

Inspection of a good school: Cottam Primary School

Haydocks Lane, Cottam, Preston, Lancashire PR4 0NY

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 April 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Cottam Primary School is a friendly and welcoming place. Pupils show care for each other and respect the differences between people. They enjoy coming to school.

Pupils told the inspector that the positive relationships that they have with their teachers are what make the school special. Leaders take reports of bullying seriously and deal with such incidents effectively. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Pupils welcome the opportunities that help them to develop their learning beyond the classroom. This has included a walk around Preston Guild Wheel and learning about forces during a visit to the Blackpool Pleasure Beach. Older pupils relish taking on leadership positions, such as being on the eco-council and the school council. Pupils also benefit from the experiences of exploring nature in their outdoor learning programme.

Pupils, including children in the Reception Year, know that leaders have high expectations of their behaviour and achievement. Most pupils respond well to these expectations and are motivated to learn.

The curriculum has been redesigned recently to ensure that it is broad and balanced. Nonetheless, leaders are at the very early stages of ensuring that the curriculum is delivered as intended. In addition, the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is not effective enough. This means that these pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

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

Since its arrival, the new leadership team has been relentless in its efforts to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. Leaders have redesigned the curriculum to ensure

that it is ambitious, broad and interesting. Leaders have identified the key knowledge that pupils should learn and when they should learn it. Nevertheless, leaders' curriculum improvement work is at an early stage. Leaders have not established assessment strategies in many curriculum areas. Consequently, teachers do not check how well pupils are learning the curriculum content. As such, learning is not secure and pupils' achievement is variable.

Leaders have recently reshaped the way in which the phonics programme is delivered. Children in the Reception class learn sounds and the letters that they represent in a logical order. This helps them to develop their phonics knowledge securely. Leaders have improved the systems to identify pupils who are not keeping up with the phonics programme. Teachers provide effective support to help these pupils to catch up. Even so, leaders have not ensured that the books that some pupils read are well matched to the sounds that they know. This prevents some pupils from practising reading with confidence and fluency.

The opportunities to promote reading are limited. For instance, pupils do not have enough exposure to a broad range of texts, such as non-fiction and poems. Teachers do not celebrate reading well. Some pupils do not gain a desire to read often and for pleasure.

Leaders have introduced new systems to identify pupils with SEND. As a result, the needs of pupils with SEND are picked up at the earliest opportunity. Leaders have put steps into place so that pupils with SEND are accessing the curriculum. That said, some teachers are not equipped to support some pupils with SEND effectively. This prevents these pupils from achieving as well as they should.

Leaders have developed a new behaviour management system that is followed consistently well by staff. Teachers set clear expectations for how pupils should respect the classroom environment and the learning of others. Hence, in most lessons, pupils can get on with their work uninterrupted. In the early years, children respond to the clear routines in place. At social times, behaviour is calm and orderly. Most pupils attend school regularly.

Leaders have redesigned the school's personal, social, health and economic curriculum. Pupils learn about relationships, how to stay healthy and life beyond school. Diversity is celebrated. For instance, children in early years take part in 'travelling Tuesdays'. This exposes children to the foods, lifestyle and activities of different cultures. Some pupils also have pen pals in France who they write to and receive letters from. This helps them build an understanding of life in different places.

Governors are skilled and have the expertise to support leaders. They understand the school and the community well. This assists them in challenging leaders' decisions. Staff's well-being is at the forefront of leaders' minds. Leaders manage staff's workload and changes to aspects of school life with care. As a result, staff are happy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are uncompromising in the support offered to pupils at risk of harm. They foster strong links with families and work effectively with other agencies when necessary. This has helped leaders to develop a strong culture of safeguarding.

Leaders have improved how safeguarding concerns are recorded and reported. For example, they have trained staff on the use of recording systems. As a result, staff are confident in using the safeguarding procedures to support pupils at risk. This means that pupils receive help in a timely and effective manner.

Pupils know how to keep safe, including online. Leaders have dedicated time for pupils to learn about keeping a healthy mind. This allows pupils to talk about their emotions and helps them to look after their mental health.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers are not well equipped to adapt the delivery of the subject curriculums for pupils with SEND. This means that the support these pupils receive is not well matched to their needs. Leaders should ensure that teachers receive the information and training that they need to ensure that pupils with SEND achieve well.
- Teachers' checks on pupils' learning are not effective enough. Consequently, pupils' learning is hindered and their achievement is uneven. Leaders should ensure that teachers check that pupils have learned what has been taught.
- The books that some pupils read do not match the sounds that they have learned. This means some pupils are not reading as confidently and fluently as they should. Leaders should ensure that pupils receive sufficient opportunities to practise the sounds they have been taught.
- Reading is not promoted as well as it could be across the school. Pupils have limited opportunities to explore a diverse range of books and celebrate stories. This hinders pupils from developing a love of reading. Leaders should equip teachers with the time and resources that expose pupils to a broader range of texts.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns

about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2014.

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

Unique reference number	131720
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10283626
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	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Wayne Steel
Headteacher	Kellie Rainford
Website	www.cottam.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher was appointed in April 2021.
- The school has recently appointed a new leader for SEND.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken this into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, other leaders and members of staff. She also spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector analysed safeguarding documentation, including the single central record. The inspector spoke with a range of pupils, staff and leaders to evaluate the culture of safeguarding in the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. She talked with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at examples of children's and

pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with children and pupils. The inspector also observed some pupils reading to trusted staff.

- The inspector observed children's and pupils' behaviour in class and as they moved around school. She also observed pupils playing at lunchtime.
- The inspector spoke with groups of children and pupils about their experiences of school.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. She also met with parents and carers before school to find out their views of the school.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Amina Modan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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