

# Cotsford Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114151
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	325953
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Graeme Clarke

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	109
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Dennis Maddison
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Rachel Cook
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 March 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Cotsford Park Horden Peterlee County Durham SR8 4TB
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 5865372
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 5865372

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<b>Age group</b>	4–7
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

## Description of the school

This smaller than average sized infant school, serves families mainly from its local village. The locality has areas of marked economic disadvantage. A well above average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils are from White British families. Of the few from minority ethnic backgrounds, none are learning English as an additional language. A very high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is in the Reception Year.

## 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, where some aspects of the education it provides are outstanding. All staff successfully foster the principle that every child does matter. Pupils achieve well and their personal development and well-being are outstanding. The headteacher, ably supported by her new deputy, provides very clear educational direction to the school's work. Children in this inclusive school greatly benefit from good provision in the Reception class, and pupils in Years 1 and 2 continue to receive good teaching where teachers and teaching assistants provide well organised interesting activities which encourage pupils to take part enthusiastically and work industriously. Together with a rich curriculum and exceptional pastoral care, guidance and support this effective teaching ensures pupils make good progress and achieve well. The school forges highly effective partnerships with local services and especially with parents to support pupils' well-being. An exceptionally high proportion of parents have full confidence in the school. One summarised their views, 'Every member of staff is friendly and approachable. The quality of teaching at the school is A1... I have never regretted sending any of my children to this school.'

Pupils currently in Key Stage 1 started Year 1 with well below average standards, having not experienced the current changes in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils make good progress. Although standards as pupils leave Year 2 remain below average in reading, writing and mathematics, they are improving. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 show girls do better than boys especially in writing. This continues to be the case. The school has accurately identified priorities for raising achievement. The new leadership team and governing body have successfully fostered key improvements and their great resolve to improve progress has paid dividends. New initiatives in reading and writing are not yet fully established but improvements can already be seen especially to the mathematics curriculum and these have accelerated many pupils' progress. This is especially the case for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the more able pupils. Most of whom have already made good progress to reach challenging targets. When taking all pupils' backgrounds and starting points into account overall achievement is good.

Pupils behave impeccably in lessons and assemblies. They act carefully and sensibly. They use the playtime facilities very considerably so everyone gains a great deal of pleasure from them. Pupils have very positive attitudes. They are polite and confident and thoroughly enjoy school, for example, taking part in lessons and assemblies with obvious great enthusiasm. They are delighted when they do well and happily share the success of others. The school rigorously monitors absence. Prompt action and liaison with parents are improving the situation and attendance is now close to the national average. Pupils have an excellent grasp of healthy eating, the importance of physical activities and personal hygiene. They contribute well in many ways to their school, local and wider community, deservedly gaining Healthy School status, the Activemark and a Silver Eco School award. The school makes a good and well managed contribution to community cohesion. This extends pupils' horizons both locally and further afield. Effective partnership with the junior school, very well developed social skills and sound basic skills ensure pupils are well prepared for their future.

Leadership and management are good. The school's determination and effective strategies are raising attendance and pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is better than at the time of the last inspection. Current improvements bode well for the future and the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. On entry, children's attainment is lower than what is typical for this age. Significant recent improvements to teaching and facilities have successfully led to higher achievement, so that by the end of Reception, standards are now average especially in the important areas of language and mathematical development. Children make good progress due to the interesting and exciting activities available in and out of doors, where they have extensive opportunities to practise new skills and become independent learners. Children settle quickly, follow routines and learn to work well together and independently. Behaviour is outstanding. Overall, they make rapid and remarkable progress in their personal development. Good teaching captures children's attention, encourages their involvement and makes learning fun. Activities offer children a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. For example, children enjoyed being pirates, searching for buried treasure and counting the value of the coins they found. The school has recently introduced new systems for helping children to improve listening skills and to recognise letters and sounds. As a result, progress in reading is improving well. Outstanding provision for children's welfare ensures they settle well and quickly gain in confidence because adults show high levels of care and attention. The school's very effective induction arrangements build on close links with the neighbouring nursery school. A very helpful booklet about the Reception class assists parents to support learning at home and strengthens the partnership with them. Assessment practices are well in place and enable adults to match learning to children's specific needs. Use of assessment information to plan children's next steps in learning is a particular strength. Clear and effective leadership results in a strong team who identify individual learning needs, give a high standard of care and diligent support which, in turn, provides the bedrock of the good and improving progress children make.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Consolidate and extend throughout the school initiatives to sustain the improvements in reading and mathematics made this year.
- Improve boys' progress and standards, particularly in writing.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2008 showed standards were below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Results in reading and writing were noticeably weaker among boys than girls. As these children had not benefited from the recent improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage, they started Year 1 with well below average standards. They made good progress. Recent changes including initiatives for phonics work, writing and mathematics are beginning to bear fruit. However, they are not fully established and standards in reading, writing and mathematics although rising, are still not yet reaching average levels. Nevertheless, from their low starting point pupils have made good progress, particularly in reading and mathematics. Progress in writing is satisfactory. Girls are making better progress than the boys especially in writing. The more able pupils achieve well as they are responding more quickly to recent changes and successfully reaching their challenging targets. Similarly, those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and achieve well, as a result of very effective support.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Many opportunities in assemblies, religious education and throughout the curriculum in and out of school, contribute to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Displays of excellent artwork, extensive participation in many physical activities and truly collaborative work reflect the great extent of these aspects of personal development. Pupils feel safe, act responsibly and know how to keep themselves safe. They speak warmly of 'the kindness of others' and are demonstrably considerate towards each other. Pupils value the school's rewards system for good work and attendance and are highly motivated to achieve success. They celebrate their schoolmates' accomplishments wholeheartedly. Pupils work very well together and their general behaviour in and out of lessons is excellent. They really appreciate the importance of exercise, nutritious food and personal hygiene to stay healthy. They thoroughly enjoy school, and take part with great enthusiasm in lessons and in play. They welcome responsibility and keenly take on the role of monitors and school council representatives. Their attitudes to school, local community projects and to charitable activities are very positive which, together with their work with a school in The Gambia, help them to value diversity and widen their understanding of the world. Close links with the local junior school, their well developed social skills and sound basic skills prepare them well for the next stage in their education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching is good with many strengths. After a period of changes among teaching staff, the situation is now stable. Classroom routines are well established and pupils settle quickly to work. Adults have good relationships with pupils, who in turn respond well to the clear demands made of them. On some occasions, the teachers' expectations of what pupils should do are not well enough matched to ability and boys, particularly, do not make as much progress as they could. In the better lessons, activities are well organised and interesting. Pupils become very involved, contribute enthusiastically when asked skilfully posed questions, and learn well. They work very cooperatively and productively in groups as well as independently. Effective collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants ensures pupils make good progress and achieve well. Teaching assistants offer closely focused and intensive support which helps many with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress. Teachers make clear to pupils what they will learn, and what they need to do to improve. This approach is consistently applied throughout the school.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is carefully designed to promote and encourage pupils to become successful and confident learners. It takes good account of the needs of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with gifts and talents. National awards reflect the major contribution the curriculum makes to promoting excellent personal development and well-being, and to fostering community cohesion. An extensive range of educational visits and visitors to school greatly enhances the curriculum. Many pupils thoroughly enjoy taking part in the popular and wide range of arts-based and physical activities available after school.

Together, they make a substantial contribution to pupils' personal development and especially to spiritual, social and cultural aspects. New initiatives to support reading, to give structure and purpose to writing, and to extend mathematical understanding show positive outcomes in pupils' current progress and achievement but are not yet fully established throughout the school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Pastoral care, guidance and support for pupils are excellent. Pupils perceive school as a welcoming and safe place. Their trust is not misplaced. They find adults very approachable, and the school successfully ensures that pupils feel secure and happy. Policies and practice for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements; child protection and health and safety are paramount. Staff training is regularly reviewed and up-to-date. Absenteeism is reducing as a result of diligent work with parents to improve attendance. However, persistent medical conditions and childhood illnesses have a significant effect upon levels of attendance in this small infant school.

Academic guidance is a particular strength. The school has a rigorous system to track and analyse pupils' progress and to set them personal challenging targets which are incorporated into lesson activities. This approach is very effective and the school is successfully extending its use of assessment to promote learning. When marking books, teachers congratulate pupils on their accomplishments and methodically give precise and clear ways for them to improve their work. The school ensures pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified at an early stage. It works closely and very effectively with outside agencies, including the local authority and a counselling service, and deploys its own staff very successfully to address pupils' specific social and emotional difficulties to enhance their learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Good leadership and management very successfully promote the very positive climate for learning which ensures equality of opportunity for all. The senior leadership team shows great commitment and determination to develop and improve the school. A particularly strong feature is the high priority governors and professional leaders give to promoting partnerships with parents and the community to support children's learning. The planned activities and opportunities they provide to widen successfully pupils' awareness of cultural diversity make a good contribution to community cohesion. Governance is good. Governors have very clear knowledge of the school from a first-hand view of its work. The school's accurate self-evaluation, and the resulting priority given to raising standards, is clear in its development plan. Well directed activities are clearly improving pupils' literacy and mathematical skills. The school sets very challenging targets at whole-school level and now uses its tracking of pupils' attainment exceptionally well to accelerate their progress. Good quality leadership and management are responsible for pupils achieving well. The school's determination and effective strategies are raising attendance and improving pupils' progress above the levels reported at the last inspection. Current improvements bode well for the future.

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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?	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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	1

## 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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	2
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

11 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cotsford Infant School, Durham, SR8 4TB

I really enjoyed my visit to your school last week. Thank you for helping me when I came into your classrooms and assemblies to see you at work. I did enjoy talking with some of you. You were exceptionally well-behaved, very polite, and really helpful. I was pleased to see how much you enjoy coming to school and taking part enthusiastically in all the different activities. I was impressed with the many ways you contribute to school life, such as through your school council and as monitors, and how you help improve the gardens. You deserve your Healthy School, Activemark and Eco School awards. I know your headteacher and all the staff are rightly very proud of you.

Yours is a good school. It is very welcoming and very well organised. All the adults in the school look after you well. I know that you feel safe. Your lessons are good. I was pleased with the way you work hard and like to take part in lessons and other school activities.

Children in Reception make good progress. I am pleased to see that the new phonics activities and the new mathematics work are helping those in all years to make good progress, especially with reading and mathematics. Most of you are doing well with the new writing project. I did note that girls are doing better in their writing than boys. I was especially pleased to see that those of you who get extra help are doing well. Last year, pupils who were in Year 2 did not do quite as well as pupils in many other schools. However, the changes introduced by the headteacher and staff are already improving your own current standards.

Your headteacher and the staff do a really good job and I have asked the school to continue next year with the projects to help you in reading, writing and mathematics. I have also asked the school to find ways to help boys to do even better.

You have many opportunities at Cotsford Infant School to learn about life and these should stand you in good stead for the future. Some of you will soon be leaving to go to another school and I hope that you do really well.

Yours faithfully

Graeme Clarke

Lead inspector