



Cottesmore St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114567
LEA Brighton and Hove
Inspection number 279415
Inspection dates 4 October 2005 to 5 October 2005
Reporting inspector Lorna Brackstone AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	The Upper Drive
School category	Voluntary aided		Hove
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		East Sussex BN3 6NB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01273 555811
Number on roll	438	Fax number	01273 555 423
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Don Lee
Date of previous inspection	18 October 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Anne O'Sullivan

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 4 October 2005 - 5 October 2005	Inspection number 279415
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three inspectors.

Description of the school

Cottesmore St Mary's is a large Roman Catholic primary school, which is situated in a favourable residential area of Hove. Most pupils are of white British origin. Other pupils are of Black Caribbean and Asian or mixed background. The number of pupils who use English as an additional language is below the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well below the national average. Most children start school with good levels of attainment in all areas of learning. At the time of the inspection a new headteacher had been in place for one month.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The school does not provide an adequate education for its pupils and gives unsatisfactory value for money.

Most children start in reception with above-average abilities. They make good progress in Years 1 and 2 but as they move through Years 3 to 6 they do not make the progress they should. By the time they leave the school pupils are not attaining high enough standards. Although the curriculum on offer is satisfactory, the overall quality of teaching and learning is inadequate because expectations are too low and pupils are not provided with enough guidance on how they can improve their work. Provision for personal development is satisfactory, with strengths in social and moral education. Pupils are well cared for within a welcoming ethos.

The quality and provision in the reception class is sound. The curriculum is well-planned and teaching is satisfactory overall. Good features of the teaching in the Foundation Stage include sessions that well matched to meet the needs of these young children. The teaching staff have worked very hard to overcome the lack of funding available for their Foundation Stage outdoor play area.

School leadership and management are inadequate. Overall, there has been a decline in the effectiveness of the school since the last inspection. Weaknesses identified for improvement in the last inspection report have not been rectified. The new headteacher, her staff and governors recognise that the school needs to improve significantly. However, it is still very early days and because there are no rigorous systems, strategic planning or robust monitoring processes in place, the school is not able to demonstrate that it is actually making the improvements required. The school's self evaluation processes are currently inadequate.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels
- introduce robust assessment procedures
- raise teacher expectations in Years 3 to 6, particularly for the more capable pupils.
- develop closer links between home and school for those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- improve the attendance of the pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Most children enter reception with above-average standards in all areas of learning and make adequate progress in the Foundation Stage. They progress well in Years 1

and 2. They consistently reach standards that are significantly above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

As they continue their journey through Years 3 to 6, the pupils do not make sufficient progress. Consequently, by the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are not high enough in relation to their prior attainment, which is very high. Boys in particular achieve less well because learning is not made interesting enough for them. Some lessons are unimaginative and rely too much on dull worksheets and textbooks. This also has a negative impact on the more capable pupils, who are not sufficiently challenged. The new headteacher has recognised that some pupils in Years 3 to 6 are underachieving but has not had time to put in place an action plan.

The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is similar to that of other pupils, with the younger pupils doing better than the older ones. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and given opportunities to extend their experiences through musical and sporting activities. Pupils from minority ethnic groups, and those who use English as an additional language, progress at rates similar to other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. There are good relationships at all levels. Cultural development is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. The introduction of 'One World Week' has helped to bring alive an understanding of different cultures. The religious education programme adequately covers other faiths and beliefs. Spiritual development is satisfactory.

Since the arrival of the new headteacher a significant minority of parents have commented on the improvement of the behaviour of the pupils in and around school. Inspectors judged behaviour to be good and Year 6 pupils themselves commented very positively on this aspect of school life. Attendance at the school is below the national average and not enough has been done to bring about improvements.

Pupils have a good work ethic and respond well to the amount of work that teachers expect. However, in Years 3 to 6, pupils' enjoyment of lessons is satisfactory rather than good. This is because work is not always matched to their needs. Some pupils 'switch off' in lessons because they are not actively engaged.

The school has responded well to helping pupils develop a healthy lifestyle. Nutritious food is served at lunchtime and water is available around the school. An extensive programme of extracurricular activities, including sport, also makes a good contribution to this area. The school provides good support for involvement in the local community through fund-raising events and working with parents to participate in the annual Brighton festival parade. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to be enterprising and contribute to the community in their own way. For example, there is no school council or systematic methods of collecting the views of all the youngsters. Older pupils do not gain a sufficient understanding of economic well-being because

they are not given the opportunities to run tuck or stationary shops. There is a 'buddy scheme' in place but pupils feel that they would like to take on more responsibilities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching is not doing enough to make sure that pupils achieve as well as they should.

In the Foundation Stage teachers plan a range of interesting activities well matched to the needs of young children. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2, where lessons move along at a good pace. Teachers take time to ask pupils about what they have learnt. This helps them to understand how well pupils are progressing. This was evident in a good Year 2 lesson when the teacher made effective use of questioning to motivate the pupils.

Teaching and learning are inadequate in Years 3 to 6. Too many teachers have low expectations of what the learners can do and there are not enough opportunities for the pupils to think for themselves. For example, during a lesson observed at the upper end of the school the pupils became bored and disinterested when they were not encouraged to use their imagination. Pupils' work is not adequately assessed and so teachers do not have a clear idea of how well pupils are doing. This means that the teaching does not build on what pupils have already learned. The more capable pupils are not given sufficiently challenging work.

The teaching of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities within lessons is satisfactory. Teaching assistants give sound and, sometimes, good support. Good progress was observed when teaching assistants worked with small groups of learners in quiet spaces outside the classroom.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum in Years 1 and 2 is well planned. It matches the needs of pupils and takes account of their different abilities. In Years 3 to 6 there are weaknesses that result in too many pupils not making the progress they should. In some lessons work is not matched to pupils' individual needs. However, there are some examples of successful lessons.

The booster classes in mathematics and English are good examples of how teachers tailor activities to the needs of individuals.

There are other positive features of the curriculum that include good provision for music. Young pupils were making good progress at playing the violin after only four lessons. The good range of activities after school, such as drama, music and several sports clubs, gives those pupils who are gifted and talented opportunities to excel. The school band meets weekly and is managed by the school's music teacher with 24

musicians. The annual residential week gives all the Year 6 pupils a wide experience of adventurous pursuits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are sound. There is a welcoming ethos in the school and adults work hard to provide a safe, secure environment. Child protection procedures are satisfactory. Each pupil is well known by the adults and those who are particularly vulnerable are sensitively supported. Pupils report that they feel secure and know who to approach if they have a problem.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities have satisfactory support in class but their overall guidance is inadequate. A significant number of parents of children with learning difficulties explained that they had not been fully involved in their children's education and were unhappy about the lack of information they have received up to the arrival of the new headteacher.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The new headteacher is working hard to address the range of weaknesses that confronts the school. However, so far it is too early to see any significant improvement in the key areas of teaching and learning.

There are no rigorous systems in place for evaluating and improving the performance of the pupils and the quality of education. This is why not all pupils receive a fair deal. For example, prior to September 2005 the school has not recognised and nor responded to the variations in the quality of teaching and the underachievement in Years 3 to 6.

The willingness of subject leaders has not been effectively used to improve the quality of provision for learners because they have not been given time, resources or the relevant information to effectively manage their areas of responsibility.

Governors have not been kept up-to-date with important information and this has meant that they have been unable to challenge decisions made by senior staff.

Although the number of adults employed to care for the needs of the pupils is adequate, best use is not made of all available staff.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	4	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	No	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We very much enjoyed visiting your school. We were interested in watching how you learnt and enjoyed talking to you about your work.

What we liked most about your school

- you welcomed us warmly and greeted us with friendliness
- your new headteacher and your teachers are very enthusiastic about improving your school and wants to make sure that all of you learn as much as you can
- since the arrival of the new headteacher both your teachers and parents have been pleased to notice that your behaviour in and around school has improved.
- you know that the teachers will listen to your worries and concerns and you do like them
- you are well cared for when you start school in reception and the teachers in Years 1 and 2 make lessons interesting and fun.

What we have asked your school to do now

- the way the school is led and managed needs to get much better, and this is starting to happen with your new headteacher
- the teachers need to give you more guidance about improving your work and give you opportunities to think for yourselves. Some lessons in Years 3 to 6 need to be much more interesting
- those of you who find difficulty in learning would benefit from closer links between home and school
- we are worried about the amount of time that you take off school.