

# Inspection of Cottons Farm Primary Academy

Sheridan Street, Sinfin, Derby, Derbyshire DE24 9HG

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Inspection dates: 2 and 3 February 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils feel happy, safe and comfortable at Cottons Farm Primary Academy. They know they can talk to staff about any worries they might have. Pupils told inspectors, 'The adults always look out for you here.'

Through the school's motto, 'If you believe it, you can achieve it', leaders inspire pupils to aim high and try their best. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their achievements and say why they are proud of themselves.

Pupils in key stage 2 like having their own tablet devices to use in class and at home. Pupils told inspectors how handy they are for research.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, but leaders know that the quality of education at Cottons Farm is not yet good enough. Pupils do not make the progress they could because the curriculum is not sufficiently well planned and taught.

Pupils know what bullying is and how to report it. They told inspectors that it is not tolerated at their school.

Pupils can find it hard to concentrate in class. This is because their classmates sometimes disrupt learning by calling out and talking when they should not be. Staff do not always deal with this type of disruption effectively.

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

Leaders have recently moved to a new curriculum. However, it is not clear how pupils will build their knowledge from the early years through to Year 6. Curriculum plans are not specific about what pupils need to know and when. In some subjects, leaders are not clear about how pupils will develop their knowledge of important concepts over time. Teachers do not help pupils recall and reuse what they have learned before in all subjects. As a result, pupils do not have the depth of understanding they need by the end of key stage 2. Pupils remember the activities that they have completed rather than the knowledge they need for future learning.

Leaders quickly identify and support pupils who need more help. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive high-quality support as soon as they start at Cottons Farm. Teachers display images alongside key vocabulary so pupils can see what words mean. Teachers adapt lessons for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Individual plans contain precise targets.

Leaders are passionate about the importance of reading. They have ensured that staff have the expertise needed to teach pupils to read. Staff teach phonics consistently well. Pupils in the early years and key stage 1 touch their chins to say the separate sounds in words. They then swipe across the word with their fingers to blend the separate sounds into whole words. Staff make sure that pupils take home

books matched to the letter sounds they know. This helps pupils to develop their confidence and fluency. Leaders make sure that any pupil who needs extra help with their reading gets it straight away.

Leaders step in immediately to deal with any absence issues. They quickly alert parents and carers to attendance that is below where it should be. This approach has been successful in reducing rates of absence.

Some pupils do not engage well with their learning. Lessons are sometimes interrupted by calling out and silliness. Pupils say that this type of low-level disruption is common. They say it distracts them from their learning. Teachers do not always address low-level disruption effectively, which means it sometimes carries on. Leaders have not checked that staff are following the academy's behaviour policy consistently.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They know how to play safely online and how to report anything that upsets them. Pupils know how to keep healthy. They like using the sports equipment on the playground to be active at breaktimes. Pupils know about healthy relationships and what it means to be a good friend. Language clubs, such as Kurdish and Slovak, are very popular. However, some aspects of pupils' personal development have not been well planned. Pupils are not knowledgeable about British values. They also lack a clear understanding about lives and beliefs that are different from their own. This means pupils are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they could be.

Staff appreciate the consideration given to their well-being and workload. They enjoy working at the school and feel well supported by leaders. However, some staff need more support and training so they can lead the development of the curriculum and check it is being implemented well.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding leads ensure that all staff are well trained. Staff know the signs that might show a pupil needs help. Staff have weekly briefings on safeguarding matters, so their knowledge is up to date. Staff know to report any concern they might have, no matter how small. Record-keeping is detailed. Leaders meet regularly to check on pupils' welfare and make sure things are improving. Pupils know to tell trusted adults if anything upsets them. As one typical pupil said, 'If I am worried about anything, I go to the teachers. They'll always do something.'

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have not clearly identified what they want pupils to know and remember in many areas of the curriculum, including in the early years. This means that

pupils do not have a sufficient depth of knowledge and understanding by the time they reach the end of key stage 2. Leaders must ensure that the important knowledge that pupils must remember is set out sequentially in all subjects, with a precise progression from the early years through to Year 6. Leaders must then make sure that teachers systematically revisit what pupils have learned before, helping them to understand and recall it securely.

- Some leaders do not have a sufficient understanding of the curriculum for the subjects they lead. Consequently, they are unable to check precisely how well it is being taught and if pupils are making the progress that they should. Senior leaders must ensure that all subject leaders have the training and expertise they need to lead the development of the curriculum and monitor its effectiveness.
- Low-level disruption in some classrooms is too common. This is often the result of pupils not being engaged well enough with their learning and the school's behaviour policy not being consistently applied by all staff. Leaders must work with staff to help all pupils develop positive and respectful attitudes to learning. Leaders must ensure that all staff follow the academy's behaviour policy so that instances of disruptive behaviour are addressed swiftly and effectively.
- Some aspects of pupils' personal development have not been well planned. This means that by the time pupils reach the end of key stage 2, they do not have an age-appropriate understanding of concepts such as equality and diversity. Leaders need to reconsider their personal development offer so that pupils develop a sufficiently detailed understanding and appreciation of British values and protected characteristics.

## 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.

## 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 145982   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Derby  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10254729   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy sponsor-led  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 107  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                      | Anne Weinstock   |
| <b>Principal</b>                           | Kirsty Patmore   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.cottonsfarm.theharmonytrust.org">www.cottonsfarm.theharmonytrust.org</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | Not previously inspected   |

## Information about this school

- Cottons Farm Primary Academy joined The Harmony Trust in September 2018. When its predecessor school, Cottons Farm Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The current principal was appointed in January 2022.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science and geography. For the deep dives, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors met with the principal, the deputy principal, curriculum leaders and a sample of teaching and support staff. Inspectors met with the leaders responsible for the early years, pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. The lead inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's single central record of safeguarding checks carried out on all staff.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans, records of governance, and documentation relating to attendance and pupils' behaviour.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 read to a familiar adult. Inspectors met with groups of pupils from across the school.
- The lead inspector met with trustees, including the chair of the trust. He also met with the chief executive officer and the director of education from the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the results of the Ofsted survey for staff.

### **Inspection team**

Shaun Carter, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Donna Chambers

Ofsted Inspector

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