

Cotmanhay Infant School

Beauvale Drive, Ilkeston, DE7 8RR

Inspection dates 24–25 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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.

- The headteacher, supported by senior leaders and governors, has successfully improved the quality of teaching and learning. Together they manage teachers' performance well. As a result, the school is improving.
- Teaching is good and pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and in a wide range of other subjects. They are proud of their achievements and eager to learn more.
- Children in the early years make good progress. They are prepared well for their work in Year 1.
- Behaviour is good. Attendance has improved and pupils enjoy coming to school.
- From the time they start in the Nursery, children learn to listen to, care for and respect others. They understand why there have to be some simple rules to help the school function calmly and efficiently.
- Parents to whom inspectors spoke are all very satisfied with the school and with the support it gives them and their children.
- Pupils say they are happy and safe at school. Their parents agree. Pupils also know how to keep themselves safe, including when using computers.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and work to develop their understanding of British values, are firmly embedded within the curriculum.
- Governors have made good use of the external review that followed the previous inspection. They support the school well and challenge it robustly because they want the best for the pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching and pupils' progress are not consistently good in all three Year 1 classes.
- Teachers do not often enough require pupils to use and apply their mathematical learning in problem-solving activities.
- The marking of pupils' work in mathematics, and of their writing in different subjects, does not provide pupils with enough guidance on how to improve. Pupils do not always respond to marking by doing their corrections.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in parts of 24 sessions. The headteacher joined an inspector in three of these observations.
- Inspectors sampled sessions where phonics (the sounds that letters make) were being taught. They analysed the work in pupils' books, and talked to pupils formally and informally about their work and about school. They also observed pupils' behaviour at play and lunchtimes, listened to some pupils reading, and talked to pupils about their work.
- The views of the 12 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account. Inspectors also gained the views of parents directly as they brought their children to school, and viewed the comments left by parents following different visits to the school. The 23 responses to the questionnaire for staff were also considered.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the school's data on current pupils' progress, its self-evaluation document and the school improvement plan. Other planning and monitoring documents were also evaluated, including those relating to teaching, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Discussions were held with senior and other leaders, three governors, various members of staff and a representative of the local education authority.

Inspection team

Doris Bell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Nigel Grimshaw	Additional Inspector
Jane Millward	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This infant school is larger than the average-sized primary school. It offers full-time education for Reception children and part-time education for Nursery children.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is more than double the national average. This additional funding is provided to support the education of disadvantaged pupils (those known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority).
- As this is an infant school, there are no government floor targets setting the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school shares its building with Cotmanhay Junior School.
- The school has specially resourced provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs relating to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Known as 'nurture provision', it is funded by the local authority but managed by the school. The provision caters for 16 pupils on a part-time basis; eight in the morning and eight in the afternoon. In each session, four of the pupils are from this school and the other four are from schools across the county.
- The headteacher was appointed in April 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Establish consistently good progress in all three Year 1 classes by ensuring that activities are better planned to engage all pupils so that no learning time is lost in lessons.
- Improve pupils' progress in mathematics by:
 - providing pupils with more activities that require them to use their mathematical learning to solve real-life mathematical problems
 - building into the new curriculum explicit opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in different subjects
 - making sure that marking shows pupils what the next steps are in their learning, and that pupils do their corrections to show they understand where they have gone wrong.
- Improve the effectiveness of marking in writing by:
 - giving pupils the same helpful guidance on how to improve the writing they do in different subjects that they get when they write in literacy sessions
 - showing pupils that, by being mindful of their writing targets at all times, they are likely to make faster progress and reach those targets sooner.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The school's leaders have created a very caring and purposeful learning environment in which pupils are able to thrive and make good progress. They have done this by establishing strong teamwork, good teaching and a climate of high expectations throughout the school. As a result, the school is improving.
- The leadership of teaching is strong. Senior leaders and those responsible for leading different subjects, including English and mathematics, are all involved in checking teaching and learning. They identify where improvement is needed, provide guidance and support, and then check again to see that these have worked.
- Senior leaders sometimes monitor teaching and learning jointly with other leaders in order to build up leadership skills, or with a representative from the local authority to assure their own accuracy. Leaders take robust action to tackle any continuing underperformance so that pupils can continue to learn well.
- The targets set for teachers arise out of the school's own accurate evaluation of its effectiveness, which informs the priorities set in the school's plan for improvement. Steps to success are clear, and progress towards them is monitored closely. The plan is a working document that is rigorously evaluated to ensure that the school stays on track.
- Leaders have improved attendance and reduced the amount of persistent absence that has hindered pupils' learning in the past. They work closely with parents and with external agencies, following up all absences and giving or seeking support for the small number of parents who are still struggling to get their children to school regularly.
- The school is developing ways to assess pupils' learning to reflect the demands of the new national curriculum. Leaders and staff have given careful thought to how to plan subjects and bring them together in topics or themes that promote progress in literacy as well as in the subjects themselves. Leaders have started to determine how mathematics can also be promoted in different subjects but this work is incomplete and, consequently, still rather patchy.
- Work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and instil in pupils an understanding and appreciation of British values is embedded well throughout the curriculum. Attractive displays demonstrate the importance of all of this, and parents are strongly encouraged to help the school in preparing their children for life in modern Britain.
- In lessons, pupils are often given time to think and reflect on their learning and behaviour, and to consider the negative impact of any form of discrimination or harassment. Staff help pupils to see why everyone should be treated equally and given an equal chance to succeed, and why discrimination of any sort is wrong. The way staff and pupils conduct themselves, look out for each other, and welcome visitors shows that they strive to adhere to these important values.
- A good range of visits and visitors, clubs and other activities support and extend pupils' learning, and gives them experiences they might not otherwise have. These include the increasingly wide range of sporting and exercise activities made possible by the primary school physical education and sport funding, and the greater opportunities pupils now have to take part in competitive sport. The funding has also been used to improve the ability of the staff to teach physical education and sport.
- Safeguarding procedures, including those for child protection, meet current requirements and are very robust. Governors and school leaders monitor them closely to ensure that the school is a safe and secure environment for the pupils. Negotiations with the junior school about the timing of the school day and the one-way system of entry to and exit from school have tightened security. The school works very closely with parents and external agencies to support pupils' physical and mental health and to promote their safety and well-being.
- Leadership of the early years is effective in ensuring that the children settle quickly and make good

progress from the minute they start school. The school establishes a close working partnership with parents prior to this point to ensure a smooth start. The procedures to help children move from Reception into Year 1 make sure they are ready for the more formal work there. The close working partnership with the junior school takes all of this further when the pupils are ready to move on.

- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide one-to-one and small-group teaching, and strong pastoral support for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, these pupils make at least the same good progress as other pupils in the school.
- Good leadership and management of the support that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive ensure that these pupils make good progress. All aspects of the provision for these pupils are meticulously checked to ensure that they are working. If they are not, they are changed immediately to help the pupils succeed.
- The school keeps a very close eye on the behaviour and progress of pupils who attend the local authority funded nurture provision. It manages the provision well and can pinpoint the very positive impact the unit has on the behaviour and personal development of individual pupils as they are re-integrated back into class.
- The good level of support that the local authority has provided for the school has been instrumental in helping leaders and managers to improve teaching and learning. The school has used the support wisely and has improved to the point that it now needs only occasional checks to ensure the improvement is continuing.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. Since the previous inspection, the governing body has sharpened its ability to hold the school to account and it now does so robustly. Governors visit the school frequently to get first-hand information about pupils' learning and behaviour. They gain valuable information from the comprehensive reports they receive from the headteacher and senior leaders. They use it well to challenge the school to do even better.
 - Governors understand data about pupils' performance over time and what it says about progress. They check that the school is meeting the targets set in its improvement plan and they play a full part in school self-evaluation. They talk to parents, pupils and staff to gain their views in order to better equip themselves to question what the school is doing and how well.
 - Governors ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements. They understand how teachers' performance is managed and the relationship between it and teachers' salaries. They know about the quality of teaching and support the headteacher well in making decisions about who to reward for good teaching, who needs support and what to do if that support does not lead to improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy learning. They persevere in class, concentrate well on their work and make good use of the wealth of information on display to help them begin to find things out for themselves.
- Pupils begin to get a sense of democracy as they elect school councillors, learn to canvass the views of others and take responsibility for bringing about change. Pupils have been influential in increasing the amount and range of playground equipment, and in helping to select the themes for the new curriculum. They know that staff appreciate and value their views, and act on them.
- The school has a few simple 'golden rules', which pupils have helped to create. Pupils see these rules, and the system of rewards and sanctions that promote good behaviour, as fair and necessary to make sure that the school remains a safe and harmonious place for them. They have a strong sense of right and wrong, and they relate well to adults and to each other.
- The good support given to pupils who find difficulty behaving well, including those who attend the nurture

unit, results in marked improvements that help them to make better progress in their learning. Nevertheless, learning still slows occasionally in lessons, particularly in Year 1, because a few pupils do not exercise the self-discipline needed to behave well at all times. These occasions usually occur because of variations in the quality of teaching.

- Pupils enjoy learning. Most pupils take pride in their work and present it neatly, responding well to their teachers' high expectations. However, work in pupils' mathematics books is sometimes untidy and numbers or diagrams are not set out correctly. This makes it difficult for pupils to check the accuracy of their work.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet, and they understand the dangers associated with talking to strangers. This was evident when they were reading a book in which a character went off with a stranger to an unknown place and they explained why that was a very unsafe thing to do.
- Pupils understand that everyone should be treated the same and that it is wrong to call each other names or hurt each other. They know what bullying is and say they know of none, but that people are sometimes nasty to each other.
- Pupils know what to do about what they call 'naughty behaviour'. They say that when they tell an adult, it all gets sorted quickly and the person who has caused the hurt has to apologise. They see all of this as fair and reasonable, and report that everyone gets on very well together most of the time.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most teachers have high expectations of their pupils' learning and behaviour. They plan work that interests and motivates pupils, turns them into enthusiastic learners and helps them to achieve well. They involve pupils in making decisions about their learning, value what the pupils say and adjust their planning accordingly.
- Teachers almost always ensure that they set work that challenges all pupils, from the least to the most able. They adjust work during lessons in response to pupils' answers and how well they are grasping new learning. Support staff also help pupils learn well. When working with less-able pupils, they break activities down into the smaller steps that these pupils need to take to show they are making progress. They also support these pupils well in whole-class sessions.
- Pupils say that their work is quite difficult most of the time but that this is what helps them to make progress. They make good use of the time they are given to talk together to clarify their thinking or to mark each other's work. They learn a lot by sharing ideas and by having to explain why they have marked something right or wrong. Staff check the pupils' comments and discussions so that errors are avoided.
- Pupils who attend the nurture provision are taught well. Learning activities are broken down for these pupils to help them sustain concentration, follow instructions and succeed. This was noted when they followed a recipe and made chocolate crispy cakes, and learned to take turns and use equipment safely.
- Staff teach phonics well and they encourage pupils to use their knowledge of phonics when reading and writing. Although teaching is good overall, it is stronger in reading and writing than in mathematics. In mathematics, it does not focus enough on helping pupils to use what they learn to solve mathematical problems.
- Teachers mark the writing pupils do in literacy sessions well. They give pupils good guidance on how to improve, and set a clear expectation that pupils must do their corrections. They do not apply the same rigour to the writing that pupils do in other subjects, or to mathematics. Nor do they encourage pupils sufficiently to use their mathematical skills in different subjects.
- Variations in the quality of teaching in Year 1 mean that valuable learning time is sometimes lost due to

low-level disruption by a small number of pupils. While relatively rare, this nevertheless slows learning for all pupils.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Many children start Nursery with literacy, numeracy and personal, social and emotional skills that are below those typical for their age. By the time they leave Year 2, their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is in line with the national average. This represents good achievement and means that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The results of the national tests and assessments have improved steadily over the past three years.
- The results of the phonics screening check for pupils in Year 1 fell slightly in 2014 compared with the previous year. Pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 know their phonics well and understand how to use them to read new words and to spell.
- Most pupils enjoy reading and many read for pleasure at home and at school. They understand the importance of being able to read, saying, 'It puts knowledge into your head.' Older pupils use the pictures in books to discuss what a character might be thinking or feeling. They are also developing an increasing ability to extract deeper meaning from written text.
- Pupils in Year 2 are developing a good sense of audience and style as, for example, they write persuasive letters to a zookeeper to take an elephant back, or describe their chosen animal to an alien. They make good use of the range of vocabulary their teachers build with them in preparation for writing.
- Pupils understand what a simile is and what alliteration means. They readily explain how using these techniques will make their writing more interesting for the reader. They know how to make their sentences more interesting, and confidently telling their teacher, 'That's not a very good sentence', when she gave them a simple sentence that they might use to start their writing.
- Pupils in Year 2 are building their ability to calculate mentally in mathematical exercises through which they learn; for example, how to double and halve numbers, or add and subtract numbers involving tens and units.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is because they receive good support from teachers and well-trained, well-briefed support staff. Staff identify the pupils' individual learning needs as early as possible – for example, in Nursery – so that they can receive support quickly to help them learn well. Pupils who attend the nurture provision also make good progress. Their progress increases as their behavioural needs are addressed.
- The most-able pupils have harder work to do in most lessons so that they can reach the higher standards of which they are capable. For example, in the mathematics work described earlier, pupils in Year 2 were moved on to using doubling to check halving and vice versa. In literacy, they were expected to use a much wider range of vocabulary and techniques to produce longer pieces of interesting writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. The school has data to show that the gap between the attainment and progress of these pupils and other pupils in the school and nationally are narrowing. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils making good progress is broadly similar to that of other pupils in the school. There are no national data for Key Stage 1 to make a similar comparison with pupils nationally.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 were just over two terms behind other pupils in the school, and less than half a term behind pupils nationally in reading. In writing, they were over two-and-a-half terms behind other pupils in the school, and just over a term behind pupils nationally. In mathematics, they were just over two terms behind other pupils in the school and approximately one term behind pupils nationally.
- Pupils and are thoroughly enjoying the increased range of sporting and exercise activities made available through the primary schools physical education and sport funding initiative. These include, for example,

curling and, from time to time, early morning dance sessions in which parents can join. Many school clubs are now oversubscribed and have waiting lists because of the increased numbers of pupils now taking part in them.

- Data held by the school and checked against the work in pupils' mathematics books show that overall progress in mathematics is good. However, there is a heavy reliance on completing worksheets with mathematical exercises rather than on using the knowledge gained to solve mathematical problems. Therefore, pupils are not deepening their learning as much as they can. Nor are they beginning to understand the importance of mathematics in everyday life.
- While progress is good overall in Year 1, variations in the quality of teaching mean that it is not consistently so in all three classes. This was evident during inspectors' observations, in the school's data and in the work in pupils' books.

The early years provision

is good

- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception in 2014 was in line with that found nationally. The children made good progress in all areas of learning, and especially in writing, from their starting points in Nursery.
- Behaviour is good because routines and expectations are quickly established. Children respond well to them and they are curious and keen to learn. They rapidly develop good attitudes to learning that ensure that they work and play happily together, indoors and out. Children say they feel safe and that the staff care for them well. Their parents agree.
- Early literacy skills develop quickly because staff encourage children strongly to read and write. Children enjoy sharing books and talking about the pictures. They develop good phonics skills and use them well to begin to read simple words.
- Children enjoy writing. By the time they leave Reception, most can form letters accurately and make good attempts at spelling simple words. The more able can write simple sentences.
- Children make a good start on their mathematical learning. Their work focuses on developing number skills but they also develop a good understanding and knowledge of different shapes.
- In mathematics, staff do not always intervene quickly enough to correct errors. This happened when some children were trying to record answers to calculations they had done in their heads. It was also evident when others were trying to add using a number line; they did not have the physical skills to draw the curves from one number to the next accurately, and therefore got the answers wrong.
- The early years leader provides good leadership for the strong team she has built around her. Induction arrangements are particularly strong. The school establishes good links with parents and uses a range of information from them and from external agencies to ensure that the children's learning gets off to a good start.
- Teaching is good and so children make good progress. Staff assess, track and record children's learning well. As a result, they have a clear view of the needs of each child and they plan learning to suit.

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	112570
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	453716

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	307
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sabrina Malik
Headteacher	Katy Latchford
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2013
Telephone number	0115 930 2064
Fax number	Not applicable
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