

Inspection of Cockington Primary School

Cockington Primary School, Old Mill Road, Torquay, Devon TQ2 6AP

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2021

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Leadership and management are inadequate. Senior leaders do not listen to staff concerns, particularly in managing pupils' behaviour. This has led to a level of despair that is starting to impact negatively on the enjoyment and experiences of staff and some pupils. However, most pupils still enjoy coming to school. They particularly like the various clubs and other activities that the school provides. For example, pupils have fond memories of trips, such as to Torre Abbey.

Most pupils feel safe and happy. They have confidence that staff will provide the right support and guidance when they need it. Pupils know what bullying is. They say that when bullying occurs, it is dealt with quickly. However, pupils complain that behaviour in lessons is not always good. This frustrates them and interrupts their learning.

Pupils enjoy learning. Nevertheless, pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not acquire the necessary knowledge in all subjects to be as ready for the next stage of their education as they should be. Recent improvements to the curriculum, coupled with higher expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, are helping pupils to know and remember more. However, an ambitious curriculum has not yet been fully established for all pupils.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Senior leaders have lost the confidence of staff due to a significant breakdown in communication. Leaders' expectations of how the most serious incidents of behaviour should be managed are not consistently applied or clearly understood. There is a lack of clarity about 'who should do what' when issues arise. Staff raise concerns about the availability of senior leaders to assist when teachers need them.

Leaders' efforts to improve behaviour, including through the quality of professional development and training that staff receive, are not working well enough. As a result, many members of staff who work directly with pupils feel isolated, confused and angry. This has led to great disharmony and resentment, which, in turn, seriously undermines the capacity of the school to improve.

Senior leaders and directors do not have an accurate view of all aspects of the school, or how well it is functioning. They have failed to listen well enough to concerns or recognise a growing body of discontent among staff. This is particularly related to how behaviour is managed on a day-to-day basis. The overwhelming majority of staff do not feel listened to. They say that the behaviour of a few pupils is becoming increasingly difficult to manage, particularly pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.

Leaders have taken appropriate action to improve the curriculum. Their ambitions to improve the quality of education are, for the most part, being realised. Their plans to improve English and mathematics, including early reading and phonics, are working well. As a result, pupils are gaining confidence and knowledge to apply to the rest of the curriculum. However, the quality of the curriculum remains too variable. In some subjects, such as religious education (RE) and geography, pupils find it difficult to recall or apply key knowledge. Sometimes, the choices that teachers make can also lead to confusion. For example, pupils in Year 2 found it hard to explain different rock formations based on examples taken from chocolate. In the early years foundation stage (EYFS), teachers have appropriate curricular plans, but these, too, are not yet being fully implemented. Consequently, there has not been the time for the children to benefit from these yet.

Pupils like to be active in making the school a better place. For example, there are systems in place at breaktimes for pupils to help each other. They understand the importance of the school rules and values. They can apply these in different situations to help promote care and support throughout the school day. Pupils show an awareness of inclusion and understand the need for equality. They talk convincingly about why it is important to respect others and make everybody feel welcome at school. However, some elements of pupils' spiritual and cultural development are underdeveloped. For example, some pupils are confused about the world's main religions, and any differences or similarities between them. This hinders pupils' understanding and preparedness for life in modern Britain and the world around them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including the designated safeguarding lead, are tenacious in their work to keep pupils safe. The school has appropriate systems for checking, vetting and training new members of staff in child protection. Leaders make timely referrals and work closely with external agencies to keep pupils safe.

The dedication of staff and the pastoral team ensures that pupils, particularly those with SEMH and complex needs, are well cared for. They provide effective nurture and support when pupils feel vulnerable.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Many staff have lost confidence in the senior leadership team. This is leading to much stress and anxiety among staff. It also significantly impairs the capacity of the school to continue to improve. Leaders must seek to understand the reasons for this and take the appropriate action to speedily resolve this situation.

- The curriculum plans, including in the EYFS, have not been fully realised in all subjects. As a result, too many pupils, including those with SEND, are not as well prepared for the next stage of their education as they should be. Leaders must continue to implement their plans and check that these enable pupils to know and remember more of the curriculum.
- Senior leaders, including directors, do not have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, they do not have a true understanding of key issues and, subsequently, fail to address them. Leaders must ensure that they accurately evaluate the impact of their work, including work pressures for staff, so that this can be a place where everybody thrives.
- Senior leaders do not ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly understood, particularly when dealing with the most challenging incidents. This leads to confusion, frustration and anger among staff. Leaders must ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly communicated and are understood by all.
- Senior leaders fail to communicate their expectations for behaviour management effectively. This leads to many members of staff feeling isolated or unable to cope. Leaders must listen to the views of staff and implement agreed systems that are effective in helping staff to manage challenging behaviour.
- Senior leaders' efforts to improve behaviour for some pupils are not having the intended impact. There are still too many times when poor behaviour disrupts the enjoyment or learning of others. As a result, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. Leaders must improve their approach to behaviour management so that behaviour is consistently good.
- Senior leaders do not ensure that professional development and training for staff, particularly in managing pupils' behaviour, is good enough. As a result, staff continue to be unclear about how to best deal with different situations. Leaders must make sure that staff feel confident and prepared to manage the full range of pupils' behaviour.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	140063
Local authority	Torbay
Inspection number	10199627
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	582
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Lockyer
Headteacher	Emma King
Website	www.cockingtonprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 February 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is located in Torquay, Devon.
- The local authority (Torbay) places a proportionately high number of pupils with SEND, particularly those with an education, health and care plan for SEMH, in this school.
- The school works closely with other local specialist SEND settings and providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics, English, geography and RE.
- For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at individual plans for pupils with SEND to see how these are being implemented.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors also looked at design and technology and history and spoke with teachers and pupils about these subjects.
- An inspector looked at the single central register and checked the school's systems for monitoring and reporting safeguarding concerns. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and the trust's human resources manager.
- An inspector also met with the special educational needs coordinator to help evaluate SEND provision and practice in the school.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff and met with groups of pupils to find out what it is like to be a pupil, or to work, in this school.
- The lead inspector met with trustees who are also directors of the school. The lead inspector met jointly with the chief executive officer, the head of school and deputy on the second day of the inspection.
- The lead inspector reviewed key documentation, including the school's online self-evaluation form, school action plans, directors' minutes and monitoring records.
- The lead inspector checked all survey responses, including those from pupils, staff and parents. This included taking the 41 responses to Ofsted's free-text service into account.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jane Dennis

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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