

Cotsford Infant School

Cotsford Park, Horden, Peterlee, County Durham, SR8 4TB

Inspection dates 17–18 December 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.

- The headteacher, governors and all staff have brought about considerable improvement in the school's work since the last inspection. Pupils' achievement has risen markedly and they are making faster progress.
- Pupils make good progress from starting points which are often below average when they enter the Reception class. Attainment in tests at the end of Year 2 has been above average for the last two years.
- Teaching is good. Teachers are very knowledgeable, manage their classes well and make good use of exciting resources to make sure pupils enjoy learning.
- Pupils behave well and feel very safe in school. They know how to look after each other and are polite and respectful to staff. They clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and have a growing awareness of their rights and responsibilities.
- Leadership and management are good. Pupils' progress is tracked very carefully and the effect of any extra help they are given is rigorously monitored. Staff are keen to try new approaches, particularly to the teaching of reading, which is now a strength of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is good, but not yet outstanding. The most-able pupils are not always fully challenged to enable them to reach the highest levels of attainment in writing and mathematics.
- Attendance is below average. Children, from a minority of families, do not attend regularly and sometimes arrive late for school.
- Although narrowing, a gap in attainment between those pupils eligible for free school meals and that of their classmates remains.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons and part-lessons including two observed jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) to smaller groups of pupils.
- Discussions were held with parents, pupils, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation.
- There were too few (two) responses to the on-line questionnaire, (Parent View) for these to be considered. The inspector looked at the responses to the school's own parental survey and at those from school staff.

Inspection team

Ann Ashdown, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This infant school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families, is well above average.
- All pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is well above average as is the proportion supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of already good teaching and increase the proportion of outstanding teaching to raise achievement further by:
 - ensuring that the most-able pupils are always fully challenged with demanding tasks to enable them to reach the higher levels of attainment in writing and mathematics
 - continuing to develop varied teaching strategies to promote the achievement of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and so reduce further the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils.
- Improve attendance and punctuality by:
 - working even more closely with a minority of families whose children are not attending school regularly or arriving on time.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress at Cotsford Infant school. Work in their books, work displayed on classroom walls and the school's detailed tracking data all confirm that pupils achieve well over time.
- Children come into the Reception class with skills which are below those typical for their age. They make good progress and reach standards which are broadly average and sometimes above average when they enter Year 1.
- Pupils continue to make good progress throughout Key Stage 1. Results in teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 improved markedly in 2012. They have been above average for the last two years in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils achieve particularly well in reading. At the end of Year 1 pupils' results in the national phonics screening check (a check to see if pupils understand the link between letters and the sounds they make) are just below average, but by the end of Year 2 an above-average proportion of those pupils who retake the test are successful.
- Pupils' progress in reading continues to speed up as they move through the school. Good quality, systematic phonics teaching and innovative approaches to teaching reading help pupils to become proficient readers and enjoy reading for pleasure.
- In mathematics pupils develop good skills which they use to solve real-life problems. Year 2 pupils extended their understanding of division well as they calculated how Santa could share his parcels equally between two sacks.
- Pupil premium money is spent wisely on, for example, staff training, expert counselling to build pupils' confidence as learners and on reading resources for parents to use with their children. As a result, pupils eligible for free school meals make good progress and reach average standards. However, although it is narrowing, a gap in attainment of approximately one term between these pupils and that of their classmates remains.
- All groups of pupils, including the most-able, achieve well, particularly in reading. However the school recognises that the most-able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently well to enable them to achieve the highest levels in all subjects.
- The high numbers of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because they receive timely, sensitive and sharply focused help from teachers and teaching assistants.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and in some lessons elements of the teaching are outstanding. Pupils respond to this good teaching by working hard and making good progress. Teachers manage their classes well and lessons are conducted in an atmosphere of respect and trust.
- Skilled teaching in the Reception class combined with a welcoming and stimulating environment ensures that children feel safe and quickly become confident learners both indoors and out. Designing and delivering Christmas cards, acting out a nativity play and developing their literacy skills to order words in a sentence correctly were all activities which were seen to help them make good progress and enjoy learning.
- Carefully planned lessons and the use of interesting resources ensure that pupils at Cotsford Infants enjoy learning. In a literacy lesson Year 1 and 2 pupils were given an exciting stimulus for their writing when it was reported by an eyewitness and on the news that a dragon had been seen in Horden. They constructed imaginative sentences using both adjectives and connectives to describe just what this dragon was like.
- Teachers are very knowledgeable. They explain topics clearly and ask perceptive questions to check how well pupils understand what they are learning.

- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are given tasks which are well matched to their needs and are not too easy or too hard. Both teachers and teaching assistants give them skilled support so they make good progress in line with that of their classmates.
- Pupils' work is marked thoroughly. Consequently they are clear about how to achieve the targets they have been set.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well in lessons. Pupils work together in pairs and teams to share resources, speak and listen to each other and discuss their ideas sensibly.
- Teachers have very high expectations of what their pupils can achieve. Although all groups of pupils make good progress in lessons, in a few lessons, pupils, especially the most-able, are not always fully challenged to achieve the highest levels. They are sometimes not moved on quickly enough to the next activity as soon as they are ready.
- The school also recognises the need to maintain its focus on developing innovative teaching strategies to further raise the attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils typically behave well and have good attitudes to learning. They move calmly around the school and play happily together in the school yard. In the dining hall they were seen being polite and sensible despite the excitement of eating their special Christmas dinner and being surrounded by staff wearing their colourful Christmas jumpers.
- In lessons pupils are keen to answer questions, enthusiastic about what they are doing and proud of their work.
- Pupils say how very safe they feel in school. In response to the school's own survey parents said they are entirely happy with the way their children are looked after. Pupils have a growing awareness about keeping themselves safe from dangers, for example from strangers and when using the internet. They understand that there are different types of bullying such as cyber-bullying but are confident that if bullying occurred in school, staff would quickly sort it out.
- Records show that pupils typically behave well. There have been no exclusions from school. Incidents of bullying or of the use of racist language are extremely rare.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through meaningful assemblies and work in 'rights respecting' lessons. The school is proud to have gained the Level 1 Rights Respecting Award which has contributed well to pupils' very good understanding of their rights and responsibilities and the need to treat others with kindness and respect.
- Attendance is below average and a minority of pupils do not arrive at school on time. Despite the school's efforts to raise awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality, a minority of children do not attend school regularly. The school is committed to working even more closely with these children's families to raise their attendance and improve their punctuality.
- Pupils and their parents are very appreciative of the good personal support the school gives. Many children, particularly those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, benefit from the skilled help they receive from teachers and teaching assistants and that given by the specialist counselling service, The Place2Be.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher, middle managers, governors and all staff have worked together to successfully improve the school and have good capacity to improve it further. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses and have identified, through accurate self-evaluation, further ways to improve the school.
- The perceptive leadership of the headteacher is good. She is well supported by talented senior and middle managers who ensure good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage and of

work in literacy and numeracy.

- The tracking of pupils' progress is now much sharper. When pupils are given extra help this is monitored very carefully to check what effect it is having. If it is not working, new approaches, for example, in teaching reading, are quickly put in place to speed up pupils' progress.
- Staff performance is well managed and realistic targets for improvement are set. Lessons are monitored carefully and support and high quality training are given to help teachers improve their skills.
- All pupils are given equal and good opportunities to succeed and this is reflected in the good progress they all make. However the school is not complacent and has rightly identified that improving the attainment of the most-able and those pupils eligible for free school meals is an area for further improvement.
- The school works closely with local junior schools to ensure that information about pupils' attainment and progress is shared so pupils have a smooth transition between schools at the end of Year 2.
- Funding to support physical education is spent well on specialist sports coaching in dance, games and gymnastics which both improves pupils' physical well-being and adds to their enjoyment of learning.
- The curriculum provides a balance of interesting topics for pupils to study. It develops their basic skills of literacy and numeracy well and successfully promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils speak enthusiastically about trips and visits they have been on and exciting activities that happen at school. During the inspection they enjoyed visiting the cinema to see 'The Polar Express' and were particularly impressed with the chocolate milkshakes and marshmallows served during the interval.
- The local authority provides good quality light touch support for the school. The educational advisor visits each term and has provided support for governors and help with school self-evaluation and target-setting.
- Safeguarding requirements are met. Staff are well trained and fully aware of risk assessment and child protection procedures.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved since the last inspection. Governors are now much more involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's work and setting priorities for improvement. Governors are well-trained and help to ensure that children are kept safe. Finances are well-managed. Governors hold the school to account for ensuring that pupil premium funding is spent wisely and are rigorous in ensuring that this spending gives good value for money. They are increasingly knowledgeable about the school's performance data, the quality of teaching and how teachers' performance is managed and linked to salary rewards. They make good use of their expertise to provide support for the school, for example, in helping boys to enjoy reading.

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	114151
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	425803

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	5–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dennis Maddison
Headteacher	Rachel Cook
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2011
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