

Cotmanhay Infant School

Beauvale Drive, Ilkeston, DE7 8RR

Inspection dates 27–28 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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

- Achievement is not yet good because progress in reading, writing and mathematics is not consistently strong throughout the school.
- Teaching requires improvement, because not enough lessons are good or better. Over time this has not helped to raise pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2, which has been low.
- Teachers do not always set work that is at the right level for all groups, especially the more able pupils, or check their progress closely enough during lessons. As a result, pupils do not learn at a brisk pace.
- Pupils' achievement in reading, particularly that of weaker readers is held back when teachers do not consolidate their phonic (linking letters to sounds they make) skills enough.
- Teachers do not always ensure that pupils follow up guidance given to them on improving their writing or on speaking clearly and correctly when discussing their work or during conversations.
- Checks made by senior leaders and the governing body do not always focus on the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement, particularly of different groups.
- A small minority of pupils does not attend school regularly.

The school has the following strengths

- Children's progress is mostly good from their starting points in Nursery and Reception classes.
- Teaching in Year 2, which is mainly good, is helping pupils to progress at a faster rate, and their attainment is rising in English and mathematics.
- In Year 1, pupils' reading is getting stronger and showing much better results than those achieved last year.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and they feel safe at school.
- Behaviour is good in lessons, at play and around the school.
- Parents and carers speak warmly of their links with the school and of the care teachers and other adults show for their children.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons or parts of lessons, including one observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with a randomly selected group of pupils, Chair, Vice-Chair and another representative of the governing body and senior and middle leaders. The lead inspector met two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including the school’s own data concerning pupils’ current and recent progress, planning and monitoring documentation, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors took into account the views of 14 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, together with the school’s own evidence of parents’ views. Two inspectors talked informally with a small number of parents and carers in the playground at the start of the second day of the inspection.
- Inspectors also considered 19 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Krishan Sharma, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Susan Tabberer

Additional Inspector

Thelma McIntosh-Clark

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is well above average. This is extra funding provided by the government to support certain groups of pupils. In this school it applies only to pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority, as there are currently no pupils from service families.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- There is a breakfast club, which is not managed by the governing body and was not part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching consistently good or better so that pupils make faster progress and achieve well over time by ensuring that teachers:
 - always have high expectations and set tasks that suitably challenge all groups of pupils, particularly the more able
 - move pupils to the next steps in their learning at a brisker pace
 - comment on pupils' work more precisely as to what they are doing well and what they could do better.
- Raise pupils' attainment in speaking, reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - strengthening pupils' speaking skills so that they can express their ideas and views with greater clarity and with an increasing emphasis on the use of standard English
 - ensuring that weaker readers use their phonic knowledge more consistently
 - making sure that pupils follow up teachers' guidance on how to improve their writing
 - expecting pupils to discuss their mathematical work and explain the reasons for their answers being correct.
- Strengthen leadership and management by making sure that:
 - senior leaders focus their observation of teaching, and reviews of pupils' written work, on the impact of teaching on the progress different groups of pupils make
 - governors are more involved in checking senior leaders' effectiveness in improving pupils' achievement and the use of pupil premium funding.
- Work even more closely with parents and families of pupils who do not attend regularly enough to make sure that attendance rises to at least the national average.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is not consistently good across the school. It is improving, but not strongly enough for them to achieve well and for standards to rise substantially.
- Pupils' progress in developing their speaking skills requires improvement. They do not always express their ideas and views clearly and in correct English. They do not get enough meaningful opportunities to practise their speaking or guidance on the correct use of spoken English.
- Pupils enjoy working with numbers. However, their progress requires improvement. Often, they are not good at explaining how they made their calculations and why they think they got the answer right.
- Across the school, some of the more able pupils make slower progress. Teachers do not have high enough expectations for them and set work that does not advance their learning.
- Children in Nursery make a good start from their low starting points. Most continue to make good progress in Reception. As a result, an increasing number are beginning to meet the expected levels by the time they leave Reception.
- Progress gradually improves and gets stronger during Year 2. Prior to this it has not been good enough to arrest their low attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Currently, an increasing proportion of pupils are meeting the expected levels for their age and standards are beginning to improve at a faster rate than nationally.
- Progress in reading is improving. The projected results for 2013 show that a much higher proportion of Year 1 pupils reached the expected standard in the national phonics test than last year and it is getting closer to the national picture. Some weaker readers demonstrate an insecure grasp of phonics and find it difficult to sound out and build unfamiliar words.
- Writing is improving but not consistently. Pupils can write and sequence simple sentences. Their use of basic punctuation is getting better. Some of them do not follow the guidance which teachers give them to improve their writing. As a result, their progress slows.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress that is similar to their peers. The additional help they get, within the classroom or in small groups, is carefully planned to build on their previous achievement and meet their emerging needs.
- In the 2012 Year 2 national tests, the gap in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups was larger than that found nationally. The school's data shows this gap is narrowing. Pupil premium funds are targeted well to provide one-to-one and small group activities.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not good in many lessons and does not ensure all groups of pupils achieve well, particularly the more able.

- In lessons where teaching is not yet good, work is not pitched at levels which enable all pupils to make the best possible progress. Checking of pupils' progress in these lessons is not precise enough to give them a clear idea of how well they are doing and what they could do to improve their work. As a result, the pace of pupils' learning is held back.
- The teaching of phonics is regular, although it is not yet consistently effective across the school. Staff training has been instrumental in sharpening teachers' and teaching assistants' skills in the teaching of reading.
- Typically, teachers expect pupils to work hard in lessons. Pupils are given numerous opportunities to work with each other and develop their social skills. Teachers and other adults relate well with all groups and set an example for pupils to follow in fostering good relationships. They make regular use of the outdoor areas for promoting pupils' learning.
- In the best lessons, teachers' clear explanations and skilful questioning reflected their strong subject knowledge. The teaching assistants were productively deployed. Teachers are able to maintain high levels of pupil engagement.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those known to be eligible for pupil premium funding, is carefully aimed at improving their basic skills and to increasing their access to all learning activities. Effective guidance provided by the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) ensures these groups continue to receive extra support and that their needs are met accurately.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are keen to learn. Even in lessons where the quality of teaching does not sustain their interest there is rarely any disruption in pupils' learning.
- Children in Nursery and Reception classes develop their social skills well. They get on well with each other and are enthusiastic about all the activities offered to them. They behave responsibly when working and playing on their own or with others.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils know what is acceptable and what is not. Consequently, they are able to reflect on their actions and are aware that they have consequences. In lessons, and in and around the school, pupils are considerate towards each other and adults.
- Behaviour management is effective. Teachers and other adults are consistent in applying the school's expectations. Parents and carers, staff and governors are rightly pleased with standards of behaviour in the school.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They and their parents say that bullying is rare and it is promptly dealt with, when and if it occurs. Pupils are aware that bullying can take different forms, such as that which involves name-calling or misuse of the internet or that which is prejudice-based.
- Attendance shows a modest improvement, but it still remains low. Senior leaders and the local authority are increasing their efforts to work with a small number of families to reduce persistent absenteeism and erratic attendance.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Steps taken by senior leaders so far to maintain good teaching and improve pupils' achievement have met with some notable success, such as the improving picture in the teaching of reading and pupils' knowledge of phonics. However, the impact of leadership and management has not been effective enough to remove the persisting inconsistencies in both areas.
- Checks made on teaching by key leaders are frequent and keep them generally informed about its quality. However, lesson observations and reviews of pupils' written work do not always critically examine the impact of teaching on pupils' progress, particularly of different groups. This means that current checks lead senior leaders to form a somewhat generous view of the proportion of good or better teaching in the school.
- Regular checks are made on pupils' progress. Senior leaders use the results to arrange extra help to meet the needs of vulnerable groups accurately. The SENCO plays a key role in reviewing the continuing progress these groups make and the impact of the provision made for them. These checks help senior leaders ensure that pupils are fairly treated and no group is discriminated against.
- Staff performance management arrangements take into account the contribution teaching makes to pupils' achievement and inform decisions on teachers' pay. Senior leaders are aware that further staff training will need to be refocused in the light of the recommendations made in this report.
- The range of subjects and activities taught are rightly focused on developing pupils' basic skills as well as promoting their personal development. Good provision for art, music, sport, educational visits and inviting visitors to school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school fosters good links with parents and carers and keeps them fully informed about their children's progress at school. Parents and carers appreciate the easy access they have to staff.
- The local authority has maintained regular contacts with the school to discuss its performance. It has now embarked upon providing considerable practical support in assisting the school in improving attendance.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are aware of the school's strengths, although they are less clear about the detail of its weaknesses in teaching and pupils' achievement. As a result, they have been insufficiently involved in holding senior leaders to account for the school's performance. The governing body looks into the pupils' performance data and, in general, understands how the school is doing in relation to similar schools nationally. It is fully aware of the need to establish suitable links between teachers' performance in the classroom and their progression through salary scales. Members of the governing body make sure that safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements. Governors have a good grasp of the school budget, but are less sure about how effectively pupil premium funds are being used to support eligible pupils. Governors have had limited training, especially for skills that are needed to check the work of the school.

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	112570
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	411880

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	301
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sabrina Malik
Headteacher	Jill Brooks
Date of previous school inspection	14 November 2007
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