

# Cottam Primary School

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

**Inspection dates** 21–22 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- From starting points that are in line with their age pupils achieve well in writing and very well in reading and mathematics. This ensures good preparation for the next stage in their education.
- The most able pupils, those eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress.
- Teaching is good with examples of outstanding teaching.
- Many lessons include activities that ensure pupils enjoy learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to make sure tasks set meet the learning needs of all pupils.
- This is a caring school and pupils say they feel safe.
- Behaviour is good. Those who have difficulty controlling their actions are managed effectively and rarely disturb others.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of stimulating and exciting experiences for pupils.
- The headteacher puts into practice her great determination that pupils should have every opportunity to flourish and makes sure that pupils 'aim high' for themselves.
- School leaders including governors work very well as a team. Their successful actions since the previous inspection have had a positive impact on pupils' achievements and the quality of teaching. The school continues to get better.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently outstanding.
- Achievement in writing is not as good as it is in reading and mathematics.
- Some subject leaders do not have sufficient impact on improving teaching and achievement in their subjects across the school.
- Skills of senior leaders and governors need further development to succinctly analyse data on the progress of groups of pupils in order to plan for further improvement.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 13 lessons. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with: school staff; groups of pupils; senior staff and leaders with responsibility for a specific subject; governors; parents and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school’s work and looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding documents, the school’s procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance, its development plans, records of pupils’ standards and progress, documents relating to attendance and behaviour, and pupils’ work in their books.
- There were 80 parental responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) which the inspectors took into account alongside the responses to the school’s own parental survey. Thirteen responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff were taken into account.

## Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Heap

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Cottam is smaller than the 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. Very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds or speak English as an additional language.
- Since the previous inspection the local authority has helped the school develop a link with Strike Lane Primary School, an outstanding school where the headteacher is a National Leader in Education. They have also provided support from a literacy consultant.
- As a result of the previous inspection, monitoring visits have been carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI).
- 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?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding and thereby drive pupil progress at an even faster rate, especially in writing, by making sure that:
  - pupils are given time in lessons to respond to teachers' marking in order to improve and edit their work, especially their writing
  - teachers have more opportunities to observe outstanding practice within the school and beyond
  - it is clear when assessments take place and use this information to accelerate progress, particularly as pupils move from one year group to the next.
- Improve further the leadership and management, including governance by:
  - developing the skills of subject leaders to enable them to effectively carry out observations of teaching and learning across the school to help improve the quality of teaching in their subjects
  - sharpening the skills of senior leaders and governors in analysing how all groups of pupils are progressing and using this information to precisely plan future actions to help improve the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Links between school, home and nurseries are good and this helps children settle quickly into school routines in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most children start school with skills that are in line with those typically expected for their age. They do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are well prepared for learning in Key Stage 1.
- In the 2013 Year 1 reading test, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level was an improvement on the previous year and higher than the national average. This is because teachers and teaching assistants are highly skilled in the teaching of phonics (matching letters to the sounds that they make). Those pupils who struggle to read are given one-to-one support leading to rapid improvements.
- Published results in 2013 show a significant improvement in attainment. By the time pupils left school at the end of Year 6 attainment in reading and mathematics was significantly above national levels. Attainment in writing was above average.
- The 2013 end-of-Key-Stage-2 test results showed that pupils made excellent progress in reading and mathematics and good progress in writing.
- Attainment in reading and writing by the end of Year 2 has improved to above the national average. Mathematics remains in line with the national average but inspectors looked at Year 1 and 2 books which show rapid acceleration across reading, writing and mathematics due now to consistently good and better teaching throughout Key Stage 1.
- The most able pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because their different needs are quickly identified and good support from teachers and teaching assistants helps each of them to make progress in reaching their targets. Pupils from minority ethnic groups make good progress. The few who speak English as an additional language make at least good, and some better, progress than their peers.
- The school provides very good support for those pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium which demonstrates the school's commitment to equal opportunities. Assessment information shows that gaps in attainment between eligible pupils and their peers reduce as pupils move up through the school. However, although in the 2013 national tests the attainment of Year 6 pupils eligible for free school meals was two terms ahead of their classmates in reading, it was a term behind in writing and two terms behind in mathematics. Nevertheless, good progress overall was made given their starting points.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good with some examples of excellent teaching; this helps pupils to make good progress.
- Phonics is taught extremely well throughout the school and this was seen first-hand when a group of Reception and Years 1 to 4 pupils came together. The session was exceptionally well-planned so that pupils became enthralled in a wide range of exciting activities moving at a very quick pace. However, when learning about the sound 'igh', one pupil interrupted with an observation that there were other letters that make the same sound and gave the example of words such as 'time' and 'like'. Without hesitation, the teacher immediately adapted her plans and pursued the opportunity to stretch pupils' learning. All pupils made outstanding progress in a relatively short space of time.
- There is a whole-school approach to teaching mathematics and there are now more opportunities using topic work to bring the use of numeracy and literacy into real-life situations which pupils enjoy.
- Throughout the school there is evidence of new technologies being used to fully engage pupils and support their learning well.
- Teachers usually use their knowledge of pupils' learning to plan work that is hard enough for all

abilities. For example, in a Year 2 English lesson, some pupils were taken out of their lesson to have a high degree of support from the teaching assistant to help them to get started with writing their poem about a pirate. Effective questioning helped the pupils to think for themselves about a range of vocabulary to describe the picture they had each drawn the previous day. The most able pupils rose to the challenge of writing three verses, each with a specific brief. All pupils made good progress.

- Effective teamwork by teachers and skilled teaching assistants guarantees a high level of support for all groups of pupils.
- Transition between classes is not always effective because teachers do not record the date of their assessments precisely, especially the records used in pupils' books. As a result, when pupils move from one year group to another, teachers are not always able to plan precisely enough to accelerate pupils' progress in the first few weeks. The school recognises this issue and has plans in place to allow for smoother transition as pupils move up the school.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and now consistently provide good written advice to pupils on how to improve their work. However, pupils are not always given enough time in lessons to correct and edit their work in order to help them to learn from their mistakes.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. When children join Cottam, they learn from an early age how to value each other, the adults around them and their school community. There is a strong atmosphere of mutual respect throughout the school.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils develop positive friendships with each other and are set good examples by the older pupils acting as role models. Each day, Year 6 pupils sell snacks during the morning break. Inspectors observed the younger pupils lining up in an orderly fashion until it was their turn to be served. Selecting the correct coins, they were simultaneously using their numeracy skills, bringing learning to life.
- A toy sale organised by the school council during the inspection was also evidence of how the pupils like to raise money for school funds and for charities. They project manage such events with enthusiasm and precision.
- Occasionally, when pupils fall out with each other, reminders are needed from staff on appropriate behaviour and pupils respond positively.
- Bullying is rare but there are appropriate systems in place when this is the case. Records illustrate that these procedures are followed. Pupils told inspectors about their understanding of different types of bullying and this was reinforced when looking in topic books. There are examples of pupils writing about the dangers of making friends 'on-line'.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school because adults care for them well and children look after each other.
- At breaks, the expansive outdoor area in which pupils can play is well staffed. However, supervisors occasionally have to be reminded that pupils need to be kept away from the fence adjacent to the public bridle path.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and the vast majority arrive in plenty of time to school in the mornings.
- The primary school sport funding is being allocated towards pupils and staff working with external coaches. There is a broadening of the sports curriculum to include participation in dance across all year groups. This is encouraging pupils to lead healthy lifestyles and promotes pupils' well-being.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher want the very best for the school and have the determination to successfully steer school improvement. Areas for development identified at the

previous inspection and during the HMI visits have been dealt with effectively in a relatively short space of time.

- The local authority's successful instigation of a link with another primary school is providing opportunities for leaders and managers to see outstanding practice in another setting. However, subject leaders have yet to develop their skills in observing teaching across the school in order for it to have a full impact on improving teaching in their areas of responsibility.
- Teachers have visited other schools but do not yet have enough opportunities to share outstanding practice both across the school and beyond.
- There is now a whole-school approach to teaching reading, writing and mathematics and an improved system to check on the quality of teaching.
- The curriculum now ensures that every opportunity is taken for pupils to use and develop their numeracy and literacy skills. Inspectors clearly saw how engaged all pupils are in the whole-school writing theme week which is currently encouraging pupils to imagine and share their thoughts on what is behind the 'tiny door' found in the skirting board of the Reception classroom and in the corridors of Key Stage 1 and 2.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given good attention and the curriculum meets pupils' needs well. It is enriched by a range of after-school and lunchtime activities. Visitors to the school and trips linked to topics provide experiences that pupils remember and enjoy talking about.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors bring a wealth of experience from a range of backgrounds and professions and are extremely supportive of the school. Together with the senior leadership team they are committed to continual improvement. They have a good understanding of how well pupils are progressing. Their overview of the quality of teaching and how it is linked to checking on how staff carry out their duties is directly linked to the salary structure. Since the previous inspection, they have created their own development plan which has ensured they can improve on how they carry out their duties. The standards and effectiveness committee provides an appropriate balance of support alongside holding staff to account for improvements in pupils' progress. They monitor the progress of pupils eligible for pupil premium to confirm that the spending is effective. However, senior leaders and governors have yet to sharpen their skills in succinctly analysing how all groups of pupils are progressing and using this information to plan future actions precisely to help improve the school. They effectively check that the new sports funding is being used to bring about improved access to sporting activities. Governors undertake statutory duties, making sure that pupils and staff are safe and the budget is well managed.

## 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>	434101

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>	203
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jon Wright
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lindsay Timms
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 March 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 727053
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