupils nationally. The school's system for checking pupils' achievement shows that the progress of these pupils is beginning to speed up in reading, writing and mathematics. The school is using its funding appropriately to provide additional resources to support these pupils. This includes appointing an additional teacher to reduce class sizes in the morning in Year 1, a class with a higher proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching in the Reception class is well matched to the ages and needs of the children. Resources are well chosen and a wide range of activities stimulates children's interest and extends their knowledge and skills. Children's enjoyment in these activities is demonstrated by the way that they want to complete a task successfully and see it through to the end. The outdoor environment provides opportunities for children to explore and experiment with ideas and develop their communication skills.
- Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is also typically good. Teachers are skilled at getting the best out of the pupils and make sure that little time in lessons is wasted. They have a good understanding of the subjects they teach, and plan activities that interest the pupils. Teachers use their good understanding of how pupils develop new knowledge and skills to promote good learning.

- All pupils benefit from the school's extensive outdoor learning environment. This enhances the quality of learning by enabling all pupils to develop their knowledge and skills, both socially, emotionally and academically, through hands-on activities. For example, the Reception class was working co-operatively to build a shelter for toy animals that they had 'found' in the grounds.
- Well-planned activities in each class enable disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to make the same good progress as their classmates.
- Teachers regularly ask pupils probing questions that are sharply focused. This helps to move learning on quickly, but also to gauge pupils' understanding and to challenge them to think more deeply.
- Changes to the ways that reading and writing are taught are beginning to pay dividends, but these are in the early stages of development and teachers have not had enough time yet to make sure that they are used to their full effect.
- Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to write independently on their own, or to use the knowledge they have developed when learning about the sounds that letters make. This is because teachers provide them with too much help.
- Teachers regularly mark pupils' books and good work is celebrated, but pupils are not told how to improve their work.
- Teachers are starting to help pupils to check if they have completed a task successfully. However, this is not linked to the learning needs of different groups of pupils and is only focused on developing writing.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning through the effective support that they provide for pupils' social and emotional development as well as their academic needs. This is particularly the case when highly focused support is provided for individual pupils.
- Excellent relationships and clear expectations result in classes having a calm and purposeful atmosphere. All pupils are treated equally and there is no discrimination.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour in and around the school is always good. This is because staff work hard to develop children's social and emotional skills from the moment they start school. Specific lessons and nurture groups help pupils to value each other, develop self-confidence and become part of the school community.
- Expectations of behaviour are high and pupils respond positively to the school's procedures for managing behaviour. This is evident in lessons, where pupils attitudes to learning ensure that they work hard.
- Pupils say that behaviour is good and bullying of any kind is rare. They say that any upsets are to do with minor arguments or frustrations and that adults will help them if they are worried. Parents who expressed their opinion believe that behaviour is good and few have any concerns.

- Pupils who sometimes find conforming to rules hard are well supported by specific teaching assistants who provide personalised programmes to support pupils' individual needs.
- Playtimes are great fun and mainly free from any incidents because the school has provided a wide range of activities which keep pupils busy. Some pupils enjoy the additional responsibility of helping others who might be finding playtimes difficult.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe at school. They recognise the need for sensible behaviour, for example when involved in Forest School activities, where they develop a good awareness of possible risks.
- Attendance has improved and is now average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors, have a determination and ambition for the school to be as good as it can be. They are united in their ambition to ensure that all pupils have an equal chance to succeed.
- The leadership and work of the headteacher have led to recent improvements in the quality of teaching. Joint observations of lessons with the headteacher confirm the accuracy of her understanding of teaching and learning.
- Self-evaluation is accurately founded on extensive information from the school's checks on teachers' work and pupils' progress, and identifies appropriate areas for improvement. Plans for future development relate closely to the need to increase pupils' progress. The effect of the work to develop areas such as reading and writing are checked carefully by senior leaders and governors.
- There are robust systems for checking pupils' attainment and progress. The results are analysed rigorously so that any underachievement is identified quickly. Additional support is then provided to ensure pupils make improved progress.
- Senior leaders have a good understanding of the areas they are responsible for and make a positive contribution to school improvement. The special educational needs co-ordinator, for example, has provided good leadership to ensure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- The effective management of the staff's performance and their training has supported improvements to teaching. This has been particularly effective in improving the provision in Reception and developing pupils' skills at linking sounds and letters.
- The range of subjects provided matches pupils' learning needs well. Pupils enjoy their lessons and find the topics they cover interesting and motivating. Pupils in Year 1 were particularly interested in the tadpoles and stick insects that had been brought to school and were drawing detailed pictures of them. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- The local authority has provided good support. Its monitoring has strengthened the school's self-evaluation, and training has been provided for teachers and their assistants to help improve the teaching of reading and writing.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors visit the school regularly and have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They use information on the school's performance to compare it with schools locally and nationally. A clear committee structure is in place which enables governors to develop expertise in specific areas so that they can challenge and support leaders in their drive for improvement. Governors have good training to ensure that they keep up to date, and that newly appointed members are supported as they grow into their role. Along with the headteacher, governors play a full role in performance management and understand its links to teachers' pay progression. The governing body takes safeguarding seriously and ensures that requirements are met. The relevant committee keeps a close check on the school's financial position and that resources are used well. Governors have ensured that the school uses the additional pupil premium funding for particular groups wisely, including those known to be eligible for free school meals. An example of this is the appointment of an additional teacher every morning to reduce class sizes in Year 1 and speed up pupils' progress.

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	112687
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	413379

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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill O'Hagan
Headteacher	Amanda Leslie
Date of previous school inspection	9 October 2008
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