

# Costock C of E Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122756
<b>Local Authority</b>	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	314388
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Geof Timms

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	46
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Neal Humphries
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Terry Beale
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	31 March 2003
<b>School address</b>	Main Street Costock Loughborough Leicestershire LE12 6XD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01509 852084
<b>Fax number</b>	01509 852084

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The school is much smaller than most primary schools. It serves the village of Costock and surrounding area. There are very few pupils entitled to free school meals. Most of the school's pupils are from advantaged socio-economic backgrounds. There are no pupils from minority ethnic groups or who have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average. Attainment on entry to the school varies widely due to the very small cohorts but the overall picture is of attainment that is broadly in line with that expected.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school with many positive characteristics. It is providing pupils with an effective education and preparing them well for secondary school. Pupils achieve well due to good teaching and the school is well led and managed. There is a strong family ethos and good support for pupils, including for those finding learning difficult. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One wrote 'I feel the family atmosphere is good for the children who feel confident and valued.' However, a minority feel they would like more information about their child's progress and about the work they are doing, and the school intends to review its current provision.

Pupils are also very happy with the school. They enjoy being there and find many lessons and activities interesting and fun. Their personal development is good. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they have good attitudes towards learning. They understand how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They have a good range of responsibilities to help them contribute to the school and the local community. Attendance is above average.

Pupils' good attitudes to learning are reflected in their achievement. Progress is good throughout the school in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Because of this, standards by the end of Year 6 are consistently above average and in 2007 were exceptionally high in English and mathematics. This represents good progress, given their attainment on entry to the school. Writing skills have been a focus for improvement recently and this has had a positive impact on standards. However, in the 2007 Year 2 assessments, no pupils reached the higher levels, so this remains an area for improvement. There are too few opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and the school has recognised the need to improve this aspect of its work. Although other subjects were not a major focus for the inspection, it is evident from the pupils' oral skills that standards in Spanish are above those expected.

The good achievement is the result of good teaching and learning. Teachers plan lessons well and make good use of available resources, including information and communication technology (ICT). They have good relationships with their pupils and this is reflected in the pupils' comments about how well they feel teachers help them to learn new things. The governors' decision to keep classes small by funding sufficient staff is also helping pupils' good learning. The curriculum is well planned to be appropriate for mixed age classes and good links are made between subjects. The school works hard to extend pupils' experiences by working with external providers in physical education, the arts and science.

Leadership and management are good and the school is well run. The headteacher has continued his excellent leadership of the school since the last inspection. This has helped maintain the high standards evident and resulted in good improvement. The school's self-evaluation is largely accurate and honest and reflects the self-critical nature of the school, which ensures a lack of complacency in its work. The governing body has had many changes recently and finds it hard to recruit new members. Although their work is satisfactory currently, there is a lack of experience and the need for further training to strengthen governors' role as critical friends to the school. Staff monitor the work in their subjects and work together well offering advice and support as necessary. They do not get enough opportunities to observe each other to accurately monitor the teaching and learning in lessons. This good school has shown a continual willingness to strive for better, which demonstrates its good capacity to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Currently there are only three children in the Reception group, and they have only been in school for three weeks. The school plans well for them, and they have a teacher or teaching assistant working with them each morning, before they join and usually work with Years 1 and 2 in the afternoon. Past records show that children make good progress, especially in their understanding of letters and sounds and in reading, writing and numeracy skills. They have a good mix of activities to help them learn to get along together well and to help them develop the skills they will need later on. Overall, children achieve well and most reach standards that are above those expected.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Develop effective strategies for raising standards in speaking and listening.
- Give subject leaders more opportunities to evaluate teaching and learning.
- Improve the role of governors in holding the school to account.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Given the small size of each year group, it is difficult to make accurate comparisons, and results can vary widely. Even so, when pupils leave the school, standards are consistently above average. In the 2007 tests at the end of Year 6, standards in English and mathematics were exceptionally high, and in science, they were above average. At the end of Year 2 in 2007, standards were also above average in reading and mathematics although too few pupils reached the higher levels in writing, speaking and listening. When the school discovers any underachievement, it works hard to address it. Recent work to raise standards in writing throughout the local 'family' of schools has clearly had a positive impact, especially in Years 3 to 6. The school has identified the need to provide pupils with more opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. The provision in Spanish is very effective and results in standards above those expected.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

This aspect is good because the pupils respond very positively to the school's supportive and caring ethos, alongside the good levels of challenge evident in teachers' expectations. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding both in and out of lessons. They support and help each other well and develop very effective relationships. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They understand how to keep themselves healthy and safe and the above average attendance levels support their comments on how much they enjoy school. They take on responsibility well where it is offered, and there is a positive willingness to help each other. This is evident in the informal ways in which older pupils interact with younger ones. The good basic skills they gain in literacy, numeracy and ICT help prepare them well for their future lives.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

This aspect is good. Staff work very hard to plan and provide appropriate and enjoyable activities for their classes. Planning takes account of pupils' ages although it does not always match accurately what they already know and can do. Even so, teachers know their pupils well and this helps them provide support on an individual basis where necessary. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and this encourages pupils' willingness to answer questions and to take a full part in lessons. Resources are used well and the use of interactive whiteboards and other ICT is a good improvement since the last inspection. Teachers continually look to improve their work. This is evident in the introduction of the 'big writing' books in Years 3 to 6, which have supported better quality writing through excellent marking and advice for pupils, and a more regular and detailed system for tracking their achievement. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support pupils' learning, especially in the Reception group and with pupils who find learning difficult.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The good curriculum planning ensures that the needs of mixed age classes are appropriately met. Teachers' and teaching assistants' expertise is used well to provide a modern foreign language, music and other activities. The school ensures good enrichment opportunities are available by using outside expertise and very good links with other schools in the area. Teachers' plans make meaningful links between subjects to contribute to pupils' understanding, especially through history or geography topics. The provision for those pupils with social or learning difficulties is good and supports their good progress. Those with specific gifts or talents are also well supported, and able to extend their learning through challenging activities and a range of events at the local secondary school.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

This is a caring school. Its small size is used very positively to create a mutually supportive and friendly family ethos. Parents are confident that their children are well looked after, and the inspection findings support this view. The school meets all statutory requirements regarding checks on adults who work with the pupils, health and safety and first aid. Pupils say they are confident that there are adults they trust and would go to if worried or concerned about anything. The school provides good advice and sets challenging targets based on the tracking of individual pupils' progress. Pupils are not always aware of what they need to do to improve and teachers' marking is not consistently as useful as that in the Key Stage 2 writing books.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 2

The headteacher has led the school very successfully for a number of years. His good humour and continual willingness to take on new ideas is outstanding and has supported the schools' high standards consistently over time. He very effectively makes the best use of a small number

of other adults and through his own teaching provides a good role model for others. The governing body are aware that due to a number of important changes to their membership, including that of the Chair, they need to develop their role further in order to hold the school to account more efficiently for what it achieves. Subject leadership has changed recently due to staff changes and teachers do not have sufficient opportunities to evaluate the teaching and learning in their subjects. However, staff work well together, supporting and advising each other and making good use of each other's expertise and experience.

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## 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?	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### 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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

25 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Costock C of E Primary School, Loughborough LE12 6XD.

I am writing to thank you for the way you made me welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed meeting you and watching you work and play together. I especially enjoyed meeting those of you who were chosen to talk to me and you helped me learn a lot about your school. I especially enjoyed watching your Spanish lessons, even though I could not join in!

You told me you enjoy school and I can see why you do. You are lucky to be at Costock as it is a good school. Mr Beale and the other adults work very hard to help you learn new things and to plan interesting things for you to do. You help them by your excellent behaviour and by the way you take part in lessons, answering questions and working well together.

Because of this, you reach high standards and you learn a lot during your time at the school. By the time you leave the school most of you have standards above those in other schools and this helps prepare you well for secondary school. I also like the way the school looks after you, and you look after each other. There is a very friendly atmosphere in the school, which I know your parents appreciate.

I have asked Mr Beale and the teachers to do three things to help the school continue to improve:

- provide more opportunities for activities to develop your speaking and listening skills
- help the governors develop their skills in visiting the school and assessing how good it is, and
- give teachers in charge of subjects time to watch other teachers teach.

Thank you again for your help. Enjoy your time at Costock and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms

Lead inspector