

Cottesbrooke Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103323
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	308281
Inspection dates	11–12 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Joyce Cox

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	343
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Aylin
Headteacher	Luciana Allsopp
Date of previous school inspection	24 November 2003
School address	Yardley Road Acocks Green Birmingham B27 6LG
Telephone number	01217 062742
Fax number	01217 644313

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Cottesbrooke is a large infant school serving pupils and families from a wide variety of backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. A high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Over half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups and a third of pupils speak English as an additional language, although the vast majority are bilingual and only a small number are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school at different times during the year is significantly above average. When children start in the Nursery their abilities are slightly below the expected levels for their age, but are often significantly lower in their communication, personal and social skills.

The headteacher has been in post for just over a year. Daily before and after school care is provided for infant and junior pupils. Governors and senior leaders have recently established a nurture group to support pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Cottesbrooke Infant School provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. It is a safe haven where children enjoy learning and behave well. Parents have every confidence in the school and appreciate the hard work of all staff. This was expressed by one parent who wrote, 'I am very happy with the school, the head is fantastic and the teachers are very helpful'. The headteacher and the senior leadership team are providing satisfactory leadership. Senior leaders have identified clear areas for improvement but this work is at an early stage as many subject leaders are new to their roles and responsibilities.

Children make a secure start in the Foundation Stage. They develop positive attitudes to learning because of the high priority the school places on helping children build good personal and social skills. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 1. Standards at the end of Year 2 have been broadly average or above in recent years and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Whilst boys' achievement is satisfactory overall, they do less well than girls. There is a particularly significant gap in writing.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now broadly average because the school does everything in its power to ensure that pupils attend regularly. Pupils like school and get on well together. Year 2 pupils carry out a variety of responsibilities conscientiously. For example, playground leaders provide good support to pupils at playtimes and lunchtimes. The school promotes and develops healthy lifestyles effectively. Sound teaching, combined with a balanced curriculum, results in positive learning taking place. However, there are inconsistencies in the way teachers use their skills and resources to engage all pupils and to challenge them to achieve as much as they possibly can at all times. Not all pupils have targets to help them improve their work or are unclear about what their targets are. This, coupled with inconsistencies in teachers' marking, means that pupils do not always know how they can improve their work. Governors provide a good level of support and a satisfactory level of challenge. The newly developed systems to improve teaching, learning and the curriculum and the effective way that issues from the previous inspection have been tackled reflect the school's sound capacity to continue to improve. Parents speak highly of the good pastoral care and they are right to be confident in this aspect of the school's work. The school works effectively with other agencies, local schools and colleges which enhances pupils' learning.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children's achievement is satisfactory in the Nursery and Reception classes. Many are on target to attain the expected levels on entry to Year 1. Satisfactory teaching enables all children to make sound progress. Good arrangements for introducing children to school, together with clear routines and good teamwork, ensure that they become confident and settle quickly and happily. There are strong relationships with parents who say they feel their children are very well cared for and that they appreciate the kindness and infinite patience of the staff. The school has identified accurately that there are two areas for improvement. These are to make the outdoor area more interesting and exciting and to make it easier to track children's progress throughout the Nursery and Reception classes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise boys' achievement, particularly in writing.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good, or better, to enable all pupils to achieve well.
- Ensure that senior leaders and subject leaders have effective systems to set priorities for school improvement and for monitoring and measuring the impact of the actions they are taking.
- Give pupils a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

All pupils make satisfactory progress and attain average standards at the end of Key Stage 1. Achievement is satisfactory throughout the school. However, boys do not do as well as girls in all classes and particularly in the Year 2 assessments. This is most evident in writing assessments in 2006 when their results were significantly lower than the girls. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Pupils at an early stage of learning English quickly learn to speak the language.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Most pupils say they love coming to the school. This is one of the reasons why attendance is rising steadily and has improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They respond to the staff's warm welcome with growing openness. Children in the Foundation Stage launch straight into the day's activities with enthusiasm. All pupils develop well socially, showing this by relating well to their friends, and by responding with increasing confidence to adults. They contribute their ideas to group work, and help staff when they do jobs such as being office angels and playground leaders. Pupils know right from wrong, and how to keep themselves safe. They feel pupils behave well at school and that there is no bullying. They are aware of what eating healthily means and how to keep fit. School councillors have been involved in discussions to improve school lunches to ensure that, 'we don't have too many pizzas'. Throughout the school pupils are happy learners. The satisfactory reading, writing and mathematical skills pupils learn and the independence they develop prepare them soundly for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons are effectively organised and teachers ensure that pupils behave well. There is a calm atmosphere in classes enabling pupils to concentrate. Relationships between adults and pupils are good so that pupils feel confident when responding to questions. However, some teachers are more successful than others at ensuring that all pupils are challenged to achieve well. On

some occasions pupils become restless, as they are kept for too long sitting on the carpet listening to the teacher talking. Teachers' effective use of computer technology to support learning is a consistently strong feature. Teachers plan lessons with a specific purpose but do not always share this purpose effectively with their pupils. Consequently, pupils are not always sufficiently involved in their own learning. Teachers work productively with their assistants to ensure that newcomers to the school and pupils with specific needs are able to tackle their activities and achieve satisfactorily. Assessment information provides teachers with good information about pupils' attainment. However, this information is not consistently used well so that some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Senior leaders have recently reviewed and revised how the school plans what pupils will learn and staff are gradually becoming familiar with a new curriculum. There is scope to improve the way pupils use their mathematical skills to explore and investigate in all subjects. The range of enrichment activities is good. Special weeks each term for art and science support pupils' learning effectively. Year 2 pupils say they enjoy visits and enthusiastically described a visit to an exploratory museum. Visits to places of worship, including a local mosque, enhance pupils' cultural awareness. A good programme for pupils' personal and health education is in place. The good range of after school clubs includes sporting, musical and creative activities. The school's effective links with outside agencies and providers ensure that everyone can benefit from all that the curriculum offers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils say they feel safe and happy at school and that there are many adults they can talk to if they have concerns or worries. The school has a very good understanding of the needs of pupils and their families and the difficulties that some of them face in their daily lives. The support for vulnerable pupils and those with social and behavioural needs is good, particularly in the successful nurture group. Pupils who join the school at times other than the usual starting points settle quickly because of sensitive and carefully planned support. Assessment data about the levels pupils have reached in their learning are not being used effectively enough. The next steps in pupils' learning are unclear and do not ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Senior leaders have a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve and their evaluations are accurate. They have succeeded in involving all staff much more in school improvement and in the realisation of the important part everyone plays in bringing this about. However, senior staff acknowledge there is still more to be done to improve boys' achievement, the use of assessment and teaching and learning in all classes. Nevertheless, the indications are positive and the school has a secure basis for further improvement. Senior leaders accept the need to prioritise improvement issues and to introduce these gradually with effective monitoring to ensure that actions taken are focused on raising pupils' achievement. Many co-ordinators are new to their roles and are relatively inexperienced and have yet to be fully

involved in monitoring and evaluating their subjects. Governors have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are increasingly involved in school self-evaluation. Virtually all parents have complete confidence in the school: as one commented, 'my child is as happy as can be and I think the school is brilliant'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Children

Inspection of Cottesbrooke Infant School, Birmingham B27 6LG

We liked coming to your school. You were very friendly and you smiled at us which made us feel very welcome. It was good to hear that you like working hard and that you feel happy and safe at school. Your school is doing a satisfactory job and the staff and governors are working hard to make it even better.

Here are some important things about you and your school:

- The adults in school take good care of you all and your parents think so too.
- You are happy, friendly and polite, and you all behave well.
- More of you attend school more regularly than you did.
- You make steady progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is satisfactory and you say you enjoy your lessons.
- You have interesting visits and many visitors coming to work with you in school.

This is what your school has been asked to do to make things even better:

- Make sure that boys do as well as girls, especially in writing.
- Help teachers to teach really great lessons so you all learn even more.
- Agree what the most important things are to improve the school and check they are being done.
- Tell you how well you are doing with your work and what you need to do next.

You can play your part by always working hard, taking good care of each other and behaving well.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Joyce Cox Lead Inspector



13 September 2007

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