

Cotmanhay Junior School

Beauvale Drive, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 8RR

Inspection dates

1–2 December 2015

Overall effectiveness

Good

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires Improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The vast majority of parents think that this is a good school.
- The headteacher has developed a strong and effective leadership team, which reflects on how each aspect of the school can be improved. Staff hold leaders in high regard.
- Leaders, including governors, know the school inside out and take rapid action to deal with any weaknesses that arise. Consequently, the school has good capacity to continue to improve in the future.
- As a result of effective leadership and management, weak teaching has been eradicated and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is much improved and is now much more consistently effective.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils' achievement has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Pupils now make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They are well prepared for the next stage of education and the world of work beyond.
- Disadvantaged pupils do particularly well, especially in Years 5 and 6, due to the excellent teaching they often receive.
- The most-able pupils and also disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do well at school and make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are much improved and are now good. Pupils say they feel safe in school and they act with consideration for the safety of others.
- The curriculum is well designed and interesting and pupils say that they enjoy school. Rates of attendance have improved well over the last two years and are now above average.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are provided for well within the curriculum and they are taught to aim high and be successful.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few inconsistencies remain in teaching. In lessons, not all teachers ensure that assessment information is used fully effectively to help pupils overcome difficulties. Also, in a few classes pupils are asked to concentrate on too many things in lessons and not given enough time to correct their work.
- Although pupils concentrate well in lessons, levels of concentration in a few classes are not as high when pupils are working independently as when the teacher is talking.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve further pupils' achievement and the consistency and quality of teaching by ensuring that, in all classes:
 - teachers carefully assess pupils' work during lessons and give timely guidance on how to improve particular aspects of their writing and mathematics
 - pupils are not asked to concentrate on improving too many aspects of their writing at once
 - pupils are given sufficient time to improve or correct their work in the light of teachers' guidance and marking
 - pupils' concentration is as high when working independently as when listening to the teacher.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has worked tirelessly to ensure that all staff expect the best of pupils' behaviour and their learning. Expectations are much higher and the school is much improved.
- The leadership team work together well to review all aspects of the school's work and life. They know exactly what needs improving and waste no time in addressing issues that arise. For example, leaders have identified that spelling is the weakest aspect of writing and a lot of good work has been carried out to strengthen the teaching of spelling throughout the school.
- All leaders know how to help other staff do their jobs better. The leadership of teaching and learning is effective. Staff training, guidance and performance management are effective. Consequently, the quality of teaching provided by teachers and teaching assistants is much improved and is now good.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher track the progress of each pupil meticulously. They meet regularly with each teacher to discuss the progress of pupils, especially that of any pupil who may not be doing their best. Plans are drawn up, targets are set and carefully tailored additional support is provided. The effect of these plans are then reviewed at the next meeting, and so on. Consequently, pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is much improved.
- Although all pupils make good progress, the strongest progress is made by disadvantaged pupils due to wise spending of additional pupil premium funding. As a consequence, disadvantaged pupils at Cotmanhay do as well as all pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Other additional funds, such as PE and sport premium money, are also used to good effect. This funding has been used to ensure that many more pupils participate in and enjoy sport, including competitive sport, during school time and after school.
- The curriculum is good. The school is fully committed to equal opportunities and the curriculum is suitably modified to ensure that all pupils, including the most able, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils all enjoy school and do well.
- The curriculum is appropriately focused on helping pupils develop basic skills such as reading and writing. Reading has a high profile in the school curriculum and standards have risen very well. Emphasis on basic skills has not been at the expense of other aspects. For example, art and design, dance and music have a high profile throughout the school and standards of art work are very good.
- The school works effectively to provide pupils with a broad range of experiences and pupils talk enthusiastically about their annual residential visit when all pupils go to Walesby. There is a good programme of after-school clubs and activities.
- The school's curriculum also includes extensive guidance for pupils' personal and emotional development. It caters well for their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. They learn about and gain experiences of other cultures in modern Britain and beyond. They are also taught British values, such as tolerance and respect for ways of life that may be different to their own.
- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has appreciated the effective support of the local authority, which has played an important part in working with leaders to help the school become so much better.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body carries out its role well. Governors have organised themselves to ensure that they are able to challenge and support the school effectively. There are specialist governors who are closely involved in particular aspects such as safeguarding, or particular subjects and sub-committees that focus on teaching and learning and the use of resources.
 - Governors are well trained and know how to use national and school data to evaluate the performance of the school.
 - They are also knowledgeable about the quality of teaching throughout the school and receive information from the headteacher and other leaders. They also find out about the school for themselves, for example, through visiting lessons.
 - Governors have good knowledge of performance management procedures and ensure that teachers are held to account. They ensure that good teaching is rewarded and that underperformance is tackled.
 - They are very adept at checking that funding is spent wisely and are very clear, for example, about the effect of spending decisions of pupil premium funding on the progress of disadvantaged pupils.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Governors carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding well. Strong procedures are in place for checking that all aspects of safeguarding are continually given high priority. Safeguarding training for staff and others who come to school are kept fully up to date. Robust and rigorous systems are understood by all staff. Parents agreed during the inspection that the school keeps their children safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- At Cotmanhay, teachers form strong and effective relationships with the pupils and manage behaviour in class well. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and how they should conduct themselves, and pupils respond well to these.
- Disadvantaged pupils, especially in English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6 are particularly well taught. The needs of the most able are met well and these pupils make good progress.
- Well-trained teaching assistants are effectively deployed and they have a particularly strong effect on the good progress made by those who find learning more difficult, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Mathematics and English subject leaders have done much to improve the quality of teaching throughout the school. They are skilful at noting weaker aspects of the teaching of their subjects and soon help staff improve particular aspects. For example, the mathematics leader was fully aware that, although the teaching of number and calculation was strong throughout the school, mathematical problem solving and investigative work was not as strong. Staff have been provided with guidance on these aspects, teaching is improving and pupils' achievement in problem solving is getting better.
- Reading is taught well and reading has a central part in the school's curriculum. Well-taught daily guided reading sessions and effective teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) to those pupils who need it have helped standards of reading rise. Pupils are encouraged to read at home, and any who do not are heard reading daily in school.
- Concentration in lessons is good. Concentration when the teacher is talking is excellent, but in a few classes, some pupils do not concentrate quite as hard when working independently.
- Teachers mark pupils work thoroughly and their marking provides good clear guidance to pupils on how to move their learning forward. Although in most classes pupils are given time to improve their work in the light of teachers' marking, in a few classes marking is not fully acted upon.
- In the best taught lessons, teachers clarify for pupils a manageable number of things to concentrate on in the lesson and then carefully check the progress that each pupil is making in the focused aspect of learning. Clear guidance is given on how to overcome particular difficulties and how to improve work, and this helps pupils progress well. In a few classes, this practice is not fully effective because pupils are asked to concentrate on too many things and this slows their progress a little.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils know that staff want the best for them and they respond well to the higher expectations of staff. Pupils, especially older pupils, have noticed how much better the school has become over the last two years and are proud of their school.
- Pupils show a clear understanding of what constitutes bullying and say that bullying is very rare in their school. They are confident that if any bullying does arise that it will be quickly dealt with and they trust staff to address issues that arise. Pupils are happy at school.
- Pupils enjoy the much improved range of physical activities available at the school both during lessons and at other times. They appreciate the good range of clubs that are on offer to them.
- Pupils benefit from the robust systems for keeping pupils safe. The school works well with other agencies to help pupils stay safe and staff are very aware of their roles in protecting pupils from harm.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. For example, they show good

understanding of how to keep themselves safe on the internet.

- Pupils are encouraged to take on leadership roles, such as becoming a digital leader, a library leader or a school councillor.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils show much stronger attitudes to learning than at the time of the previous inspection. They enjoy lessons and their concentration is excellent when the teacher is talking. On a few occasions, concentration in lessons is not as strong when pupils are working independently.
- Pupils enjoy school and due to rigorous procedures to assure good attendance and punctuality, rates of attendance have improved considerably since the previous inspection and are now above average. Persistent absence is much reduced.
- The vast majority of pupils behave well around school, at playtimes, lunchtimes, in corridors and in the dining room. Leaders have recognised that behaviour around school is not quite as good as in lessons. Work is underway to bring about further improvements in behaviour around school.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Standards have improved well since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and other subjects, especially in art and design. By the time they leave school, they are thoroughly prepared for secondary school.
- Disadvantaged pupils progress well throughout the school and do particularly well in Years 5 and 6. These pupils benefit from regular additional support, which helps them enjoy school and make good progress in their learning. In 2015 national assessments, they did well to attain higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics than similar pupils nationally and also attained in line with average standards for all pupils nationally.
- The most able make better progress than at the time of the previous inspection and more pupils are exceeding levels expected for their ages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress. They benefit from accurate assessment of their learning needs and well-organised and well-tailored support from teachers and teaching assistants, both in class, in special groups and in the Rainbow Room. In 2015 national assessments, Cotmanhay pupils achieved well to attain considerably higher standards than similar pupils nationally and on average leave the school only around a year behind national averages for all pupils.
- Writing results were not as good as those in reading and mathematics in last year's national assessments. The school is aware of what needs to be done to bring writing results up to the levels of other subjects and is sensibly concentrating on improving pupils' spelling. Also, teachers are teaching writing skills more effectively in subjects other than English, for example in history, geography and science. Writing standards are rising well.

School details

Unique reference number	112569
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10001847

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sean Platt
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Simon Robinson
Telephone number	01159322011
Website	http://www.cotmanhay-jun.derbyshire.sch.uk/
Email address	srobinson21@cotmanhay-jun.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	December 2013

Information about this school

- In this average sized school, almost all pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average.
- There is a high proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled pupils or have special educational needs is high.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has received the Arts Council Artsmark award.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw teaching and learning in all classes, including a joint observation of a full lesson with the headteacher. In addition, a number of shorter visits were made to see particular aspects, such as the teaching of reading. A range of other school activities, including playtimes, lunchtimes and an assembly, were observed.
- Past and current work of pupils of all abilities in all year groups was scrutinised and some pupils were heard reading.
- Meetings were held with school staff and with four members of the governing body.
- Documents, including plans for school improvement and reports showing the school's view of its own performance, safeguarding documents, and policies and records relating to personal development, behaviour, welfare, safety and attendance were inspected. Information on the performance of the school in comparison with other schools nationally was analysed. The school's records of pupils' progress were also considered.
- Inspectors held short discussions with 60 parents of a total of 85 children at the beginning of the second day of the inspection. The views of 15 parents who responded to the online 'Parent View' questionnaire were also analysed.
- Inspectors received the views of staff through discussions and by analysing the 26 responses to the inspection survey of staff views. They also received the views of pupils through both informal and pre-arranged discussions.
- A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority.

Inspection team

Roger Sadler, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Evans	Ofsted Inspector

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Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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