

Cottesmore Primary School

Kendrew Barracks, Cottesmore, Oakham, LE15 7BA

Inspection dates

3–4 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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 do not make consistently good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Teachers' expectations for what pupils can achieve in lessons are not always high, the pace of learning is sometimes not fast enough, and pupils do not get on to independent activities quickly enough.
- Sometimes work is a little hard for some pupils and too easy for others. Although behaviour is generally good, teachers do not always check regularly in lessons to make sure pupils remain focused and attentive.
- Pupils are not always clear about what they have to do to improve their work, so they do not take enough responsibility for their learning.
- Leaders, managers and governors have not ensured that teaching and achievement have improved enough to be good.
- Leaders' observations of lessons do not focus on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning, and are not followed up with clear next steps for teachers to help them improve.
- Subject leaders do not take a full role in monitoring teaching and supporting staff to improve their work.
- The actions in the school development plan are not monitored closely enough by governors, so school leaders are not rigorously challenged to make sure teaching and achievement are good.

The school has the following strengths

- The school helps pupils who join partway through the year, or in different year groups, to settle in quickly.
- The new sports funding is being used effectively to give pupils the opportunity to learn gymnastics and dance.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils feel safe in the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 15 lessons or part-lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also carried out a series of other shorter visits to lessons with the headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their views of the school, listened to them read, examined their work in books and attended three assemblies.
- Meetings took place with the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor, staff and two local authority officers.
- Inspectors considered the 11 responses to the online Parent View survey and spoke to parents informally before school. The questionnaire responses from 10 staff were also reviewed.
- A range of information provided by the school was checked carefully, including the school's own information about how well pupils are doing, checks on the quality of teaching, planning documents, as well as records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Susan Williams, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michael Stanton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Pupil numbers reduced significantly after the previous inspection. They almost quadrupled during the last school year due to two large influxes of families moving into the community. The school is now a little smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Three-quarters of the teaching staff, subject leaders and a deputy headteacher have joined the school since the previous inspection.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British. Other pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, although there is no other significant group.
- The school receives pupil premium funding for the vast majority of its pupils (this is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and other groups).
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is similar to national levels. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave partway through their primary school education is above average.
- It is not possible to make a valid judgement against current floor standards, the minimum expectations for attainment and progress set by the government, as there were not enough pupils in Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so it is consistently good or better and pupils make good progress across Key Stages 1 and 2 by ensuring that:
 - teachers insist on a high work rate in lessons, so they proceed at a faster pace and pupils are involved in activities more quickly
 - pupils are given work that is closely matched to their ability levels, so it is challenging but achievable
 - teachers check on learning more regularly and intervene where necessary so pupils remain focused on activities and make rapid progress
 - pupils have more opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning by working independently or in groups
 - pupils are given clear next steps so they know how to improve their work.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - focusing observations of teaching sharply on pupils' progress in lessons, and giving teachers clear feedback on how their teaching can be improved
 - involving subject leaders more fully in monitoring the quality of teaching and driving improvements
 - ensuring that governors monitor actions in the school development plan more closely, so they can hold school leaders rigorously to account for teaching and achievement being good.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement as pupils do not make consistently good progress across Key Stages 1 and 2. All groups of pupils, including those who join or leave the school at times other than the usual time, do not make as much overall progress as they could during their time in school.
- The school uses pupil premium funding to support single-age classes across all age groups. A member of staff also has a specific role to provide individual support to help pupils to catch up with others, and to provide emotional support for pupils and families who are facing difficult circumstances. It is not possible to compare the attainment of pupils supported by this funding against others, as most pupils are eligible. Progress is accelerating, particularly for pupils who receive one-to-one tuition, although it is not yet consistently good across the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive extra support in lessons. The school has worked closely with schools in other countries to ensure they knew how to support new pupils joining the school, and staff visited a school in Cyprus to meet pupils and talk to staff. Although progress is improving for these pupils, it is not yet good across the school. However, attainment gaps are starting to narrow and the focus on supporting pupils throughout their time in the school shows how effectively equality of opportunity for pupils' learning is promoted.
- Pupils made faster progress in developing their writing and mathematics skills in Year 1 and Year 5 last year. Sometimes, teachers' expectations of how much progress pupils can make in lessons are limited. On occasions, pupils have limited opportunity in lessons to develop their learning by working independently, and this limits the progress they make. When this happens pupils sometimes lose their focus on learning.
- There is some variability in children's skills and knowledge when they enter Reception. They are often at or above the levels usually found for their age, but in 2012 they were lower than expected. Staff provide children with a wide range of activities which support all areas of their learning, and ensure there is a focus on developing communication and numeracy skills. For example, staff ask children questions about their work during biscuit-making activities and reinforce their knowledge of numbers when exploring in the water. Standards are typically above average when children move into Key Stage 1. In 2013 the majority of children reached a good level of development when they entered Year 1.
- Pupils enjoy reading and like being able to choose their own books from the well-stocked library. Early reading skills are well developed and the proportion of pupils achieving the national standard in the Year 1 phonics (the sounds that letters make) check in 2012 was above average. A similarly strong performance was maintained in the check in 2013.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good across the school. Sometimes, teachers' expectations are not high enough and the pace of learning slows. On some occasions, introductions to lessons are a little long. This means pupils have less time in the lesson to work independently or in groups to develop their work, and some pupils start to lose interest in their learning.
- Sometimes work is not pitched precisely enough to pupils' levels of ability, so it is too easy for

more-able pupils and too hard for less-able pupils, and they make less progress than they could. Teachers do not always check carefully in lessons the pupils are making enough progress, adapting activities or giving pupils additional help where necessary to maintain a faster pace of learning.

- In the best teaching, pupils make rapid progress. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson where pupils were writing descriptions, the teacher gave them opportunity to work independently and checked carefully on their progress throughout, making suggestions and adaptations to keep up the rate of learning. Pupils had the opportunity to share their work and were encouraged to underline their best writing, which other pupils circulated around the room and shared.
- There are some examples of clear feedback on pupils' work with 'wow' and 'now' comments, although this is not used consistently by all staff to help pupils improve their work. Pupils are not always clear in lessons what they need to focus on to improve their work and to help them take more responsibility for their own learning.
- Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff assess children's individual needs very carefully and plan work to help them develop skills. For example, some pupils who find speech difficult are encouraged to use their mouths to blow bubbles. Teachers and other staff check on learning carefully throughout sessions, and adapt activities and make suggestions to move children's learning on to support their good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are not equally positive in all areas of the school. In some lessons, particularly when there are longer introductions or work is a little easy, pupils lose their focus in learning and this slows their progress.
- Around the site, in assemblies and at playtimes behaviour is generally good. Pupils take on responsibilities such as being a member of the school council, and older pupils look after younger pupils in the playground. The school is effective in promoting good relationships and ensuring discrimination is not tolerated.
- Pupils say behaviour is usually good, although they do say some lessons are disturbed by pupils talking. They say that they feel safe in school and are aware of how to keep themselves safe such as with strangers. They know about different types of bullying such as cyber-bullying and name-calling. They do not think bullying is an issue in the school and say that teachers would sort it out if it did occur. School records show that incidents are rare, and they are dealt with effectively.
- Attendance is broadly average and pupils are routinely punctual to school and lessons.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leaders, managers and governors have not ensured that the school has improved enough to sustain good teaching and achievement. Although observations of teaching are carried out regularly, these do not have enough focus on pupils' progress and teachers are not given precise feedback about what will help them improve their teaching.
- The school has started to develop the role of the new subject leaders but they are not yet fully involved in monitoring the quality of teaching, driving improvements in their areas of

responsibility or helping staff to improve their teaching.

- The school has a development plan with appropriate priorities. However, it is not clear enough how the actions taken will be monitored by governors so they can hold senior leaders to account to make sure actions make a difference to teaching and achievement.
- The school has updated the way it manages staff performance in line with national policy changes. These are linked to the teachers' standards (national standards for teachers) and pupils' progress. There are some examples of where staff have been supported and teaching has improved, but not all leaders have had a role in developing teaching so that is it good overall.
- Governors and senior leaders have worked closely with the local authority and other agencies to prepare the school for the dramatic increase in numbers at relatively short notice. Building work has taken place and new staff have been recruited. This unusual situation has been managed well. The school works closely as part of the community to support families facing difficult situations.
- The curriculum is mainly taught through topics, with whole-school themes that the pupils themselves develop. For example, through the 'enterprise' theme pupils budgeted, prepared products and spent money. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively in regular assemblies with opportunities to reflect about others, sessions to develop skills working together at the beginning of term and an adult 'friend' who supports pupils with social issues.
- The new sports funding is effectively allocated by employing sports coaches to train all staff in gymnastics and dance. This helps pupils to develop healthy lifestyles and to have better physical well-being. Additional sports clubs have also been set up, including a Year 5 and 6 club for girls to encourage them to take part in competitive sport. There are also coaches to engage pupils in sporting activities at lunchtimes. The school has appropriate plans to monitor the impact of this provision and to report this to governors.
- The local authority has provided useful support to help senior leaders monitor the work of the school and check on the quality of teaching, and so help staff to improve their practice. There are examples of where this has made a difference but this has not helped the school to ensure teaching is consistently good.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very supportive and have worked closely with the local authority to provide additional accommodation. They are regularly updated on how staff performance is managed, and sign off pay awards for staff who meet their targets. They receive updates from the headteacher on the quality of teaching and are aware of where underperformance has been tackled and what support has been provided. They understand performance data and discuss pupils' progress regularly. They discuss how pupil premium is spent and have been involved in decisions related to this spending. They visit regularly and have started to focus their visits on the school development plan, although they have not challenged senior leaders rigorously enough to make sure teaching and achievement improve rapidly. Safeguarding policies and procedures meet national requirements and the site is particularly secure.

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	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. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	120041
Local authority	Rutland
Inspection number	424992

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Bews
Headteacher	Carol Jamison
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2012
Telephone number	01572 812278
Fax number	01572 812326
Email address	office@cottesmore.rutland.sch.uk

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