

Inspection of Cotmanhay Infant School

Beauvale Drive, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 8RR

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 November 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff care deeply about their pupils. They are passionate that all pupils will achieve well. The school's motto is 'Celebrate, Inspire, Nurture, Succeed'. This captures the school's ethos. Pupils thrive on the warm relationships that staff foster throughout the school day. Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for.

Adults expect pupils to behave well. Pupils live up to these expectations. They pay attention in class and are kind to one another. Pupils are taught that bullying is wrong. They know that bullying is not tolerated at the school. Cotmanhay Infants has improved since the last inspection. Pupils leave the school ready to succeed at their next school.

Parents and carers are exceptionally positive about what the school offers their child. One written comment was typical, saying Cotmanhay Infants is 'the best school any child could ever be in' and that staff 'are always there for your child's needs in school and at home'.

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

Strong leadership has raised the quality of education in the school. Pupils enjoy an interesting and broad curriculum. It equips them with the skills they need and widens their experiences.

Teachers in all classes make sure that pupils feel safe and ready to learn. There is a strong focus on speaking and listening skills right from the start. Teachers also want pupils to love books and become confident readers. These are the priorities. The curriculum also gives pupils lots of opportunities be creative and active and to learn about their world.

In most subjects, leaders have carefully planned the order in which pupils learn new knowledge. Pupils build up knowledge and skills step by step. For example, in the nursery classes, pupils arrange objects and play counting games. These activities set them up to work confidently with numbers up to 10 in Reception. In physical education, the pupils in Year 2 have good balancing skills. This reflects the focus, right from the age of two, on helping pupils increase their core body strength.

Teachers recap earlier learning at the beginning of lessons. They introduce clearly what pupils will learn in the lesson. When pupils work on tasks using their new knowledge or skills, teachers check how they are getting on. If pupils need extra help, adults are encouraging and reassuring.

In a few subjects, teachers' delivery of the curriculum does not enable pupils to develop their understanding as well as they should. In religious education and geography, for example, plans do not make clear what pupils should remember from

their topics. Pupils complete their work set but remember little of it a few weeks later.

Reading is a top priority. Pupils start learning phonics in Nursery. Phonics lessons are well organised and effective. Throughout the day, staff find ways of enabling pupils to practise using their phonics skills. Staff soon spot if any pupils are struggling to correctly say the sounds that letters make. Pupils get additional practice so that they can read words that have these sounds.

Each class has a rich range of fiction and non-fiction books. Pupils enjoy their guided reading lessons and daily story times. The books chosen fire pupils' imaginations and often enable them to learn about the world beyond Cotmanhay.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully involved in school life. Teachers have high expectations of what they can achieve. Teachers support pupils with SEND well so that they can study the full curriculum. They do all that they can to ensure that pupils work as independently as possible.

Leaders are keen to widen pupils' interests and experiences. The curriculum teaches pupils about British values. It ensures that pupils learn about equality and diversity. Pupils have many ways of helping staff and their peers during the school day. There are midday and after-school clubs that cater for many interests.

Staff praise how senior leaders help them do their jobs effectively. They love working at the school. Some teachers are inexperienced at leading subject areas. Others have recently taken up new subject leadership roles. Subject leadership is not as strong in these as in other subjects.

Governors are knowledgeable about their responsibilities. They keep a close eye on how well the school is doing. Their actions are always focused on making things better for the pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Senior leaders and all staff are acutely aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. They are alert to any signs that pupils are at risk of harm. Leaders, including the family support worker, know the local community well. Parents respect the role school staff play in keeping their children safe. Leaders act swiftly when concerns are identified. They work closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get the support they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum plans in religious education and geography do not clearly identify the most important knowledge that pupils should acquire. Pupils struggle to recall their learning in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that the essential knowledge they want pupils to learn and remember is identified in all subjects.
- Some staff are quite new to subject leadership and others have recently taken up new responsibilities. Subject leadership is not as effective in some subjects as in others. Senior leaders should ensure that those new to leadership roles, particularly in leading subjects, receive the training and support which will enable them to bring about further improvement.

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	112570
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10200141
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sabrina Malik
Headteacher	Katy Latchford
Website	www.cotmanhayinfants.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 March 2018

Information about this school

- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken it into account in their evaluation.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders and members of the governing body.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, history and geography. For each deep dive, they 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. The inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.

- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including those relating to safeguarding. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and family support worker.
- The inspectors reviewed the responses that were submitted by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 53 free-text responses. He also considered the 26 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Anthony O'Malley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Lewis	Ofsted Inspector
Ged Philbin	Ofsted Inspector

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