

# Inspection of Cotmanhay Junior School

Beauvale Drive, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 8RR

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Inspection dates:	10 and 11 December 2024
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

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

Cotmanhay Junior School has high expectations of all pupils. This is reflected in the school's aim for 'happy, safe learning'. Daily, pupils do their best to live up to this. The school is a calm, caring and nurturing community. Each child is known, valued and wellcared for. Pupils feel understood and looked after. Relationships between staff and pupils are consistently exemplary.

Pupils behave well. They know the school's rules of, 'be kind, stay safe and work hard'. They add that there are 'no excuses' for not following these. Earning reward points and the different coloured certificates motivate pupils. The gold certificate is held in very high regard. Pupils look forward to celebrating each other's achievements in special mentions assemblies. Pupils who need help to live up to the school's expectations are well supported. They receive personalised help to understand and manage their behaviour. They are encouraged and supported by their peers.

In lessons, pupils work hard. They pay good attention and follow instructions carefully. However, there are some weaknesses in how well pupils learn the curriculum. This means that pupils do not, over time, achieve as well as they should.

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

Overall, the school's curriculum is well organised. It makes clear what pupils are expected to know and remember at each stage of their education. However, pupils have an inconsistent recall of what they have learned. In some lessons, teachers do not check carefully enough on how well pupils learn. There are inconsistencies in how well teachers help pupils remember what they have learned before. A significant proportion of the curriculum has been recently reviewed and improved. While these improvements are fit for purpose, they are at an early stage of implementation. Therefore, they have not yet fully impacted on what pupils know and remember.

The school has prioritised reading. There is a well-structured reading curriculum in place. On the whole, it is taught consistently. Pupils study a wide range of authors, texts and genres. However, the reading curriculum remains relatively new. It has not yet had time to fully impact on how well pupils achieve over time.

Those at an early stage of learning to read receive well-tailored support. The school promptly identifies the sounds that pupils have not yet learned and puts in place lessons to teach these. However, in some phonics lessons, teachers do not pronounce the sounds they are teaching accurately. Pupils go on to replicate these inaccuracies.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. The school accurately identifies their needs. It puts good quality help and support in place, including through provision in the Viking Room and the school's nurture group. The school ensures that parents, carers and pupils play their part in designing the help that is provided. The school has a successful track record in supporting pupils with SEND.

The school significantly enhances pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about a wide range of people, places and cultures from across the world. They learn about protected characteristics and fundamental British values. They know what these are and why they are important. 'The Zones' help pupils to learn about and manage their feelings and emotions. The 'SMILERS' acronym helps everyone to understand how to stay mentally healthy.

Leaders at all levels, including governors, are relentless in their aspirations for pupils. Many of the school's pupils face challenges in their lives. The school addresses these head on. Staff, pupils and the vast majority of parents hold the school in high esteem. Staff workload and well-being are prioritised. Although work on the curriculum has not yet impacted on the outcomes that pupils achieve over time, it is in a strong position to do so.

The school does everything within its power to prioritise and tackle poor attendance. It has an exhaustive and robust approach. However, attendance remains stubbornly low. The school continues to prioritise this.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- There are inconsistencies in how well teachers help pupils to know and remember content. As a result, pupils do not remember what they have learned as well as they should. This is reflected in the low outcomes of national assessments over recent years. The school should ensure that teaching results in pupils consistently learning and remembering the content of the curriculum.
- In some lessons, teachers do not check closely enough on how well pupils are acquiring content. This means that teaching is not always closely matched to pupils' learning. The school should ensure that teachers consistently assess how well pupils achieve in lessons and, where necessary, adapt teaching in light of this.
- A significant proportion of the curriculum has been recently reviewed and improved. While these improvements are fit for purpose, they remain at an early stage of implementation. They have not yet had time to impact fully on what pupils know and remember. The school should ensure that recent improvements to the curriculum are embedded and result in pupils recalling content consistently.
- In some cases, teachers do not teach the sounds contained in the school's phonics programme correctly. They use 'impure' sounds. Pupils go on to replicate this when segmenting and blending words. As a result, some pupils do not use phonics as accurately as they should. The school should ensure that, across all phonics lessons, teachers use the correct pronunciation of sounds and ensure that pupils do the same.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112569
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10347347
<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	284
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Sean Platt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon Robinson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cotmanhay-jun.derbyshire.sch.uk">www.cotmanhay-jun.derbyshire.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 May 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There have been no significant changes since the last inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and groups of staff and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in five subjects: reading, mathematics, science, physical education and history. To do this, they met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and met with teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders and pupils about the curriculum in geography, religious education, and modern foreign languages. They also reviewed curriculum documentation for these subjects. The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair. He held a discussion with representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View. They spoke informally to parents outside the school. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- 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.
- Inspectors reviewed school documents, including those relating to governance, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors scrutinised leaders' plans for improvement and their assessment of the school's effectiveness.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils at breaktimes, in the dining hall and on the playground.

## Inspection team

Vic Wilkinson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

George Huthart

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