

Inspection of Cotsford Primary School

Third Street, Horden, Peterlee, County Durham SR8 4EH

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 March 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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Cotsford Primary School is friendly and welcoming. The school provides many ways to develop pupils' character and independence. The school gives pupils regular opportunities to share and debate their ideas with each other. Lessons brim with meaningful discussion. Pupils confidently participate in purposeful conversations. They are proud to be a part of this school.

The school is ambitious for all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective support. Pupils who are newly arrived to the country and school benefit from the timely support they receive. Pupils achieve well at Cotsford.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils know this is important to help them to learn. Most pupils treat each other with respect and kindness. They are keen to use their positive behaviour points in the weekly reward shop.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe online. They discuss the potential risks of using mobile phones confidently. Pupils benefit from the counselling services, which are readily available to them throughout the school day. The school has effective systems to promote pupils' attendance. Pupils attend school regularly and on time.

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

Pupils benefit from the well-thought-out curriculum. The school has closely tailored the curriculum to meet pupils' needs. Pupils with SEND and those who speak English as an additional language are well supported. The school engages well with external partners and specialist local authority teachers to provide additional support where needed for these pupils.

The reading curriculum is a strength of the school. Children learn to read as soon as they start in the Reception Year. Staff are expert at teaching phonics. Children learn to read quickly and fluently. Children who struggle with reading benefit from regular, sharply focused interventions. As a result, they catch up quickly. Pupils are enthusiastic readers. They are keen to discuss the books they have read. Pupils in different year groups recommend books to each other. This contributes to the sense of excitement about books in school. The newly refurbished library, with cosy sofas and reading nooks, is popular with pupils. Many pupils choose to read and share stories together during playtimes.

Staff are well trained to teach the school's ambitious curriculum. In reading and mathematics, teachers meticulously check what pupils know and remember. In these subjects, staff ensure that the important knowledge that pupils must know is revisited often. For example, pupils wear stickers showing the phonics sound they have learned that day. Staff who pupils speak with throughout the school reinforce this learning with them. In mathematics, pupils have daily opportunities to revisit prior learning and develop their confidence. This practice is not as well developed in

the foundation subjects. In some subjects, the school does not prioritise the important knowledge pupils need to know and remember.

Children make a strong start in the early years. Staff quickly understand individual children's starting points and tailor the curriculum accordingly. There is high ambition for children in the early years. Children benefit from the well-planned environment indoors and outdoors. The language-rich environment reinforces children's new vocabulary. The school ensures that adults rehearse important language with children throughout the school day. This contributes to the eloquent conversations that children have about their learning. Children settle into the routines and expectations of school life well. They quickly develop independence and communicate positively with their peers and adults.

Pupils with SEND benefit from the tailored support they receive. Their needs are identified quickly. Staff are well trained to support pupils' individual needs. In lessons, pupils are provided with the resources that they need to do their best. Staff know pupils' needs well. Many pupils benefit from the staff-led activities that are designed to meet pupils' sensory needs. These help pupils to manage the school day successfully.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. The school's systems to support positive behaviour are effective. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their feelings and use the toolkits that are provided to help them. Relationships between staff and pupils are delightful. Pupils respond well to cues and reminders for good conduct.

The school provides a wealth of activities to develop pupils' character. The mental health of staff and pupils is a high priority. Pupils relish the variety of leadership opportunities that are available to them. They are proud of the many ways that they can contribute to the school, for example, by developing the outdoor play area. The school develops pupils' lifelong skills. Pupils enjoy learning to cook healthy three-course meals on a small budget and taking part in the winter enterprise challenge. The school teaches pupils to respect difference and celebrate the diversity of the pupils who attend the school. Pupils enjoy this learning from their assemblies and personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons. Pupils know it is important to treat others fairly. However, some pupils do not use this knowledge to treat others with respect. The school has prioritised teaching pupils about the protected characteristics. This does not consistently have the intended impact. For example, some pupils in older year groups use discriminatory language. The school is addressing this issue.

Leaders understand and prepare pupils for the contextual risks and challenges of the local area well. Governors are mindful of their statutory responsibilities. Several changes in governing body membership have impacted on the continuity of governance. Recent appointments and training are helping to address this. The school recognises there is more to do to ensure that governors provide supportive challenge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, the curriculum does not prioritise the important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember. Pupils do not remember sufficient curriculum content in these subjects. The school should refine the curriculum in these subjects.
- There have been some recent changes to the membership of the governing body. Presently, the governing body is not as well equipped to provide supportive challenge to school leaders as it could be. The school should prioritise the training and development of the governing body.
- A small number of older pupils use derogatory language. This does not align with the school's high standards of behaviour and means that the school is not as inclusive as leaders intend. The school should develop pupils' understanding of and respect for difference.

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	114150
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10297279
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	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ian Mclean
Headteacher	Rachel Cook
Website	www.cotsfordprimary.durham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 December 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The school provides a breakfast club.
- Cotsford Infant School and Cotsford Junior school merged in September 2019.
- The school does not currently use alternative education providers.

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

- Inspectors spoke to senior leaders, including members of the governing body and the local authority leadership adviser.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography, computing and music. 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.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read from different year groups.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, governors and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors analysed the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. They reviewed the responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments.

Inspection team

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