

Inspection of Cove Infant School

92 Fernhill Road, Cove, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 9DP

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 February 2024

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?

Pupils greet you with happy smiles at this friendly, nurturing school. They know how important it is to make everyone feel welcomed and included. Pupils treat one another, adults and their environment with respect. Relationships are strong. Right from Reception Year, children play well together, happily sharing equipment and taking turns. Furthermore, pupils trust adults to help them with any worries or concerns.

Pupils learn how to be effective citizens through supporting charities and by taking on responsibilities in school. By taking part in a festive fun run, they raised money for a local hospice. Pupils also impressively strive to keep their school environment tidy and safe.

The school aims to 'nurture, inspire and empower' pupils to do their very best. Pupils rise to this challenge with enthusiasm, talking excitedly about the different subjects they enjoy. Pupils love to learn, and they achieve well.

The school has a strong focus on supporting pupils' mental health and well-being. Pupils learn to self-regulate and stay calm through using mindfulness strategies and practising yoga. They also learn to be still and reflective, developing a sense of awe and wonder in nature. Furthermore, they reflect respectfully on important themes during times such as assembly.

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

The school has created a bespoke and ambitious curriculum. Pupils' knowledge and skills build in an intelligent and considered way. In most subjects, the carefully chosen content is sequenced in a precise and sensible order right from the start of Reception Year to the end of Year 2. This enables pupils to learn confidently and effectively. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are supported to make connections in their learning over time. For example, in history, pupils learn how transport has influenced people's lives throughout time by studying this aspect in all their history projects.

However, in a small number of subjects, the important knowledge that pupils must know before considering new learning has not been identified precisely enough. Therefore, teachers cannot always check what pupils do not know and cannot do accurately enough. For example, sometimes teachers are not always assuring themselves that pupils can use important, specific skills with confidence. At other times, teachers are required to check pupils' understanding of too many different concepts. This can mean that pupils do not always know the exact knowledge and skills they need to be ready for the next part of their learning.

Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. There are clear systems in place to identify pupils who may need additional help with their learning, and teachers are expert in providing helpful support for those pupils who need it. However, occasionally,

teaching is not as effective as it could be. When this is the case, teachers do not always use the most helpful activity or strategy to ensure that pupils learn as much as they could.

The school has worked hard to improve reading. Staff have created a positive culture of reading where all members of the school community are encouraged to love books. Right from the start of Reception Year, children learn to read by using a well-sequenced programme. Phonics is taught by well-trained staff, with carefully considered support in place for those pupils who need extra help. Pupils read books that match the sounds that they have been taught. This helps them to develop confidence and fluency as readers.

Pupils' attendance is high, and they behave well. They listen carefully in lessons and work hard. Pupils move around the school in a calm and orderly manner, following well-established routines. Pupils treat each other with kindness. They readily hold doors open for each other and willingly include each other in conversations and games. For example, in Reception Year, children willingly invite their peers to join in with collaborative role-play activities.

The school provides effective provision to support pupils' personal development. Pupils have a strong age-appropriate knowledge of how to keep themselves safe online. They explain clearly that you should not share private information, such as personal details, on the internet and know to tell an adult if they see or hear something online that worries them. Through encouraging pupils to take part in a 30-day fitness challenge, the school helps pupils to learn the importance of keeping physically fit. Furthermore, pupils enjoy keeping fit and healthy by using the wide range of playground equipment that supports them to be active.

All school staff and governors work well together to continue to improve the school. Governors know the school well. They understand their role and carry out all their duties effectively. Staff feel valued and appreciated. Staff and governors see themselves as a real team. They all share the same goal of working hard to secure the very best education for all pupils at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the most important knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn to be ready for their next steps are not always clear. Teachers do not have enough clarity on the key aspects of the curriculum that they need to check pupils' knowledge securely. The school needs to identify the precise knowledge and skills that pupils must remember confidently before moving on to

new learning so that pupils can build and apply their learning systematically over time.

- Sometimes, teachers do not use the most effective activities or strategies to support all pupils to learn the curriculum. This means that some pupils do not develop their understanding as well as they could. The school needs to develop teachers' pedagogical knowledge further to ensure that they can support all pupils to learn the curriculum well.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	116141
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10296216
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kate Bees
Headteacher	Natasha Vass
Website	www.coveinfantschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 September 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized infant school.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the second routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with the headteacher and the senior leaders. The lead inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, 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 discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The views of parents and carers were considered through their responses to Ofsted Parent View. The views of pupils and staff were gathered through surveys, interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documents, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings and behaviour incident logs.

Inspection team

Sue Keeling, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Fiona Henderson

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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