

Cottons Farm Primary School

Sheridan Street, Sinfin, Derby, DE24 9HG

Inspection dates 7–8 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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.

- Pupils now make good progress from their entry to the Nursery class. By the end of Year 6, escalating progress means that the current group have reached standards that are close to average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good and pupils respond well to their teachers' expectations of them. Teachers' enthusiasm and good quality advice on how to improve further are improving pupils' learning.
- All pupils, including those newly arrived, disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who receive the pupil premium funding, make good progress because their individual needs are quickly assessed and support for them is put in place where needed.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. The pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to succeed. They are polite, well mannered and often help others. Pupils feel safe and many set a good example for their peers.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, which they say is 'a friendly place'. The range of interesting topics and themes is complemented by the strong values of the school and this contributes to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development'.
- School leadership has strengthened since the previous inspection. The good leadership of the executive headteacher and the head of school have driven up the quality of teaching and standards substantially over the last year.
- Governors are passionate about, and committed to, the school's success. They visit the school regularly and provide good levels of support and challenge, ensuring that the school continues to improve rapidly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers and support staff in lessons do not always create high enough levels of challenge and raise the aspirations of all pupils so that they believe in themselves and reach their true potential.
- Often, in the Nursery and Reception classes, progress slows because children are expected to make their own learning choices, before they are actually ready to do this for themselves.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed ten lessons and was joined by the executive headteacher for one of them and the head of school for six others. All of the staff responsible for teaching were seen. The inspector also observed support sessions for pupils who need extra help with their learning.
- The lead inspector was also present for a whole-school assembly.
- The inspector listened to pupils read in class, and observed a volunteer supporting pupils with their reading. She spoke informally with pupils during the inspection, gathering their views and experiences of school life. She spoke with the Chair, vice chair and a third member of the Governing Body, and held meetings with the senior school improvement adviser, and school staff, including the special educational needs coordinator and subject leaders.
- Not enough parents responded to the online Parent View survey for results to be published. The inspector spoke to parents and carers who were bringing their children to school and read through the results of the school's own surveys.
- The inspector analysed the contents of 17 staff questionnaires completed during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's information on pupils' current progress, planning documents, checks carried out by leaders on the school's effectiveness, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- A visit was made to the breakfast club.

Inspection team

Aune Turkson-Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cottons Farm is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is in a federation with Ash Croft Primary School and both share the leadership of an executive headteacher and a single governing body. The school has its own designated head of school.
- A much higher proportion of pupils than average join the school during the school year.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding provided for looked-after children, and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is currently made up of a morning Nursery class and full-time Reception class.
- The school runs its own breakfast club daily.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching even more effective so that pupils make more rapid progress, by ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants:
 - regularly set challenging tasks and consistently express their highest expectations of all pupils, so that they believe in their own capabilities and achieve their very best
 - in the Nursery and Reception classes, check that all pupils are confident and ready to make their own choices, before they are given the freedom to work without adult guidance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Nursery class with skills and abilities that are generally well below the levels typically seen at their age. They make a good start, settle quickly and soon develop positive attitudes to learning. Pupils continue to make good progress, from their starting points, through the Reception even though around half are new to the class and have little or no pre-school experience, improving their skills, but remaining at levels below those expected for their age.
- Pupils' progress has improved dramatically and is good, and current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach standards around national averages by the end of the year. Results have generally been significantly below average in the past but have been improving since the previous inspection. Current standards of pupils in the school are improving rapidly in all year-groups. School information and pupils' current work indicate that pupils, including the most able, are on track to improve further in 2014.
- Proportions of Year 6 pupils last year making expected progress were similar to national figures, but with too few exceeding expectations. In the current Year 6, a higher proportion of pupils than that seen nationally are on track to make better-than-expected progress in reading, writing and in mathematics by the end of the year. This reflects the good progress now made across the school by the most-able pupils.
- The attainment of Year 6 pupils eligible for the pupil premium last year was behind their peers in school by two and a half terms for writing, three and a half for reading and slightly more than four terms for mathematics. Equivalent pupils currently in the school achieve well and gaps in attainment between these pupils and their classmates are closing quickly. They are currently working at similar levels to their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics and are making good progress. Gaps are closing because the extra funding is used effectively to provide highly skilled staff to lead a variety of extra support activities.
- Year 1 pupils achieved results well-below national averages in the annual screening check in phonics in 2013. However, this was an improvement from the previous year. By the time pupils repeat the test in Year 2, they have improved their standards of reading considerably.
- Pupils' standards in reading have risen consistently over recent years and the promotion of reading across the school is strong. All pupils have positive attitudes and read regularly, showing their enthusiasm and interest. Older pupils act as reading buddies for the younger ones and several volunteers make regular visits to listen to pupils read.
- Writing standards have risen since the previous inspection. Pupils write accurately for a range of purposes, with high levels of competence and confidence. They frequently review and check their own work so that they know how to improve further. Pupils take great pride in their work, and are keen to gain their own 'pen-licence'.
- In numeracy, teachers and other adults make good use of varied and colourful resources to help pupils learn. Regular morning 'BAT' (bonds and tables) sessions help pupils to improve their essential mathematical skills and they are encouraged to explain how they have solved problems. This improves their confidence and understanding of the subject and has had a positive impact on raising achievement across the school.
- Additional sports funding is used well and teachers are working with specialists to improve their own skills. Training teaching and support staff and strengthening links with other schools has

raised the profile of active sport across the school and greater numbers of pupils are now attending clubs and are active at playtimes.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive good support and achieve well as a result. Additional funding to provide specialised adult support for smaller groups has been used effectively to promote these pupils' progress.
- The achievement of pupils from minority ethnic groups is similar to that of other pupils. Those who speak English as an additional language also make good progress because the school identifies their language needs early on and provides good support. Expertise shared across the federation has helped to provide early language support.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely together in lessons to make sure that activities are interesting, motivating and suitably demanding for most pupils. Teaching assistants have a good impact on learning and frequently deliver additional teaching and catch-up sessions outside the classroom.
- All disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive good quality support at the right level for them, within lessons and in one-to-one or small-group activities. This good-quality support also extends to those for whom English is an additional language. Pupils appreciate this and, in the relaxed and friendly environment, are encouraged to do their best.
- The best teaching encourages the skills of pupils as keen learners who willingly rise to the challenges set for them. Pupils frequently use prompts and resources in the classroom and are becoming more confident about what they can achieve. For example, Year 2 pupils annotating the qualities of different characters from a story helped themselves to dictionaries to check the spellings of their own choices of tricky adjectives. This showed their confidence and positive attitudes to helping themselves to learn.
- Pupils learn exceptionally well in some lessons because adults' expectations of them are high and they are consistently set work which is challenging for all. Because of this, their belief in themselves and what they are capable of is high. This is not yet the case in all lessons and, as a result, pupils do not always progress as rapidly as they could.
- Teachers are becoming more effective in linking activities with pupils' targets so that the pupils understand how they can achieve greater success. Pupils know their learning targets and can pinpoint how well they are doing, by referring to targets displayed on the classroom wall. This good practice is spreading across the school. This is boosting progress.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes quickly gain positive enjoyment for learning and their overall progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. However, adults sometimes expect them to get on with activities and to freely make choices before they are ready to do so unaided. As a result, progress slows and learning opportunities are missed, until teachers and teaching assistants step in.
- Marking is good in most lessons and subjects. Pupils use their regular 'fix it' time to respond to teachers' spoken guidance and written 'green pen comments', showing their engagement with their learning and active participation in helping themselves to improve. Teachers' marking offers a careful balance between praise and suggestions about how to improve.

- Homework set has a clear purpose. Pupils understand that it is a regular feature and extension of their work in class or links with what they will be learning next.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have developed positive attitudes to learning and the great majority act responsibly in managing their own and helping with others' behaviour in the school. Class and school councillors are raising their profiles across the school and pupils' views are well represented. This contributes to the warm and friendly atmosphere of the school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe in school and outside and many pupils are knowledgeable about e-safety and understand the potential dangers of misusing the internet.
- Parents, carers, and staff agree that pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Pupils' attendance levels have risen and remain above average. School leaders are very effective in deterring unauthorised holidays or absences during term-time and the family worker plays an essential and visible part in encouraging attendance daily. The breakfast club is growing in popularity and has had a positive impact on attendance and punctuality.
- Bullying is rare and pupils comment that staff deal with it effectively when it occurs. Pupils understand that, if they cannot resolve conflicts themselves, they can rely on staff to intervene quickly. There are very few racist incidents and discrimination in any form is not tolerated.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. The grounds are immaculately kept litter free and the school caretaker is frequently seen as a positive role model around the site. Pupils show a high regard for each other in the school and this helps those who join the school late to settle easily and feel welcome there. 'Mini leaders' and 'buddies' help their fellow pupils and speak positively about how much they enjoy and value being a part of the school. This is reflected in their smart appearance in the new school uniform and their good manners.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders of the federation, championed by the executive headteacher and head of school, have quickly established and implemented a detailed plan to raise achievement while skilfully managing significant staff changes.
- School leaders have been successful in appointing new teaching staff and re-positioning others, while continuing to improve pupils' progress during the period of considerable change in the school. The leadership team works together with a clear vision and commitment to continuous improvement. Its high expectations are reflected throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching and its impact on achievement have greatly improved since the previous inspection, and are now good. Teaching and learning are managed well across the school.
- Leadership roles are evolving and strengthening at all levels, with the newest subject leaders holding clear responsibility for checking the quality of teaching in their areas and receiving support from their colleagues across the federation. Staff support for school leaders is strong and many staff during the inspection expressed their praise for the head of school.
- The school now reviews all aspects of its work thoroughly and acts quickly to address any gaps,

so that the pace of improvement remains constant. The school's plan to raise achievement is realistic and sharply focused and is linked to close checks on the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' progress.

- Staff training, together with the effective and active partnerships with the local authority and partner school, has led to marked improvements across the school since the previous inspection. Staff are now more skilful in using assessment and progress information, and early gaps in learning are identified and dealt with swiftly.
- Leaders make sure that teachers' and support staff's pay and performance link directly to whole-school priorities and pupils' progress. Every member of the leadership team is active in checking the quality of teaching across the school, and class teachers and teaching assistants team up to plan and prepare together. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching so that the majority is now consistently good or better.
- Activities in lessons are supplemented by a growing number of extra-curricular clubs and activities, enhanced by the sports specialists who work with the school. The promotion of health through sport is gaining a higher profile in school and more pupils than previously are active at lunch and playtimes and attend sports clubs. This has been enhanced by the extra funding for sports from the government.
- Equal opportunities are rigorously promoted and no pupil is denied access to anything the school has to offer. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, and a strong pastoral programme ensures the all-round development of each pupil.
- Pupil premium spending on the breakfast club has already had a positive impact on raising attendance and improving punctuality and the school has strengthened its work with vulnerable families by directing funds to appoint the family worker, and share nurture provision across the federation.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are highly committed to continuing to improve the school. The governors work closely with school leaders and the local authority to ensure that raising the quality of teaching and learning remains at the heart of their work. They now have a good understanding of information on pupils' progress, and undertake regular training to refresh their knowledge and skills.
- Governors use the most recent data to make comparisons with other schools, locally and nationally, and actively challenge school leaders where dips occur. They meet with key staff, and make visits to check directly on important areas of the school's work.
- Governors ensure that financial resources are efficiently managed, know how the pupil premium and sports funding is being spent and monitor the impact of these initiatives on achievement. Governors see that targets to improve the performance of all staff are reviewed carefully and that teachers' and support staff pay is linked to how well pupils are doing. They are highly motivated and increasingly visible in the school and ensure that safeguarding meets statutory requirements.

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	112734
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	441871

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	143
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill Smith
Executive Headteacher	Penny Brown
Head of School	Debbie Donnelly
Date of previous school inspection	13 December 2012
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