

Cottesmore Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	120041
Local authority	Rutland
Inspection number	379941
Inspection dates	6–7 February 2012
Lead inspector	Mike Capper

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	57
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Bews
Headteacher	Carol Jamison
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2007
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Introduction

Inspection team

Mike Capper

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed 12 lessons taught by three teachers. Five of these observations were joint observations with the headteacher. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including teachers' planning, assessment information, safeguarding policies and samples of pupils' work. The inspector analysed 33 questionnaires from parents and carers, nine from staff and 29 from pupils.

Information about the school

Most pupils come to this smaller than average sized primary school from the RAF station on which it is located. Many pupils only stay in the school for two years. The number on roll has fallen significantly since the previous inspection. The number of classes was reduced from seven to three in September 2011 and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are now taught in a mixed-age Reception and Year 1 class. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils identified as being disabled or having special educational needs is also broadly average. The school meets the current government floor standards.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. The school is going through a period of transition and this has slowed the pace of change. Nonetheless, leaders have worked successfully to maintain a cohesive school community and members of staff continue to be highly effective in supporting pupils' social and emotional needs.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory but progress is uneven across the school. Pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 because they are taught well.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. Teaching is not always successful in meeting pupils' differing needs in mixed age classes because of the wide range of abilities.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety is good. They behave well and are very happy at school. They get on well together, work hard and give each other good support in lessons.
- The curriculum successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils develop good social skills and keenly take on responsibilities.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leaders have ensured that the school has continued to run smoothly during the period of transition. They are making a concerted effort to ensure that recent changes have not had a significant impact on pupils' learning. They know that not all teachers have adapted equally well to the demands of teaching mixed-age classes and support has not been successful yet in improving sufficiently the quality of teaching where it is less effective.
- The school engages very well with parents and carers and they contribute significantly to their children's learning, especially in reading.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on strengths in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 so that teaching in three out of four lessons in Key Stage 2 is good or better by

- ensuring that expectations are high enough and work is pitched at the right level for all pupils
- ensuring that the pace of learning is always brisk and that pupils are encouraged to work more quickly.

(By December 2012)

- Strengthen leadership and management by March 2013
 - using monitoring of teaching and learning by leaders at all levels to set clear targets for improvement and then following them up to check that they are being effective
 - ensuring that assessment procedures are applied consistently across the school so that dips in progress are identified and tackled more quickly
 - developing the role of middle managers in improving provision in their subjects.

(By March 2013)

- Sharpen the use of targets in Key Stage 2 so that pupils are clear about how to improve their work.

(By April 2012)

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The vast majority of parents and carers feel that their children make good progress. However, national test data, the school's own analysis of current performance, observations of learning in lessons and sampling of pupils' work confirm that pupils' progress is variable across the school and, in Key Stage 2, it is no better than satisfactory. Consequently, pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory by the end of Year 6, but varies significantly across the school as new pupils with different starting points arrive and leave regularly.

Pupils make the best progress in reading where attainment is above average by the end of Year 2 and by the time they leave school. In phonics lessons, good teaching, which is well matched to pupils' needs, means that early literacy skills improve quickly. Younger pupils quickly learn to build words by sounding them out and they confidently use technical terms such as 'split digraph' to describe what they are doing. In Key Stage 2, pupils who lack confidence in reading are given extra support outside lessons and this is helping to close the gap so that they catch up with their peers and are not underperforming by the time they leave the school.

In lessons, learning is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. Children and pupils in these year groups typically show interest and engagement, and are keen to find out things for themselves. For example, a group of Reception children, children worked with great enthusiasm and showed great curiosity as they

searched for 'bears' and then ordered them according to size. Year 2 pupils concentrated well as they explored the properties of different materials, quickly improving their skills and understanding because the teacher's questioning encouraged them to think deeply about how fair testing was.

In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress is satisfactory in most lessons. In a numeracy lesson, pupils all worked on the same task of exploring percentages and expectations were not high enough, thus slowing their learning. Whilst the task of sorting and tallying sweets was enjoyable, pupils did not always concentrate well enough and the more able were not sufficiently challenged. In a literacy lesson, where pupils were writing about a video they had watched, they were not encouraged to work quickly enough.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the best progress when they are supported by skilled teaching assistants in small groups outside lessons. At these times, their progress is rapid because work is closely matched to their particular needs to ensure that skills develop systematically. In some Key Stage 2 classes, lessons do not always build well enough on prior learning and pupils' work is sometimes left uncompleted in books because it is too hard.

There are no significant variations between the progress of boys or girls. Pupils who spend only a short time at the school make the same progress as others in lessons.

Quality of teaching

Most parents and carers feel that the quality of teaching is good. The inspection found that teaching is consistently good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, and this is the reason why pupils' progress so quickly. However, teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 2.

In the Reception classes and Key Stage 1, teachers and adults plan work that is pitched at the right level for pupils of differing abilities. There is a buzz of excitement in lessons because learning is made purposeful and pupils are expected to think for themselves. For example, as they explored symmetry, pupils explained how they had made large 'patterns,' using their friends.

In Key Stage 2, teachers make good use of resources and on most occasions manage pupils' behaviour very effectively. They regularly assess learning but they do not always use this information to ensure that their planning of work is pitched at the right level or that their expectations are high enough. Teachers mark work conscientiously but although there are targets in workbooks to show older pupils how to improve, they say that they rarely take account of them because they are 'too complicated.'

Curriculum planning successfully soundly supports the development of basic skills. The school has sensibly refined planning in the current year to take account of the new mixed-age classes and this has helped to ensure that there is no repetition of topics and that skills develop sequentially. Pupils are able to apply their reading, writing and numeracy skills in different subjects and do so competently. New pupils' attainment is quickly assessed so that no time is lost in moving their learning on.

Teachers take good account of what new pupils have already learnt in subjects such as history and geography to ensure that topics are not repeated.

Throughout the school, teaching successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers encourage pupils to cooperate through group work and they ensure that they develop a strong knowledge of different faiths and traditions through topics such as the current ones on India and Europe.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils work hard in lessons and are polite and courteous. They feel that behaviour is good, with one saying 'We learn that courtesy costs nothing and how important it is that we do our best.' Their good attitudes towards their work mean that there are rarely disruptions in lessons and learning is able to move on at a good pace. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and are keen to attend regularly, arriving punctually even on a snowy morning. Pupils who arrive during the school year settle quickly because of the welcome and support they are given by their new friends and staff.

Parents and carers feel that pupils behave well and are kept safe. The school has good systems for promoting good behaviour and these are well understood by pupils and staff. Activities such as the 'Sensory Circuit' where pupils learn to interact with each other are effective in helping those with behavioural difficulties to improve their social skills, although the school knows that just occasionally their behaviour can still disturb the learning of others.

Pupils learn about possible dangers that they may encounter in later life. For example, pupils responded very positively in a lesson where they were learning about the dangers of smoking. They are very confident that bullying only rarely occurs in school and they say that if it does happen it is tackled very quickly because 'there is always someone to talk to.' Pupils know that bullying can take many forms and they explain clearly about how to stay safe when using the internet.

Leadership and management

Leaders are successfully maintaining a cohesive and happy school community in a time of significant change. As one parent wrote, 'I think the school has dealt with the high loss of pupils in an excellent manner with no disruption at all to the children's daily routine.' The governing body have supported the school well and are playing a strong part in preparing for the impending intake of new pupils. There is a strong focus on keeping pupils safe and safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.

The school has successfully demonstrated that it has the capacity to improve, despite the great uncertainty caused by the falling role. Results are broadly similar to that found at the time of the previous inspection and strengths in behaviour and safety have been built on. Key development points from that time have been tackled well. For example, the use of information and communication technology in different subjects is now good and pupils' cultural awareness has improved significantly. Initiatives such as the phonics sessions for older pupils are already having a sustained effect on attainment, but leaders know that there is more to do to iron out

remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching now that there are mixed age classes. Leaders are identifying the relevant priorities for improvement and are pursuing them with rigour, focusing particularly on Key Stage 2 where teaching is less effective. At present, middle management responsibilities are shared between very few staff, limiting their impact on improving provision. The headteacher is aware of the need to delegate more widely once more staff have been appointed for September.

Leaders ensure that there is no discrimination. They focus strongly on promoting equality of opportunity, welcoming pupils with a wide range of needs. There is a wealth of data to check the progress of different groups but assessment procedures are not applied consistently, making it difficult to identify and tackle dips in learning.

There is a broad and balanced curriculum that generally reflects pupils' needs and interests. It is enriched by a good range of clubs and is successful at promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, activities such as an 'Eco Challenge' contribute significantly to pupils' awareness of their responsibilities to each other and the wider community.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.

8 February 2012

Dear Pupils,



Inspection of Cottesmore Primary School, Cottesmore, LE15 7BA

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking to you about your work and hearing some of you read. I found that your school is providing a satisfactory education. This means that I found some good things in the school but also some things that need improving.

Here are some of the things I found out about your school.

- You said in discussions and in the questionnaire that you enjoy school and I could see that you all try hard in lessons.
- Although there is good teaching some of the time, this is not always the case for older pupils and this means that your overall progress is satisfactory.
- You rightly told me that behaviour is good most of the time and you keenly take responsibility. I was very impressed by the work of the school councillors who told me how they are helping to improve the school.
- You feel you are kept safe and I could see that you take good care of each other. It is great that you are so welcoming to new pupils when they arrive.
- The school provides lots of interesting clubs and visits.
- All adults in school are caring and they give you suitable help when you have problems with your work.
- Leaders are doing the right things to move the school forward and are clear about what still needs improving. They have good plans for when the school gets bigger again.

What I have asked your school to do now.

- Make sure that teachers in Key Stage 2 always provide you with the right level of work and expect you to work quickly all of the time.
- Check that teaching is always good enough and use all of the information about your learning to ensure that you are all making the same progress.
- Make the targets you are given in Key Stage 2 clearer so that you know how to improve your work.

You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard all the time.

Yours sincerely
Mike Capper
Lead inspector

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