

# Cottam Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131720
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	341204
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Melvyn Hemmings

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	240
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Jon Wright
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lindsay Timms
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Haydocks Lane Cottam Preston PR4 0NY
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who visited 17 lessons or parts of lessons. The inspectors observed seven teachers and held discussions with governors, staff, groups of pupils and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work and looked at school policies, records of meetings, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 63 responses to parents' and carers' questionnaires were received and analysed.

The inspection reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether pupils in Years 1 and 2 make sufficient progress
- the impact of pupil mobility on standards by the end of Year 6
- how successfully the school has worked to improve attainment in reading and mental mathematics
- how effectively leaders identify and deal with any potential underachievement of pupils.

## Information about the school

This average-sized school has gained a number of national awards, including the Activemark, and has achieved Healthy School status. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught in mixed-year classes. The school roll is falling and leaders are preparing to have seven classes rather than eight in the next academic year. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The numbers of pupils who join or leave school other than at the normal time is high in some classes. During the inspection, most Year 6 pupils were on a residential stay and three classes were taught by short-term supply teachers. Most pupils are White British, though a few pupils from minority ethnic groups are at an early stage of learning English. The onsite before- and after-school provision is privately managed and was not part of this inspection.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. It is a friendly and welcoming place in which to learn and has many strengths. The care and well-being of pupils is central to the school's work and this is much appreciated by parents and carers.

The headteacher's clear vision for school improvement is shared by all involved in the school and a strong team ethos is evident. Action taken by leaders in recent years has led to improvements in a variety of areas, such as in improved standards in reading, raised attendance and stronger engagement with parents. The procedures for checking pupil progress have been refined and enable leaders to identify any potential underachievement at an early stage. This has resulted in the introduction of extra support and programmes of intervention to boost pupils' progress. Nonetheless, the impact of action taken to bring about improvement is not evaluated rigorously enough to measure how successful it has been. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching is not sufficiently robust to ensure teachers are fully accountable for the progress their pupils make. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate, though the view of its effectiveness is too generous. Nonetheless, the school knows its strengths and improvement plans reflect what needs to be done to consolidate success and gain further improvement. The capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Pupils make satisfactory progress overall throughout the school and attain broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. This represents satisfactory achievement from their skill levels on entry to school, which are broadly typical for their age. The school has worked successfully to improve attainment in reading by making guided reading sessions more focused on developing specific skills, providing a new reading scheme and upgrading library provision. A whole-school mathematical calculation policy has been put into place and is supporting the successful development of pupils' calculation skills, particularly their quick mental recall skills. Leaders are not complacent and acknowledge, rightly, that there is more to do to raise standards further. This includes improving pupils' skills in structuring and punctuating sentences accurately and providing more opportunities to write at length across the curriculum. Leaders are now focusing on improving pupils' ability to apply their mathematical calculation skills to solve number problems in different contexts. Pupils behave well and enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in their above average attendance. Teaching has many strengths but does not always sufficiently challenge pupils of different abilities, and this limits the progress that pupils make at times. An extensive range of enrichment activities adds interest and variety to the curriculum.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

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- Raise standards, particularly in writing and mathematics, by:
  - developing pupils' skills in structuring and punctuating sentences accurately and providing more opportunities to write at length across the curriculum
  - improving pupils' problem solving skills in mathematics.
- Improve teaching and learning and accelerate pupils' progress by:
  - ensuring teachers are more consistent in setting work that matches the needs of pupils
  - making sure teachers are fully accountable for the progress their pupils make.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - sharpening the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning
  - evaluating more rigorously the actions taken to bring about improvement.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Attainment overall is broadly average. The results of the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2009 were exceptional, being significantly above average. This cohort was self-motivated, enthusiastic and made good progress. Although pupils currently in Year 6 make good progress in some aspects of reading, mathematical calculation and scientific investigational skills, progress is satisfactory overall. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and collaborate well in pairs and small groups to complete tasks. They especially enjoy practical activities, as was observed in a mathematics lesson for pupils in Year 2 when they were learning to read an analogue clock and identify time intervals. Pupils are competent readers and enjoy books. While they write interesting stories and accounts, they lack accuracy in using correct vocabulary, punctuation and spelling to construct sentences. Pupils have secure mathematical calculation skills but are less adept at using these to solve real-life number problems. Improvements in science provision mean that pupils have well developed scientific investigational skills. Currently, there is no significant difference between the achievement or the quality of learning of different groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English make similar progress to other pupils because of the extra support they receive.

Pupils are polite and show respect for the feelings of others. They make a good contribution to school life by willingly taking on responsibilities, such as being a member of the school council and by confidently showing parents around the school at induction meetings. Pupils also contribute well to the local community, including taking part in the Preston Schools' Music Festival. Pupils' understanding of cultures in other countries is enriched by work in geography and their fundraising towards the education of a student in Kenya. Their awareness of the cultural variety within the United Kingdom is less well developed. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to eat a balanced diet and

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take regular exercise in order to stay healthy. They say they are looked after well and feel safe and secure in school.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Pupils show enthusiasm in their work because the activities given to them are often practical and interesting. Teachers manage classrooms well so that little time is lost. Relationships are good and teachers use praise well to bolster pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are able to explain ideas clearly and demonstrate new techniques confidently. A good example of this was observed in a lesson for Year 1 pupils in the information and communication technology (ICT) suite, when the teacher's expertise enabled pupils to improve their skills in using a computer programme to create a variety of Mr Men images. Planning usually ensures pupils of different abilities are given challenging work, but not always, and this slows progress at times. Pupils are informed about their progress and how to improve through teachers' marking and by talking to adults. They are not yet fully involved in assessing their own progress and how they might improve. Teaching assistants are soundly

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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deployed, particularly in terms of supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or difficulties and those at an early stage of learning English.

The curriculum is extended by a variety of out-of-school activities, including sports, music and dance clubs that are well attended. Visits to places of educational interest, including Ribchester Roman Museum and Blackpool Zoo, and opportunities to work with a variety of visitors, extend pupils' skills and widen their horizons. Established links with the local high school enhance pupils' development, particularly in their scientific investigational skills. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to refine and extend their literacy skills by writing purposefully at length across the curriculum. Leaders are exploring ways of making stronger links between subjects so pupils can better use skills developed in one subject to support learning in others. Partnerships with other organisations help the school effectively meet the needs of those pupils who are potentially vulnerable.

All staff are firmly committed to the safety and pastoral care of pupils. Well organised arrangements for the care of all pupils contribute to their good development and well-being and support their learning. Staff are clear of the steps to take if they have any concerns about the well-being of a pupil. Clearly targeted support for potentially vulnerable pupils plays an important role in fostering their learning and development. Established links with outside agencies ensure extra support for individual pupils is available when required. Transition arrangements are good and ensure that the high pupil mobility in some classes does not adversely affect standards by the end of Year 6. Newcomers receive a warm welcome and settle quickly in school. The school has worked successfully to raise attendance, which is now above average.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Leaders establish ambition and drive improvement by ensuring the school focuses on the priority areas for development. This is reflected in the careful planning and preparation to manage the school's falling roll and move to seven classes. However, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning lacks sharpness. Lesson observations tend to focus on provision rather than the quality of pupils' learning. As a result, the areas for development given to teachers do not focus enough on how learning could be improved. Improvements to the procedures for tracking pupil progress mean the school has a clearer picture of the performance of different groups of pupils

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and their contribution to school life. The promotion of equal opportunities and tackling of discrimination is sound. The school takes action, based on sound data, to bring about improvement in targeted areas but the impact of this action is not robustly evaluated. This means the school does not have a clear picture of how successful changes have been and the impact they have had on attainment.

Leaders actively promote community cohesion within the school and pupils from different backgrounds get on well with each other. The school is working to strengthen engagement with a range of groups beyond the school and the immediate community. All safeguarding requirements are met and arrangements are regularly reviewed. Training of staff in safeguarding, particularly child protection, is of good quality. Governors are supportive of the school and are developing their expertise in holding the school to account for its performance. The school works effectively with a variety of agencies to support specific groups, such as those pupils who are potentially vulnerable. Engagement with parents and carers is good, with the school helping them to support their children's learning in different ways and providing them with regular information about their progress.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Adults have a sound understanding of the needs of children of this age and work well as a team to ensure they are met. They provide activities that are interesting and practical. As a result, children are interested and usually engaged in all that they do and make satisfactory progress. Children behave well and work and play happily together. At



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times, activities are too adult directed and this limits children's development in making choices for themselves. Children are keen to talk about what they are doing, as shown in their enthusiasm in a baking activity when they were making owl cakes. An interesting range of enrichment activities enhances the curriculum, such as walks around the local environment and a visit to Knowsley Safari Park. The leader ensures that assessment procedures are thorough and provide an accurate record of children's progress and achievement. At times, this information is not used effectively to ensure that children are always given sufficiently challenging work. Children have access to the spacious outdoor area throughout the day and thoroughly enjoy the exciting activities that are provided for them. Children are cared for well in this friendly and happy setting. Parents and carers say that staff are very approachable and keep them informed of their child's progress.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

**Views of parents and carers**

Just over 21% of parents and carers completed questionnaires. The very large majority of these were positive about the school's work and the efforts of all staff. Two comments were typical of many:

Cottam provides an enriching environment. Staff always do that little bit extra to make learning interesting' and

'I have always found the staff incredibly approachable and they clearly put the welfare of the pupils at the heart of everything they do.'

A few did not agree that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. There was no such behaviour observed during the inspection and pupils say it is dealt with promptly if it occurs. A very small minority of parents and carers did not agree that their children made enough progress. Inspectors judge that progress is satisfactory overall but is occasionally limited by a lack of sufficient challenge in lessons.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cottam Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 63 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 240 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	71	13	21	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	49	78	13	21	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	30	42	67	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	52	25	40	5	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	40	63	23	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	51	28	44	1	2	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	54	28	44	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	23	37	30	48	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	52	28	44	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	48	24	38	4	6	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	52	25	40	2	3	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	43	68	20	32	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	68	19	30	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



11 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cottam Primary School, Preston, PR4 0NY

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave the team when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the many interesting things you do.

The inspectors judge that:

- you make satisfactory progress through the school
- adults look after you well and make sure you are safe
- you enjoy coming to school and behave well
- many of you take part in extra-curricular activities
- in your questionnaires, you say you learn a lot at school and adults are interested in your views
- the headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to help you do better.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- raise standards by improving your skills in constructing sentences correctly, giving you more opportunities to write at length in all your subjects, and improving your mathematical problem solving skills
- make sure teachers always give you work that makes you think hard
- check the quality of teaching and learning and the impact of action taken to improve the school.

All of you are a credit to your school and your attendance is high. Well done! You can help your school improve further by continuing to try your best in your activities.

Yours sincerely

Melvyn Hemmings

Lead Inspector

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