

Cotmanhay Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112570
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	310927
Inspection date	14 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Alison Cogher

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	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sabrina Malik
Headteacher	Mrs Jill Boyle
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Beauvale Drive Cotmanhay DE7 8RR
Telephone number	0115 9302064
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Age group	3-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' achievement and standards, personal development and well-being, teaching and learning and leadership and management. Evidence was collected from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data and the school's records of pupils' progress over time. A range of school documents and the questionnaires returned by parents were also looked at. Parts of lessons were observed and meetings were held with outside agency personnel, school staff, governors and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

All but an extremely small number of pupils attending this average sized school are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also well above average. The area around the school is extremely socially and economically disadvantaged. The school has achieved a number of nationally recognised awards including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Investor in People and the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Cotmanhay Infant School is an outstanding school. It has the overwhelming support of parents, one of whom wrote, 'The headteacher and staff all show an interest and enthusiasm for children that is inspiring', and another who commented, 'Our children are achieving beyond our expectations'. Many others wrote of their confidence that the school provides their children with a first class start to their education.

The school is a happy and welcoming place where children's enthusiasm for learning is very real. They talk excitedly about how much they enjoy being at school because they have fun and the adults help them to learn. They feel safe and secure in school, and able to talk to an adult if they are worried about something. Relationships, based very strongly on trust and respect, are exemplary and safeguarding and child protection procedures are extremely robust. In this exceptionally supportive environment, children are able to grow as people and to learn extremely well.

Children of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with higher ability make exceptionally good progress and achieve extremely well. Standards overall on entry to the nursery are extremely low compared with those typically found for children of nursery age. Despite the outstanding progress they make, standards in Year 2 over the past few years have been well below average overall. Standards in the current Year 2 are similarly well below average. In 2007 standards dipped to exceptionally low overall. School assessment data clearly shows this group had entered school with even lower knowledge and skill levels than usually recorded but that they made outstanding progress. Almost 90% of these children required and received some degree of additional help for a learning difficulty or disability, and many received support for their personal circumstances.

Teachers have very high expectations for children and pay very close attention to teaching basic skills such as spelling and writing in complete sentences, to enable children to learn as well as possible in all subjects. The innovative use of resources engages children in the learning process and makes it relevant and interesting. Particularly good use is made of information and communication technology, role-play and drama to stimulate and extend children's spoken language skills before they are challenged to write. The outdoor area is used exceptionally well in the nursery but opportunities to use the outdoors as a learning resource for children in other year groups are sometimes missed. Lessons move at a brisk pace and children are managed extremely well. Skilled teaching assistants work with teachers to provide exceptionally good support for children and make a significant contribution to their learning overall.

As a consequence of the extremely good care guidance and support they receive children's personal development is outstanding. Links with the receiving junior school and partnerships with a wide range of outside agencies are excellent. The school's assessment and progress monitoring systems are also outstanding. Teachers are highly effective at using this information for target-setting, and supporting and guiding children to achieve as well as they can. Excellent links with parents of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and with external support agencies ensure these children receive the help they need to achieve as well as other children. Children behave exceptionally well and are enthusiastic and motivated to learn because teachers take account of their individual needs. Activities are always designed to enable children to use what they already know to support their new learning. They are encouraged by teachers and teaching assistants to have a go and not be afraid to make mistakes. Children are praised

for their efforts and develop into confident learners who work extremely hard to achieve their challenging targets.

The outstanding curriculum, including the very effective use of visitors, visits and after-school clubs support children's learning extremely well. Children are very keen to accept responsibilities and learn to respect each other's ideas and feelings. They are proud of the contribution they make to their school and the wider community. Children understand the importance of eating healthily and enjoy using the extensive range of equipment available at playtime. Adult involvement in children's play helps them to learn about the benefits of being active, of being tolerant of each other and of sharing and co-operating. Most children's attendance is good and they arrive at school on time each day. However, despite the rigorous and sustained efforts of the school, the Education Welfare Officer and Family Resource Worker a few parents do not ensure the good and punctual attendance of their children.

Leadership and management at all levels, and governance, are extremely effective. Teamwork is very strong in the school and underpins its success. Staff are very self-critical and reflective and school self-evaluation is accurate. Staff are enthusiastic and energetic and constantly seeking to make things better for children so they can achieve as well as possible. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are rigorous and responsive to children's changing needs. Rapid action is taken to address any weaknesses that are identified. This proactive approach and the high level of commitment of all those who work in and support the school have secured outstanding improvement since the previous inspection. The school has an excellent capacity to improve in the future and provides extremely good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding and is exceptionally well led and managed. From their extremely low standards on entry to the nursery children make exceptionally good progress. Despite this, few of them reach the expected goals by the end of their reception year. Teaching is excellent and meticulous records are kept of children's achievements and the progress they are making. Highly effective use is made of this information to guide the planning of activities to match children's interests and abilities. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning and the very effective admission arrangements ensure children settle quickly and happily into school. Adults act as extremely good role models and fully engage with children in the activities provided with the result that children learn rapidly and achieve exceptionally well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers capitalise on opportunities to use the outdoor areas as a learning resource.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

14 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Cotmanhay Infant School, Cotmanhay, DE7 8RR

Thank you very much for helping me with the inspection of your school. You made me feel very welcome and I really enjoyed my day with you. I particularly liked watching you work in your lessons and talking to you at playtime and lunchtime. You told me how you think school is fun and how the adults at school help you to feel safe and to learn very, very well. I was very pleased to hear just how much you enjoy being at school.

Here are some of the things I liked best about your school.

- You behave extremely well and have a good time in your lessons because teachers make them fun and all the adults help you to learn new things.
- You work very hard and try your best to reach your targets.
- You listen carefully to each other and adults and enjoy each other's company.
- Your headteacher and the other adults in school take extremely good care of you. They want you to be happy and to stay safe.
- Almost all the parents or carers who wrote to me are extremely pleased with the care and education you receive.

I think you go to an outstanding school that helps you to really enjoy learning. To make it even better I am asking the teachers to plan more activities outside for those of you in Reception, Year 1 and 2 to help you learn even more.

Thank you very much for making my visit such a pleasant one. I hope that you will all keep on working very hard and enjoying your time at school.

Best wishes

Alison Cogher

Lead inspector