

Cottenham Primary School

Lambs Lane, Cottenham, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB24 8TA

Inspection dates

3–4 May 2017

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
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, leaders and governors have exhibited a relentless determination to improve the school over the last two years. As a result, the provision in key stages 1 and 2 is now good.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics across the school have improved year on year. Current pupils continue to make consistently good progress from their various starting points.
- Current pupils from Year 1 to Year 6, including disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are achieving well.
- Leaders monitor pupils' progress routinely, so that they can quickly support those pupils who need to catch up. This is leading to pupils making good progress and attaining at least what is expected of pupils of the same age.
- Teaching across key stages 1 and 2 is highly effective. Teachers' planning and questioning ensure that pupils deepen knowledge and apply new skills well.
- Pupils experience an enriching and broad curriculum. Pupils access many opportunities to explore and investigate different subjects, including exciting activities, various trips and visiting speakers.
- Staff care for the pupils. Adults respond well to pupils' welfare needs and ensure that pupils are well looked after. Safeguarding is effective.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are highly positive. They take pride in their work, and proactively use their interactive and engaging learning environment to develop their understanding of different topics.
- Teaching, learning and assessment in the early years are not yet securely good. The planning of learning opportunities, including phonics for some of the youngest children, is not yet precise and consistent enough to ensure that they make the progress of which they are capable.
- Some leaders newer to post are not as precise about their responsibilities in the school, and are not yet as effective at measuring the impact that they are having on pupils' outcomes.
- A small number of parents have concerns about the quality of provision, and do not feel that leaders communicate effectively with them.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the early years by:
 - ensuring that adults have high expectations about what children can achieve, and are precise in their planning, so that activities support children to achieve the high standards of which they are capable
 - securing more consistency in the quality of phonics teaching
 - developing the outdoor area further so that it supports children’s learning better.
- Ensure that all leaders, especially those who are newer to post, are clear on their responsibilities in the school, and are effective in strategically measuring and evaluating their impact on improving pupils’ outcomes.
- Further develop ways to improve the school’s partnership with parents, so that parents feel fully informed about the school’s work and the rationale behind leaders’ decisions. Consider more successful ways to enable parents to feel that they can contribute their views about the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have successfully improved standards since the previous inspection. They have created a highly ambitious vision for every pupil in the school. Staff and pupils work together to create a positive learning culture, focused on ensuring that pupils achieve the best they are capable of.
- Leaders hold teachers rigorously to account for pupils' progress, and this is closely aligned to the formal management of their performance. Staff, including teachers who are at an early stage of their careers, are confident in asking for support and advice. High-quality training is empowering staff to improve their practice. This has led to significant improvements in the overall quality of teaching.
- The consistent implementation of the school's chosen 'framework of expectations' for teaching and learning in key stage 1 and key stage 2 is ensuring that all adults promote high standards and expectations for all. This has resulted in a shared understanding of what the school needs to do to improve, leading to a rapid shift in attitude, focus and motivation for all.
- Leaders are using pupils' assessment information effectively to improve pupils' outcomes. Staff set ambitious targets for pupils' achievement, and assess pupils' progress in all subjects routinely. Leaders successfully use the outcomes of assessments to identify those who require additional support to achieve what they are capable of. Teachers ensure that their judgements about pupils' attainment are accurate through working with each other, the local authority, and increasing numbers of other schools.
- Pupils benefit from the school's chosen 'knowledge-rich' curriculum. Teachers and pupils use the school-devised 'knowledge organisers' consistently to ensure that all pupils access an equality and breadth in their curriculum provision across the school. The school also invests in trips, residential trips and regular themed days. These contribute to increasing pupils' engagement with their work. A number of extra-curricular activities, largely in sport, further enhance pupils' learning. Consequently, pupils enjoy a rich and varied curriculum.
- The new special educational needs leader is further refining monitoring systems so that she can provide more specific support for pupils in lessons. The leader checks regularly on pupils' progress, identifies where pupils need more support, and ensures that the funding is being allocated purposefully and appropriately. These close checks are ensuring that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making consistently good progress from their starting points across the whole school.
- Leaders use the additional pupil premium funding that they receive well. In the main, this funding supports a tightly managed programme of academic and pastoral support for pupils who need to catch up. The use of funding to support disadvantaged pupils is effective in ensuring that these pupils achieve well. The use of some pupil premium funding to support pupils' emotional well-being has also resulted in an improvement in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. This has also helped them develop positive attitudes to learning.

- The additional funding for primary school sport and physical education (PE) is spent well. For example, the clubs available have been extended so there is more variety for pupils to become involved in, and staff training has been undertaken following an audit of staff's PE skills. More pupils now take part in sporting activities, contributing to them developing healthier lifestyles. In addition, teachers are more confident in teaching specific aspects of PE so the quality of teaching in PE has improved.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of British values. The school uses regular assemblies to explore various values and pupils are encouraged to apply their learning to their everyday life both at school and outside of it. Pupils respect different cultures and traditions. They also understand the value of democracy and can explain how their views contribute to the improvement of the school.
- Leaders have taken on board the effective input and support from the local authority. Visits from advisers to develop newer leaders are helping the school, for example in early years and mathematics. While this has contributed to the improvements having been achieved in the last two years in mathematics, the early years leader identifies there is further work to be done in early years.
- Teachers who lead subjects, and other aspects of the school's provision, are enthusiastic and appreciate the confidence placed in them by senior leaders. They provide support to their colleagues, and help to check on standards. However, some are newer to their roles and appear unclear of their strategic responsibility. As a result, some less-experienced leaders are not yet fully able to articulate how their role will strategically make a difference to the school's improvement work.
- The large majority of parents are overwhelmingly positive about the rapid improvements that are being made in the school. Many parents say that the school is 'doing an amazing job', is 'well managed' and 'has a truly dedicated staff team'.
- While the majority of parent responses are effusive about the school's work, there are a significant minority of parents who have concerns about behaviour, homework and support for pupils who need more help. Leaders and governors have already identified that some of their communication is not as effective as it could be with a few parents and carers. Leaders are working rapidly to improve this area of their work, particularly through their website and parent information evenings.

Governance of the school

- Since the previous inspection, governors have quickly set about securing necessary improvements in their support and challenge to leaders. Governors now have a very clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school's provision.
- The governing body routinely receives and reviews a range of information about the school and asks challenging questions about how well pupils are doing. Governors are focused on making sure pupils are safe and achieve as well as they can. They use focused visits to ensure that the information that they receive is accurate.
- Governors demonstrate that they have an insightful understanding of the provision for disadvantaged pupils, and an increasingly detailed understanding about how pupils in the school are achieving compared to others nationally. Governors know the effective

spending of funding has ensured that pupils attend school more often and the disadvantaged pupils are making good progress.

- Governors oversee safeguarding appropriately. They are involved in regular safeguarding audits and checks and take steps to recommend improvements where possible.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Senior leaders and governors are resolute in ensuring that pupils are kept safe. All staff have a good awareness of safeguarding procedures and know what to do if they are concerned about the welfare of a pupil. This is because they are well trained in all aspects of child protection, and are kept up to date with current procedures.
- The school's arrangements meet all statutory requirements. Policies and procedures are up to date. Leaders also make sure that parents are aware of the school's policies and how they can play their part in keeping children safe. Leaders ensure that important safeguarding information is updated regularly on the school's website. This means that all adults linked to the school are aware of their responsibilities to keep children safe.
- The school business manager maintains the single central record and guarantees that it is detailed and thorough. Leaders and governors ensure that safer recruitment processes are followed, such as checking gaps in employment and following up references.
- Pupils are unanimous in their view that they feel safe. Pupils compliment, and talk positively about, the 'worry busters'. One pupil said: 'If anyone feels worried, upset or wants to speak to someone, we have "worry busters". These are special adults we can go to anytime and they will help us no matter how busy they are.'
- Leaders maintain detailed and well-organised records. When necessary, leaders involve outside agencies and appropriate action is taken. As a result of this thorough work, all children and pupils, including those who are most vulnerable, are kept safe and are well looked after.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Senior leaders have worked successfully to improve the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Learning is characterised by very strong relationships between pupils and adults in the classroom. Most teachers have high expectations for their pupils, and set work which builds effectively on what they can already do. Pupils, in turn, are enthusiastic and willing to work hard.
- Teachers plan carefully for the different abilities of pupils. Teachers use thorough subject knowledge to explain new ideas clearly, with a clear focus on developing pupils' subject-specific vocabulary. Teachers check on pupils' progress to provide personalised support to pupils as they need it. Teachers encourage pupils to explain their thoughts, reflect upon their work, learn from their mistakes and improve.

- Teaching in mathematics is focused on ensuring that pupils can apply what they learn quickly to practical questions, in particular developing pupils' calculation skills. Pupils' workbooks show that many pupils are becoming increasingly skilled at choosing appropriate methods to solve problems accurately. There is also increasing evidence of pupils using reasoning to deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts and think in more depth about how they could apply their understanding differently.
- Teachers have raised the quality of the reading provision in the school since the previous inspection. The school environment, including the classrooms, promotes reading as a life skill and something to enjoy. Key stage 1 pupils are able to use their phonics knowledge well to read unfamiliar words using a variety of strategies they have learned. Older pupils proficiently apply their comprehension skills with a good knowledge of inference when reading and responding to questions about texts. Pupils have access to high-quality reading books and are encouraged to read at home as well as in school.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is improving in each year group. This is because the expectations of the quantity and quality of what pupils write have increased. The 'knowledge-rich', broad curriculum lends itself to many more opportunities for pupils to write in other subject areas. Pupils are therefore rehearsing their writing more regularly and their books show that they are applying their skills more efficiently when they complete their extended writing.
- Teachers have raised their expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve, particularly in their writing. Teachers challenge the most able pupils to include features in their writing which reflect greater depth. The teaching of spelling and handwriting has recently been improved to take account of the greater challenge of the curriculum. As a result, pupils more consistently join their handwriting and can edit their work to correct spelling errors and improve the quality of the content of their work.
- Following the previous inspection, teachers have developed their use of questioning. Leaders' monitoring demonstrates that teachers are routinely using effective, targeted and well thought out questions to ensure that pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding of the aspects they are learning. This is leading to pupils making quicker progress from their starting points.
- Teachers meet frequently with leaders to check on assessments of pupils' work to ensure that they are accurate. At these meetings, adjustments are made to teaching planned for individual pupils if there is any chance that they may be falling behind. Intervention is quick to support pupils who are at risk of not making good progress.
- Where pupils are excelling, teachers provide more challenging learning opportunities. This ensures that most-able pupils, including the small number of most-able disadvantaged pupils, have the chance to apply their knowledge and understanding in a variety of contexts and situations. For example, one most-able pupil shared their writing with an inspector and said: 'I was challenged by the teacher to change my sentence starters and I had to choose four ways of doing this – that was hard because the sentences already included a lot of detail and difficult punctuation like here, where I used semi-colons. The teacher asked me to improve it more.' As a result, larger proportions of most-able pupils are set to attain the higher standard this academic year.
- Teachers plan effectively for different groups of pupils in their lessons. This is the case

particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Following the pupil premium review, the pupil premium champion's work has focused staff on improving provision for disadvantaged pupils. Teachers are knowledgeable about the disadvantaged pupils' needs. This, aligned with the leadership focus on disadvantaged pupils in pupil progress meetings, ensures a team approach to the planning and delivery of personalised programmes of academic and personal support. This is leading to disadvantaged pupils' achievement, including that of the few most-able disadvantaged pupils, improving over time from their various starting points.

- Across the school, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because teachers deploy the well-trained teaching assistants to provide consistently effective support to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Adults ensure that pupils have access to the whole curriculum at an appropriate level that matches their starting points. The targeted support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive is well planned and meets their specific, individual needs well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are very positive about school. They are proud of being a part of Cottenham and of the work they do there. They show growing confidence as they explain their wish to be successful learners, and praise their teachers for the way they help them to make good progress.
- Pupils said bullying rarely occurs, but if any incident happens, it is dealt with effectively by staff. Pupils feel comfortable about approaching any adult. In these situations, pupils are confident that they will receive help. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in potentially risky situations, for example when using the internet.
- The school's house system offers pupils the opportunity to work as a team and experience aspects of healthy competition. This develops their social and personal skills when working with peer groups in a variety of contexts. Pupils are enthused by the house system and try hard to gain points for their team.
- The school's 'SHINE' (Succeed, Help others, Inspire, Never give up, Engage) programme is used effectively to promote the success of pupils' personal development. Through this, the school's aims and values are lived. Pupils recognise these aspects in their daily life and apply them to all they do. They talk proudly about collecting evidence so they achieve their 'SHINE' bronze badges.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and most of the parents who contributed to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed. A very small minority of parents who responded said bullying was not dealt with well by the school, but this was not supported by most parents, the pupils themselves, or by inspection evidence.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- When involved in discussions, pupils are polite in their responses. They give each other time to speak and they listen carefully to what each person has to say. This results in little disruption to learning because pupils respect each other and the adults they work with.
- There has been an improvement in the proportion of pupils who attend school regularly over time. High levels of attendance are rewarded, and the improvements in teaching, and in particular the more exciting curriculum, mean that pupils are keen to attend lessons. This, alongside the leaders' close monitoring of attendance and persistent absence, is ensuring that the attendance of all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, is improving.
- Leaders have undertaken regular analysis of behaviour over time. This is used to identify where individual support is required, which is subsequently implemented and reviewed to help pupils make appropriate choices about their behaviour.
- While there have been cases of challenging behaviour, leaders are adhering to the school's agreed policies ensuring, successfully, that appropriate measures and support are in place to minimise any disruption in the school.
- A small minority of parents report that some behaviour disrupts their children while they are working. Inspection evidence shows that where this has been the case on a small number of occasions, leaders are acting quickly and rigorously to eradicate it. This is ensuring that there is very little disruption to other pupils' learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In the last two years, effective teaching and a school 'determined to raise standards' culture have led pupils' outcomes, in all areas, to improve rapidly from what they were previously.
- In 2016, the proportion of key stage 1 pupils who achieved the expected standard, and were assessed at working at greater depth, was above the national average for reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check in 2016 was above the national average. Currently, observations of Year 1 phonics show that pupils in Year 1 are making good progress and the school has evidence to suggest that Year 1 pupils are likely to do as well in 2017.
- In key stage 2, pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined in 2016 was above the national average. This was the same picture individually for reading and writing. Although, in mathematics, the attainment was just slightly lower than the national average, current pupils are receiving high-quality additional support to ensure that they are making more rapid progress.
- Pupils left Year 6 in 2016 having made progress in reading and writing which was above the national average, and progress in mathematics which was at least in line with the national average.

- The achievement of the most able pupils, including the few most-able disadvantaged pupils, is on a trajectory of improvement. In 2016, the proportion of key stage 2 higher attainers achieving the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average.
- Information supplied by the school, observations in lessons and evidence from pupils' books show that in all year groups pupils are making strong progress in reading, writing, mathematics and several other subjects, including science. Inspectors also noted that pupils' standards of spelling, punctuation and grammar have risen as a result of teachers' focus on improving these skills and giving pupils many opportunities to apply these skills in other curriculum subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the small number of the most able, perform similarly to their peers in school. The additional funding is used effectively and consequently, disadvantaged pupils' progress is good. Differences in achievement have diminished between these pupils and other pupils nationally. The school has effectively removed barriers to learning for those disadvantaged pupils who have difficulty meeting the school's expectations for attendance.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress across the school. High-quality plans provide staff with clear guidance about how pupils' needs are best met. Support staff skilfully apply them in group work and are held to account for their progress.
- Both pupils' achievement across a range of curriculum subjects, and their positive attitudes towards their learning, prepare them well for the next stages of their education.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Although the early years provision is benefiting from the strong leadership of a new leader, the outcomes are not yet securely good.
- The leader has accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses in the provision, and has acted quickly to begin to bring about improvements. However, this is not yet well-enough embedded, and requires more time to be implemented fully.
- Staff do not yet have consistently high enough expectations about what children can achieve from their various starting points. Although standards in 2016 were above the national average, teaching does not consistently provide children with activities that allow them to make the progress of which they are capable. Too often, children undertake activities that do not challenge them to learn as effectively as they could. Consequently, the inquisitive nature of the children is not being fully utilised to deepen their knowledge or understanding of the topics that they are learning about.
- The leader has already identified that the outdoor learning area does not consistently offer stimulating activities for children, which support their progress. Leaders have commissioned support from the local authority to improve this area, although this work is still in its infancy.
- Although phonics teaching in key stage 1 is consistently good, this is not as well developed in the early years. Children are not being consistently challenged to develop their phonics knowledge, when they are ready to move on. As a result, children do not

make the rapid progress of which they are capable.

- Staff in all three classes use appropriate systems to check children's progress throughout the year. These include detailed records of learning in the children's learning journeys. These assessments provide information to plan children's next steps of learning.
- All staff who work with the early years children take good care of them and keep them safe. The training and development staff have received has ensured that children are well cared for, and that safeguarding is effective.

School details

Unique reference number	110604
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10031376

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	580
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara Duckworth
Headteacher	James Kilsby
Telephone number	01954 250227
Website	www.cottenhamprimary.co.uk/
Email address	office@cottenham.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 March 2015

Information about this school

- Cottenham Primary School is a larger than average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is lower than the national average.
- Just over three quarters of pupils are White British. There are a significant number of pupils of traveller, Irish, Gypsy or Roma heritage, as well as of any other White background.
- The proportion of pupils who need support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is broadly in line with the national average.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has consulted over, and established, a new leadership structure and also has experienced staff changes of roles within the staff team.

- In 2016, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes at various times over the two-day inspection. Additionally, inspectors carried out learning walks and looked at pupils' books, and observed some activities being carried out in small groups. Some observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors also visited three assemblies and the singing club, and observed pupils' conduct at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other leaders and class teachers. The lead inspector met with governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Groups of pupils, chosen at random, met with inspectors. This included a group of most-able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspectors spoke with a large number of pupils informally while visiting classrooms and took account of the 35 responses to the Ofsted pupil questionnaire. One inspector listened to a couple of pupils from Year 1 read.
- All of the inspectors looked at many workbooks in their visits to classrooms, and, sometimes with a senior leader, scrutinised in depth work produced by several pupils this academic year. They considered a wide range of information about pupils' current and recent performance.
- The inspectors looked at a variety of documents both prior to, and during, the inspection. These included development plans and evaluations of the school's performance; leadership monitoring of teaching and learning; the headteacher's report to the governing body and the minutes of governors' meetings; and current reports on pupils' progress. Inspectors scrutinised, in detail, records showing how the school supports vulnerable pupils.
- A wide range of the school's documents related to safeguarding, behaviour, racial incidents and accident reporting were scrutinised by the lead inspector.
- The inspection team took account of the 187 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and the 183 comments made using the free-text facility. Inspectors also spoke with parents collecting their children from school on the first day of the inspection. Additionally, inspectors considered the 52 responses to the questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Tracy Fielding, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Helen Bailey	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Warboys	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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