

Cottesmore Academy

Kendrew Barracks, Cottesmore, Oakham, Rutland LE15 7BA

Inspection dates

25–26 September 2018

| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
|--|--------------------------|
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Requires improvement |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Requires improvement |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Requires improvement |
| Outcomes for pupils | Requires improvement |
| Early years provision | Requires improvement |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' plans for improvement are not sharply linked to pupils' attainment and progress to help drive more rapid improvements.
- Leaders have not ensured that assessment is consistently accurate. Their improvement targets are not as focused as they could be.
- Middle leadership is not yet fully established and effective in raising standards.
- Leaders' use of additional funding is not as effective as it could be.
- The governing body does not effectively hold leaders to account for improving pupils' outcomes and the impact of additional funding.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent.
- Sometimes, teachers, including in the early years, do not match learning and work carefully to pupils' needs. Some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers' expectations of the quality and quantity of pupils' work are inconsistent.
- Teachers are not consistent in ensuring that pupils take pride in their work.
- The teaching of phonics is improving. However, staff do not consistently teach pupils to apply their phonics and early reading skills well.
- Teachers do not consistently teach pupils to use accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation. This slows pupils' progress in writing.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed headteacher has brought ambition and drive to the school. She is establishing a culture of higher expectations. Staff morale is improving.
- Leaders have accurately identified the most important areas for improvement. They have brought about improvements in the areas in which they have focused. Standards are improving.
- Leaders have provided a range of support and introduced many initiatives. The quality of teaching is improving.
- Behaviour is improving. Pupils are polite. They conduct themselves well at all times of the school day.
- Approaches to the teaching of mathematics are improving standards.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:
 - they check their actions and initiatives are applied equally and effectively by all staff
 - they further develop the roles of middle leaders so that they have greater impact on improving pupils' outcomes in their areas of responsibility
 - their plans for improvement are sharply linked to pupils' progress and attainment to help drive more rapid improvement and enable them to better hold staff to account
 - they check carefully pupils' progress in phonics and make sure that all staff have the skills they need to secure pupils' rapid progress
 - they make effective use of the pupil premium, primary physical education (PE) and sport premium funding, and additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities so that they have the maximum impact on accelerating pupils' progress and raising their attainment
 - the local governing body has the expertise it needs to hold leaders more effectively to account for the progress made by pupils and the impact of additional funding.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to further, and consistently, accelerate pupils' progress and raise their attainment by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in all subjects
 - accurately assess pupils' learning and use this information to match work well to pupils' needs, including in the early years, so that pupils are appropriately challenged
 - rigorously and more effectively teach pupils to acquire and apply their phonics and reading skills in their work
 - teach pupils to use accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation appropriate to their age or ability.
- Improve personal development, behaviour and welfare by ensuring that all staff teach pupils to take pride in their work in all subjects.
- An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher has an accurate grasp of the school's strengths and aspects which need to improve. She is effectively addressing a legacy of low expectations and pupils' underachievement. Leaders have introduced a range of actions to improve standards, many very recently. However, leaders are not rigorous enough in checking that all staff consistently and effectively apply their initiatives. The pace of improvements in some areas is not as rapid as it could be.
- Leaders' improvement plans do not set sharp targets for improvement which are linked to improving pupils' progress and attainment. Leaders have not ensured that assessment is fully accurate. Consequently, leaders have not been as effective as they could be in holding staff to account to secure more rapid progress in some aspects of the school's work.
- The development of a middle leadership structure is at an early stage of development and is currently supported closely by senior leaders and the trust. Staff who spoke with inspectors say they value the professional development opportunities now being developed. They are developing their roles in monitoring and evaluating standards. However, middle leadership roles are not yet fully established and effective in raising standards.
- Leaders and the governing body have not ensured that the pupil premium funding is used effectively. The governing body has not ensured that the school has published a pupil premium strategy or a review of the impact of previous funding. Leaders and the governing body cannot be clear what impact the funding has had.
- Leaders and the governing body have also not published a plan or review for the primary PE and sport premium funding. Leaders are using the funding to enable pupils to participate in school events and competitions, for example for athletics, tag rugby, hockey and tennis. The funding is also used to provide staff training, the development of pupil 'sports ambassadors' and the purchasing of additional resources. However, leaders and the governing body have not carefully checked that the funding is having the maximum impact on improving rates of participation, the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- The new coordinator for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is rapidly strengthening school systems for identifying these pupils' needs and putting into place appropriate support and provision. She has ensured that relevant training has been provided for some support staff to support pupils with emotional difficulties. However, leaders do not have a sharp overview of the impact of teaching and support for these pupils. Again, leaders and the governing body cannot be sure that additional funding to support these pupils is having the maximum impact.
- Leaders demonstrate the capacity to bring about improvement in areas in which they focus. Leaders are providing a range of staff training as well as more

programmes of support to help strengthen the quality of teaching. This has brought about improvements in, for example, the early years, the teaching of phonics, behaviour management and the teaching of mathematics. Many initiatives are at an early stage of development. Leaders are clear in their view that there is still work to be done. Nonetheless, the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes are improving.

- The recently appointed headteacher and assistant headteacher, with the support of the trust, have brought stability and challenge. The headteacher is rapidly establishing a culture of higher expectations. The 'strength' programme, for example, draws upon staff's expertise and is helping to build a cohesive school team. Leaders and staff who spoke with the inspectors say staff morale is improving. A member of staff commented that 'there is a buzz around the school now'.
- Leaders have further developed the effectiveness of the curriculum to ensure that it is broad and balanced. Leaders have addressed deficiencies and now provide swimming, music and a foreign language programme. The curriculum incorporates the promotion of fundamental British values. Pupils enjoy the Friday enrichment opportunities in which they choose from a range of interesting activities, such as cross-country, film making and cooking. The curriculum effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The significant external support from the trust is effective. The trust has supported improvements in leadership, curriculum development, governance and the quality of teaching and learning, including in the early years.
- Almost all parents and carers who spoke with the inspectors or who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were positive about the school. They commented on the friendliness of staff. They say the school is welcoming, keeps their children safe, and their children are happy and enjoy school.

Governance of the school

- The local governing body has a secure overview of the school's strengths and areas in which it needs to improve. The governing body is knowledgeable about the school's actions and initiatives to improve standards. However, because targets for improvement are not clearly identified, they are not as effective as they should be in holding leaders to account for improving pupils' progress and raising their attainment.
- The governing body is not effective in ensuring that additional funding has the maximum impact on improving pupils' outcomes. The governing body has not ensured that the school meets the government's recommendations about what academies should publish on the school website.
- The governing body is committed to developing the effectiveness of its role. Many new governors have joined recently. The governing body welcomes the support from the trust in reviewing and improving the effectiveness of its role. The governing body is benefiting from the comprehensive programme of training agreed with the trust.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a strong culture of safeguarding. The record of recruitment checks on staff, governors and visitors is accurate, up-to-date and thorough. Leaders act upon any concerns about pupils' welfare rapidly. They are tenacious in involving external agencies when this is appropriate. Leaders have ensured that records of concerns, including the actions taken, are thorough and rigorous.
- The very large majority of pupils are from service families. Leaders carefully check the destinations of pupils when families are deployed to different locations. Leaders are establishing closer relations with the barracks family welfare organisation.
- Pupils say they feel safe and all parents who spoke with the inspectors said their children are safe. Pupils spoke of the 'time to talk' sessions in which they can speak to their teachers if they wish. Pupils are confident that adults will resolve any concerns they may have.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. Inspectors observed strong teaching practice in some classes. However, in too many classes, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Teachers do not consistently ensure that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make the progress of which they are capable.
- Sometimes, teachers do not use assessment information about pupils' learning to plan work that is well matched to pupils' needs, or to decide when to move learning on. In some lessons the pace of learning is too slow.
- In some classes, pupils make good progress in writing. However, this is not consistent. Teachers do not equally challenge pupils to use accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation appropriate to their ability. Some teachers do not ensure that pupils have opportunities to write at length.
- Staff promote positive attitudes to reading. The introduction of the 'book talk' sessions are promoting pupils' reading and comprehension skills. The new library stimulates pupils' interest in a range of reading materials in a pleasant environment. Because of recent training and support, as well as a more structured approach, the teaching of phonics is improving. However, staff are not equally skilled or rigorous in reinforcing and consolidating pupils' early reading and phonics skills in English and other subjects.
- Teaching assistants often provide effective support, particularly when working with small groups. However, sometimes, teachers do not deploy teaching assistants carefully enough in whole-class work to ensure that they can have the maximum impact on pupils' learning and progress.
- Inspectors saw evidence of the positive impact of leaders' and staff's work to improve pupils' editing skills, the use of self- and peer-assessment, handwriting, presentation and spelling skills. Where this is most effective, pupils often make

good progress. However, this is not consistent throughout the school.

- Teachers are mostly enthusiastic and relationships are positive. Where teaching is strongest, teachers use their good subject knowledge to ask questions to check pupils' understanding or develop their thinking. They clearly explain and demonstrate tasks so that pupils understand what is expected. Pupils' learning is part of a logical sequence which builds their learning over time.
- Teaching of mathematics is improving. Teachers often use visual imagery and physical apparatus well to support pupils' fluent understanding of mathematical concepts. Some teachers provide increasingly effective and challenging opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are not consistently positive. A range of initiatives, such as developing a 'growth mindset', the 'Learning Zone', the '6Rs' and 'EPIC' learning, are beginning to have positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning, particularly for older pupils. Pupils in Year 6 said, 'We're here to learn ... we need some challenging things in our life.' However, the impact of some of these initiatives is at a very early stage. In some classes, pupils are not challenged to achieve all that they are capable of.
- In too many classes, pupils are not taught and encouraged to take enough care and pride over their work. Poor-quality work is sometimes not challenged.
- Staff promote pupils' social and cultural awareness by helping pupils to value and celebrate their experiences as service children from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. The weekly 'deployment club', supported by a family liaison officer, gives pupils opportunities to talk about their experiences. A world map display encourages pupils to reflect on the different countries their family member has been deployed to. Pupils are encouraged to write to their parents, and the Prince William award helps pupils to see the benefits of being part of a military family.
- Relationships are positive. Staff encourage pupils to be responsible. Inspectors observed, for example, older boys and girls being very supportive of younger pupils on the playground. Pupils are excited about the recently introduced 'young governors' role, and they value the use of 'trust passes', which are a reward for responsible behaviour. Year 6 pupils value their school ties which they say represent their role to 'show kids respect and help them to do good things.'
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including road and fire safety as well as when online. Pupils say bullying is very rare and most are very confident that adults will rapidly resolve any concerns they have. Leaders carefully record incidents and the actions they have taken in their efforts to resolve issues.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. While most teachers have high expectations of behaviour, and behaviour is generally improving, in some classes, pupils lose focus when expectations of behaviour are not sufficiently reinforced, the pace of learning is too slow or work is not carefully enough matched to pupils' learning needs.
- Leaders' recording and checking incidents of poor behaviour have improved. However, leaders and the governing body have not carefully analysed and compared behaviour trends over time. Leaders report that, overall, the number of incidents has reduced. They have identified where behaviour needs to improve. Leaders provide specific support to improve the behaviour management skills of staff.
- Leaders have made improvements to the school's physical environment. The school is tidy and well organised. There is a calm atmosphere. Pupils have good manners and conduct themselves well at playtimes, lunchtimes, in assemblies and in school corridors at all times of the school day. Pupils are friendly and polite.
- Attendance is above the national average. The improvements in behaviour management have ensured that the number of exclusions, which was previously high, has reduced significantly. There have been no exclusions since January 2018.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes are inconsistent. Published and school information shows that the proportion of pupils who achieved a good level of development in the early years improved at the end of 2018. The proportions of pupils achieving the expected standards in mathematics at the end of key stage 1, and in writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2, improved. However, these outcomes were below those seen nationally. Pupils' attainment in reading and writing at the end of key stage 1 and in reading at the end of key stage 2 declined, in some cases, to well below the national averages.
- Pupils have generally positive attitudes to reading. Pupils say they enjoy visiting the school library. Pupils read confidently. Recent changes to teaching phonics are beginning to bring about improvements and current pupils are making more rapid progress than in the past. Pupils who did not meet the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check are now supported to catch up more quickly. However, the proportion of pupils who achieved the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2018 was lower than the national average and lower than that of the previous two years.
- Too many pupils do not make the progress they should. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that while there is evidence of some improvements, this is not consistent or sufficiently secure. Teachers' expectations of the quality and quantity of pupils' work are inconsistent. Standards of handwriting and presentation are inconsistent. The quality of pupils' writing is often let down by poor grammar,

punctuation and spelling. This slows the progress pupils make, including those who are disadvantaged.

- Pupils of different abilities are often given the same work to complete. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, the least and most able, those who speak English as an additional language and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, are capable of more.
- In some classes, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and particularly mathematics. The introduction of reading challenges, provision of reading resources attractive to both boys and girls, promotion of the importance of reading at home, mathematics information evenings, events such as the 'maths circus', as well as specific support are helping to diminish the differences in the attainment and progress of girls and boys.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The leader for the early years took on the role in September 2018. The early years leader has benefited from effective support from the trust to rapidly improve her expertise. There have been clear improvements in the early years. The early years leader analyses key strengths and areas for improvement. However, leaders do not use their analyses sharply enough to guide more focused improvements to provision.
- The leader for the early years has ensured that activities provide opportunities for children to learn across the different areas of learning. However, planned activities, both indoors and outdoors, sometimes are not sufficiently focused to promote children's curiosity and perseverance. Sometimes, activities do not offer children sufficient challenge, including for reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, some children, including the most able, do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers and other adults use questioning effectively to take children's learning forward. Staff assess individual children's learning carefully. Again, sometimes, adult-focused or child-initiated opportunities are not carefully enough planned to stimulate children's curiosity and promote their independence and perseverance.
- Outcomes are improving. The school's on-entry assessment information shows that most children enter the early years with skills that are below those typical for their age. Unvalidated published information shows that the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development improved in 2018 compared to the previous year and was in line with the national average.
- Children behave well in the early years. Staff ensure that children quickly understand systems and routines. Children settle into school well. They sensibly and independently hung up their coats after play, for example. They are confident and cooperate well.
- Parents who spoke with the inspectors were positive about the start their children have made in the early years. Some parents commented positively on the individual support provided for their children who have specific needs. The leader for the early years is beginning to secure greater parental involvement.

The well-attended recent 'sausage sizzle' event was a positive opportunity for parents to discuss their children's learning.

- Leaders ensure that the safeguarding requirements in the early years are met.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 142401 |
| Local authority | Rutland Council |
| Inspection number | 10053478 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy special sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 149 |
| Appropriate authority | The board of trustees |
| Chair | Gareth Williams |
| Headteacher | Megan Lucas |
| Telephone number | 01572 812278 |
| Website | www.cottesmoreacademy.co.uk |
| Email address | cottesmoreoffice@rutlandlearningtrust.com |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed to her post in April 2018. The assistant headteacher, who is also the coordinator for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, was appointed in September 2018.
- In April 2018, the school joined the Rutland Learning Trust.
- When its predecessor school, Cottesmore Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement overall.
- Cottesmore Academy is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. The school is currently organised into six classes.
- The school is located in Kendrew Barracks. Almost all pupils are of service families.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and of pupils who speak English as an additional language, are below those seen nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, middle leaders, including the leader for the early years, and the coordinator for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The inspectors met with the chief executive officer of the Rutland Learning Trust and members of the local governing body. Discussions explored a wide range of subjects, including safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspectors observed 11 lessons, as well as the teaching phonics. During these visits, the inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke with them to evaluate the quality of their learning. Most lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or assistant headteacher. The inspectors met with groups of pupils and listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. Account was taken of the seven responses to the Parent View survey and free-text responses. There were no responses to the staff and pupils' questionnaires.
- A range of documents were scrutinised relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, pupils' attainment and progress, and staff performance. The inspectors looked at plans for improvement as well as leaders' evaluation of the school's performance. The inspectors also considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

Inspection team

John Lawson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jane Moore

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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