

Cottage Grove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116203
Local Authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	346399
Inspection dates	15–16 June 2010
Reporting inspector	John Seal HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	341
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tom Morton
Headteacher	Mrs Polly Honeychurch
Date of previous school inspection	18 November 2008
School address	Chivers Close Southsea PO5 1HG
Telephone number	023 92341133
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. They observed 19 lessons which involved seeing 12 teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, parents, staff and members of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and shadow governing body. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at: data on pupils' progress and attendance; a range of policies and planning documents; minutes of meetings; the school's self-evaluation documents; risk assessments; financial information and documents relating to safeguarding. As the inspection was a section 8 deemed section 5 inspection, there were no parental questionnaires for analysis.

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

the extent to which lessons provide activities which meet the learning needs of all pupils
the effectiveness of the school's systems to analyse and take action to improve pupils' progress

the effectiveness of leaders and managers in improving teaching and raising standards
the effectiveness of measures to improve attendance through its work with parents and other agencies.

Information about the school

Cottage Grove Primary is larger than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than average, as are the numbers of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their needs include moderate learning difficulties and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The number of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English is very high. There is a higher than average proportion of pupils from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds especially Asian Bangladeshi. The school holds a number of awards, including Healthy Schools, Artsmark Gold and the Financial Management Standard in Schools charter marks. When the school was inspected in November 2008 it required special measures because it was judged to be failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. Significant improvement was required in relation to: raising standards and achievement, tracking and analysing pupils' progress, providing effective school improvement plans, improving the planning for literacy and numeracy and improving attendance.

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

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Cottage Grove Primary is an inclusive and caring school. It has strong and effective links with a very wide range of agencies enabling it to provide good support for vulnerable pupils and their families. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school and the headteacher and all staff know all the pupils well. As a result, pupils feel safe in school and know who to go to if they need help and support, and behave well during lessons and around the school.

Some of the things that have improved since the last inspection include:

a higher proportion of good teaching and some that is outstanding

the curriculum meets the needs of all the pupils and provides an exciting, practical approach to linking different subjects together in themed topics to motivate pupils' learning

a higher number of pupils attending school and significantly fewer persistent absentees. However the overall rates of attendance remain below average.

The quality of teaching is improving, but because of the high turnover of staff, particularly in Key Stage 1 and Years 3 and 4, there are still inconsistencies in practice. Consequently, pupils' progress is uneven over time and contributes to the below average standards in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2, particularly in writing. However, by the time pupils are in their final year, many of them have made up the lost ground.

The headteacher, supported by an enthusiastic leadership team and members of the IEB, has a secure view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The team's programme to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching is rigorous and leads to accurate self-evaluation. However, the role and contribution of middle managers remain underdeveloped. With a shadow governing body in place for September 2010, the withdrawal of the local authority's intervention and a track record of steady and sound improvement since the last inspection, the school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- 'Improve pupils' attainment in English and mathematics, especially writing, so that it is at least in line with the national average.
- 'Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good across the whole

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school by:

- using assessment more sharply to plan activities which meet pupils' needs and inform them of the next steps in their learning
- ensuring that the proportion of pupils' work and discussion outweighs that of teacher talk.
- 'Ensure that all leaders and managers including governors maintain an objective view on the school's strengths and weaknesses in order to drive and secure improvement by:
 - regular monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching
 - the governing body robustly holds the school to account.
- Increase the rates of all pupils' attendance by:
 - continuing to work effectively with other agencies
 - promoting good attendance within the whole school.

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

Pupils' progress is satisfactory across the school from exceptionally low starting points. Progress accelerates towards the end of Key Stage 2.

Standards, particularly in reading at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, continue to improve, but writing remains a weakness. Mathematics has been a priority for the school and significant improvements at the end of Key Stage 2 can be seen, as observed when Year 6 pupils completed a challenging algebraic investigation. The school has met its agreed targets in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress because of the good support they receive and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make expected progress.

There are no significant differences in achievement between different ethnic groups, although pupils with English as an additional language make better progress in reading and older boys perform better than girls in reading, writing and mathematics.

Most pupils have good attitudes towards school and enjoy their learning and many pupils understand how to live healthy lifestyles and suitably contribute to the school and local community. Pupils were keen to raise funds for Haiti earlier in the year.

Despite the attendance rates being below average, the school has been particularly effective in encouraging more parents and carers to send their children to school more regularly. As a result, there has been a dramatic reduction in persistent absentees and a sustained and significant improvement in attendance since the last inspection.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ 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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Care, guidance and support are real strengths of the school. The school has effective working relationships with a wide range of agencies that support vulnerable families very well.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is led and managed well and the team of well-trained and experienced learning support assistants work effectively with pupils in groups and individually.

The curriculum has improved significantly since the last inspection. Key strengths are:

- exciting, well-planned whole school topics which link different subjects together
- a strong emphasis on the key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology
- an extensive range of visits and visitors for all ages of pupils to promote and stimulate learning
- extended school activities including homework, football, dance and gardening.

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. The increasing number of good lessons have:

- well-planned and practical activities which motivate and capture pupils' interest
- good use of assessment information to accurately match all pupils' needs
- a good range of well-organised resources to support learning
- well-deployed teaching assistants
- marking in books is regular with many of them having helpful comments about their

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next steps.

Where teaching is less effective:

- teachers spend too long explaining and keeping pupils inactive which hinders their progress
- learning activities are not matched closely enough to pupils' needs and are not supported with relevant practical materials.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The school has faced many challenging circumstances, but throughout the recent turbulent times, the headteacher and the leadership team have managed to maintain a strong and successful focus on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning by:

- regular monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning
- accurate and informed analysis of information about pupils' progress and attainment
- supporting teachers through effective training, coaching and where necessary more formal and directed interventions.

Effective and strong working relationships have been forged with a range of services and agencies including the child and adolescent mental health services and education welfare.

A strength of the school is its tireless work to promote equality of opportunity and tackle potential discrimination. The school analyses its data and takes action to ensure no one group of pupils is disadvantaged.

The school's safeguarding procedures are strong and ensure all staff are up to date in their child protection training. Checks on newly appointed staff are carried out carefully and logged on the single central register.

There are some good activities to promote community cohesion, particularly with regard to linking with local faith groups and international links to sponsoring a child in Nigeria. However, because quite rightly there have been other priorities to address, the school's evaluation and planning are still in the early stages of development.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start and settle in well because adults are successful in establishing a warm and welcoming environment. They have positive attitudes towards learning and behave well because expectations are high and relationships are good.

The school's assessment information indicates that children make satisfactory progress from very low starting points at the beginning of the Nursery. By the time they leave Reception, many are broadly in line with age related expectations but a significant minority have lower than average levels of skills and knowledge than expected for their age.

The learning environments provide good access between outdoor and indoor activities although there is some disparity between the quality of the outdoor provision between Nursery and Reception.

The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory rather than good because there are inconsistencies in the quality of assessment and planning between Nursery and Reception.

There are a range of appropriate activities for children which meet their needs. However, there are missed opportunities to accelerate progress by encouraging children to be more active in their participation and building on their previous learning during the planned social activities.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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

During the visit, the inspector met informally with a small group of parents. Some were generally pleased with how the school was working with their children. A very small number of parents had concerns about pupils' behaviour and the school's communication with them. However, evidence seen during the inspection and the previous three monitoring visits indicates that pupils' behaviour is good and that the school employs a range of regular, informal and formal strategies to keep parents and carers informed, including inviting them to various consultations, workshops and other events.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

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). 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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



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16 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cottage Grove Primary, Southsea, PO5 1HG

Thank you for your friendly welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed watching you learn and play.

We thought that your school has really improved and does not need extra help to sort things out because it now provides you with a satisfactory education. Some of the good things we found were:

- ' the school cares for you really well and you feel safe in school
- ' there are lots of interesting activities for you to take part in both in and out of school time
- ' you are well behaved
- ' even more of you are learning more in reading writing and maths
- ' your parents are more involved in making sure you come to school

After talking to your headteacher, staff and governors about what we saw we have asked them to work on:

- ' helping even more of you do well in reading, writing and maths, especially writing
- ' checking that the work you do is improving
- ' making sure that the school keeps on getting better by checking that lessons are interesting and helping you learn
- ' helping even more of you to come to school more often.

You have helped the school improve and I am sure you would like to help it get even better by coming to school as much as you can and working hard.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

John Seal

Her Majesty's Inspector

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