

Cuckney CofE Primary School

School Lane, Cuckney, Mansfield, NG20 9NB

Inspection dates 26–27 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders have taken decisive action to improve teaching. Recent appointments have strengthened teaching so it is consistently good across the school. Staff morale is high and pupils' progress is speeding up as a result.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, especially in Key Stage 2.
- Children in the early years make good progress. Good teaching ensures they are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. In lessons, this makes an exceptional contribution to their learning. At free times they conduct themselves in an exemplary way. The school, as a result, is a supportive and friendly community.
- Governors are well informed and hold leaders to account. This helps to ensure that pupils' achievement is good.
- Pupils say that the school helps them to keep very safe, and parents agree. They enjoy coming to school, and this is reflected in their regular attendance.
- The school provides excellent care for any pupils who need extra help in overcoming barriers to learning.
- The topics pupils study are supported by regular school visits. A strong focus on shared values such as honesty and tolerance makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although good, progress in writing is not as rapid as in reading or mathematics, especially for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to find about cultures and faiths other than their own, and describe their features using appropriate vocabulary.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in six lessons or part-lessons. Three observations were made with the headteacher. The inspector also made a number of other short visits to classrooms. He attended an assembly and observed pupils in the playground and around the school.
- The inspector heard pupils read, and looked at written work from each year group, much of this with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plan, behaviour, safety and attendance records, and minutes of meetings held by the governing body. He also looked at information on individual pupils' progress and monitoring records of teaching.
- The inspector met with pupils, interviewed a sample of staff, and spoke to parents. He also spoke to members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The views of parents were obtained through the 46 responses to the online Parent View survey. Written comments from 10 members of staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Brian Netto, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cuckney CofE Primary is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes. Children in Reception attend on a full-time basis.
- A small number are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Few of these speak English as an additional language.
- The pupil premium provides support to just over a tenth of pupils, well below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, at around three in ten, is well above the national average.
- The school provides a breakfast club managed by the governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Within the last 12 months the headteacher has been supported by a Local Leader of Education from Walkeringham Primary School in Nottinghamshire.
- The school appointed a new headteacher in November 2011. Two out of the four teachers were appointed in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress in writing, particularly for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in Key Stage 1, by:
 - using every opportunity for children to practise their early writing skills in the Reception and Year 1 class
 - providing more frequent opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar in different contexts
 - helping pupils to find out about cultures and faiths different from their own, making use of appropriate vocabulary to describe their features
 - making sure that teachers with additional responsibilities provide advice and support for colleagues so that teaching is outstanding.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Following a period of turbulence when there were significant changes in staff, leaders have taken decisive action to ensure consistency in teaching. The headteacher is now well supported by a team of teachers. Governors also offer good support and challenge.
- The headteacher leads by example, upholding high professional standards and expectations, and is well supported by leaders and governors in a relentless drive for improvement. Pupils are well known as individuals. Those whose circumstances make them vulnerable receive excellent care and support.
- Clear and robust planning ensures that all staff share the same ambitions. The thorough checks leaders make on teachers' performance ensure that staff pay rises depend on pupils making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Staff make the most of the training opportunities provided through the links with other local schools. This helps them share best practice and resources. Teamwork is strong and all staff share the school's ambitions to raise achievement. Morale is high as a consequence. However, some teachers with additional responsibilities are new to their jobs, and they have not yet had time to support and advise their colleagues.
- The curriculum gives pupils good opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding and skills. The school teaches pupils about moral and social issues particularly well. This was emphasised in an assembly about how Christians prepare for advent. Similarly, pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 developed a good sense of empathy in comparing the bombing of Coventry and Dresden during the Second World War.
- The school teaches pupils about some of the wider cultures and faiths of the United Kingdom, despite its rural location. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to visit towns and cities as well as find out about the diversity of people that make up the country. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain. However, opportunities to find out about different faiths and lifestyles from their own, and develop a relevant vocabulary are too infrequent.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to support disadvantaged pupils' academic as well as social development. Additional support is provided in classrooms, and the funding is used to ensure they do not miss out on educational visits or sporting events. The fact that these pupils achieve as well as their peers in reading, writing and mathematics is testament to the school's firm commitment to promoting equality of opportunity.
- The national primary school sports fund is used to buy in specialist teachers so that pupils can experience a wider choice of sports and games. Competitions are encouraged so pupils can test their skills against pupils from other schools. Specialist coaches also help teachers to develop their confidence in teaching sports that are new to them.
- Partnerships with other local schools are helping leaders develop new ways of checking and reporting on pupils' learning. Teachers' checks on learning are now more accurate as a result.
- The local authority arranges helpful support for the school. For example, the Local Leader of Education has helped to ensure that leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and main priorities. Their accurate judgements on the quality of teaching are helping to drive further improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are ably led by the experienced Chair of the Governing Body. Recent training in safeguarding is helping them to understand their responsibilities and those of the school's leaders. Many governors also attend the school's training so that they are up to date with statutory requirements, and this helps them to ensure that these are fully met.
 - Governors use their experience, including in teaching and leadership, to offer effective support and

challenge to the school. They have a good understanding of how well pupils' performance compares to national expectations.

- Governors play a strong role in strategic developments, such as the appointment of the headteacher, and in ensuring that staff pay awards reflect outstanding performance only.
- Regular visits enable governors to find out first-hand how the school is doing. They are kept well informed by the headteacher.
- Governors manage the budget effectively. They have helped to ensure that all necessary building works have been carried out. They keep checks on how extra money such as the pupil premium and the sports fund are spent, to ensure that these bring value for money in helping to raise achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding; around the school it is exemplary. This is no better typified than in the daily lunchtime family service. Older pupils serve the younger ones, and pupils are taught to be thankful for this food. The atmosphere is truly of one big happy family!
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exceptionally strong. They show eagerness to learn and are enthusiastic in their responses to questions. It is clear they derive genuine pleasure from learning. They show great pride in their work and respond maturely and carefully to teachers' written comments. Pupils say they enjoy all aspects of school life, and this is reflected in their improved attendance.
- Pupils show considerable care and consideration for each other. One pupil spoke about how Stephen Hawking acts as a role model, as he shows that 'someone who is very able but disabled can still conquer things.' This attitude of respect and constant striving is reflected in the day-to-day behaviour of the pupils.
- No pupils have been excluded from school for poor behaviour for some time, and incidents of concern are extremely rare. Pupils are used to working together across the age groups, and this is evident in the co-operative way they play together.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. All visitors, including parent volunteers, are carefully checked to make sure they are suitable to work with the pupils. Accurate records are kept on safeguarding, policies are up to date and reflect the most recent guidance, and staff have a thorough understanding of safeguarding procedures.
- Pupils speak confidently about how the fire service helps them understand risks, and how the school teaches them to be safe on roads. They understand why the school blocks some sites on the internet.
- Pupils say that bullying never happens, as they are taught to be kind and honest with each other. They are fully aware of how bullying can be hurtful, for example through racism or name-calling. They have every confidence that adults will help them resolve any minor disputes. Parents agree that bullying is rare.
- The popular breakfast club provides a safe and secure start to the day for those who attend.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good across the school. Strong purposeful relationships and exciting topics engage pupils' interests. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and their enthusiasm ensures that pupils thoroughly enjoy learning.
- Reading is taught consistently well. Teachers and teaching assistants use a wide range of ways to engage pupils in speaking and listening, so that pupils confidently use their phonic skills to successfully tackle unfamiliar words. New phonemes are carefully introduced so pupils consolidate these skills. Parents volunteer to listen to pupils read, and pupils are given regular opportunities to read.

- Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 improved their writing skills through the teacher's expert questions, which challenged them to think deeply. The teaching excited their interest and fired their imagination, as they wrote persuasive arguments to convince their parents to be more lenient. The teaching of writing has had less impact in Key Stage 1, particularly for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, as support for these pupils has not been as effective. Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to practise and apply their skills through different types of writing, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils are taught to practise their calculation skills in solving problems. Good demonstrations and careful questions from the teacher helped pupils in Years 1 and 2 to think about how to solve money problems. Some were able to successfully use different techniques including halving, counting back and writing equations to reach the right answers.
- Teachers are ably supported by well-trained teaching assistants and a number of regular parent volunteers. Well-focused support ensures that any pupils who fall behind quickly catch up.
- Teachers give detailed feedback in their marking. Pupils respond positively to the comments and extra challenges. This helps learning to progress more quickly.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- In 2014, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly in line with national averages, reflecting good or better progress from their starting points for the vast majority of pupils.
- The Year 1 check on pupils' skills in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) was well below average. However, the school has improved its programme for teaching phonics systematically and this is ensuring that the work is set at the right level of difficulty. As a result, progress in reading has accelerated and pupils who had fallen behind have quickly caught up with their peers.
- Too few pupils were known to be eligible for free school meals in Year 6 in 2014 to comment on their attainment without risk of identifying individuals. However, disadvantaged pupils across the school progress at least as quickly as their peers in reading, writing and in mathematics. They mix well with older or more-able pupils, and effective support ensures that they do not fall behind in their learning.
- Good support ensures that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. There is a strong focus on supporting their well-being. However, a few pupils have fallen behind in writing, particularly in Years 1 and 2, as teaching has not been as strong in the past.
- The most able pupils achieve well, as teachers make sure the activities they provide are suitably challenging. As one said, 'I think the school is really good in the way that they challenge us and we go on many school trips to show us more of the outside world.' More pupils are now reaching higher levels at the end of Year 6 in reading and mathematics. Younger pupils thrive in mixed-age classes as the activities stimulate their interests.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics as they enjoy learning and are taught well. They have a secure grasp of number facts and use different strategies to good effect to work out calculations.

The early years provision

is good

- Children join the Reception and Year 1 class from a variety of pre-school contexts. Most have skills typical for their age though some are behind in communication and language. An exciting and rich environment helps these children quickly catch up, so they all leave Reception well prepared for Year 1.
- Children in the Reception and Year 1 class make good progress. They thrive particularly during activities

which are led by adults and show a good degree of concentration. Adults question and model appropriate language, and this helps them to deepen their learning.

- The early year's leader is new in post and some routines are not yet firmly established. However, phonics is taught well because the work is set at the right level of difficulty, and adults help them knowledgeably to learn new skills.
- Children's early writing skills are not as developed as some of their other skills, and the school's plans to address this area of learning are well in hand.
- Children mix well and, from an early age, play and learn together happily. Boys and girls, for example, cooperated well as they tried to construct a tower from different materials. Children are given good opportunities for creative work in both the inside and outdoor classrooms.

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	122757
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	449634

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	108
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Little
Headteacher	Lisa Crossland
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2010
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