

PEOPLE (CHILDREN) SCRUTINY PANEL

13 February 2014

OFSTED REPORTS ON THE INSPECTION OF COTTESMORE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND THE PARKS SPECIAL SCHOOL

Report of the Director for People

STRATEGIC AIM:	Creating a Brighter Future for All
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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report provides an overview of the Ofsted Inspection reports relating to Cottesmore Primary School and The Parks Special School, Oakham.

Cottesmore Ofsted Inspection grade outcome was “Requires Improvement” in October 2013 (previously ‘Good’).

The Parks Special Schools Ofsted Inspection grade outcome was ‘Requires Improvement’ in December 2013 (previously ‘Good’)

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Scrutiny Panel considers the contents of this report noting the inspection judgements, overall effectiveness, capacity for sustained improvement and what the schools need to do to improve further.

3. KEY FEATURES OF THE FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL INSPECTION ARRANGEMENTS FROM SEPTEMBER 2012.

3.1 From September 2012, under the revised Ofsted school inspection arrangements, inspectors are required to focus sharply on those aspects of schools’ work that have the greatest impact on raising achievement.

3.2 Inspectors are required to report on the quality of education provided in the school, and must, in particular, cover:

- a) The achievement of pupils at the school;
- b) The quality of teaching in the school;
- c) The behaviour and safety of pupils at the school;
- d) The quality of leadership, and management of, the school.

These are the key judgment areas and there has been an increase in the proportion of inspectors’ time in school that is spent observing teaching and gathering evidence of learning, progress and behaviour.

3.3 Inspectors will continue to engage headteachers, school staff and governors in the process of inspection so that they understand better the basis for the judgements that are made. Inspectors will give greater consideration to the views of parents, pupils and staff as important evidence.

3.4 In reporting, inspectors must also consider:

- a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school
- b) The extent to which the education provided by the school meets the needs of the range of pupils at the school, and in particular the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.

3.5 Under the 2012 Ofsted Inspection Framework:

- a) Schools cannot be judged 'Outstanding' for overall effectiveness unless they have 'outstanding' teaching;
- b) An acceptable standard of education is defined as a 'good' standard of education;
- c) A school that is not deemed 'Good', but that is not judged 'Inadequate', is a school that 'Requires Improvement';
- d) A school that is 'Inadequate' overall and that requires significant improvement, but where leadership and management are not 'Inadequate' is a school with serious weaknesses;
- e) A school that is 'Inadequate' overall and where leadership and management are also 'Inadequate' is a school requiring special measures;
- f) Schools that are judged as 'Requires Improvement' will normally be monitored and re-inspected within a period of two years, the timing of the re-inspection will reflect the individual school's circumstances and will be informed by what inspectors find at the monitoring visits;
- g) If a school is judged as 'Requires Improvement' at two consecutive inspections and is still not 'Good' at a third inspection, it is likely to be deemed 'Inadequate' and to require 'Special Measures';
- h) Inspectors will normally contact the school by telephone during the afternoon of the working day prior to the start of a Section 5 inspection;
- i) Inspections will evaluate the robustness of performance management arrangements, and consider whether there is an appropriate correlation between the quality of teaching in a school and the salary progression of the school's teachers.

This framework sets out the statutory basis for inspections conducted under the Education Act 2005 (as amended), from 2012.

3.6 This framework applies to all schools in England that are to be inspected under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended). This includes all maintained schools and state-funded independent school and certain non-maintained independent schools.

The schools subject to Section 5 inspection are:

- a) Community, foundation and voluntary schools;
- b) Community and foundation special schools;
- c) Pupil referral units;
- d) Maintained nursery schools;
- e) Academies;
- f) City technology colleges;
- g) City technology colleges for the technology of the arts;
- h) Certain non-maintained special schools approved by the Secretary of State under Section 342 of the Education Act 1996.

3.7 How does inspection promote improvement?

Ofsted is required to carry out its work in ways that encourage the services it inspects and regulates to improve, be user-focused and be efficient and effective in the use of resources.

Inspection acts in a number of ways to drive and support school improvement, for example by:

- a) Raising expectations through criteria and grade descriptors that illustrate the standards of performance and effectiveness expected of schools;
- b) Offering a sharp challenge and the impetus to act where improvement is needed;
- c) Clearly identifies strengths and weaknesses;
- d) Recommends specific priorities for improvement for the school and when appropriate, checking on and promotes subsequent progress;
- e) Promotes rigour in the way that schools evaluate their own performance, thereby enhancing their capacity to improve;
- f) Monitors the progress and performance of schools that are not deemed 'good' and challenges and supports senior leaders, staff and those responsible for governance.

3.8 What inspection judgements mean

When finding the overall effectiveness of the school and when making the four key judgements about the achievement of pupils, the quality of teaching, the behaviour and safety of pupils and the quality of leadership in, and management of, the school, inspectors use the scales below:

- a) Grade 1 Outstanding
- b) Grade 2 Good
- c) Grade 3 Requires Improvement
- d) Grade 4 Inadequate

3.9 Outcomes and Ofsted monitoring process

Certain schools are exempt from Section 5 inspection. These schools are known as 'exempt schools'. Regulations specify that maintained primary and secondary schools, and academies, that were judged to be 'outstanding' overall at their most recent Section 5 inspection are exempt from future

inspection under Section 5. This exemption also applies to an academy converter school whose predecessor school achieved an ‘outstanding’ grade overall at its most recent Section 5 inspection.

Certain types of schools cannot be exempt schools. These are special schools (including maintained residential special schools and non-maintained special schools with residential provision), pupil referral units and maintained nursery schools.

Where Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector (HMCI) or the Secretary of State has concerns about the performance of an exempt school, HMCI has powers to inspect at any time under Section 8 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended). Such concerns may be identified through the risk assessment process when Ofsted becomes aware through other means of concerns about a school’s performance or the safety of pupils. HMCI may treat an inspection of an exempt school conducted under Section 8 as if it were an inspection under Section 5. Under Section 8, HMCI may be required by the Secretary of State to conduct an inspection of an exempt school. The Secretary of State may also require that the inspection be treated as if it were also an inspection under Section 5.

Exempt schools (like other schools inspected under this framework) may be subject to inspection as part of a programme of surveys, of curriculum subjects and thematic reviews, including those focused on best practice. These inspections are conducted under Section 8.

3.10 Cottesmore Primary School

Key Findings:

Inspection Dates	3-4 October 2013	
Overall Effectiveness	Previous Inspection This inspection	Grade 3 Satisfactory Grade 3 Requires Improvement

Key Judgment Area	Grade Awarded	Outcome
The achievement of pupils	Grade 3	Requires Improvement
The quality of teaching	Grade 3	Requires Improvement
The behaviour and safety of pupils	Grade 3	Requires Improvement
The leadership and management	Grade 3	Requires Improvement

3.11 Main findings

The **attached** Ofsted inspection report provides background information about the inspection carried out – in summary:

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not ‘Good’ because:

- a. Pupils do not make consistently good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Teachers' expectations for what pupils can achieve in lessons are not always high, the pace of learning is sometimes not fast enough, and pupils do not get on to independent activities quickly enough;
- b. Sometimes work is a little hard for some pupils and too easy for others. Although behaviour is generally good, teachers do not always check regularly in lessons to make sure pupils remain focused and attentive;
- c. Pupils are not always clear about what they have to do to improve their work, so they do not take enough responsibility for their learning;
- d. Leaders, managers and governors have not ensured that teaching and achievement have improved enough to be good;
- e. Leaders' observations of lessons do not focus on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning, and are not followed up with clear next steps for teachers to help them improve;
- f. Subject leaders do not take a full role in monitoring teaching and supporting staff to improve their work;
- g. The actions in the school development plan are not monitored closely enough by governors, so school leaders are not rigorously challenged to make sure teaching and achievement are good.

The school has the following strengths:

- a. The school helps pupils who join partway through the year, or in different year groups, to settle in quickly;
- b. The new sports funding is being used effectively to give pupils the opportunity to learn gymnastics and dance;
- c. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage;
- d. Pupils feel safe in the school.

Information relating to the inspection which provides background includes:

- a. The inspection team observed 15 lessons or part-lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also carried out a series of other shorter visits to lessons with the headteacher;
- b. Inspectors spoke to pupils about their views of the school, listened to them read, examined their work in books and attended three assemblies;
- c. Meetings took place with the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor, staff and two local authority officers;
- d. Inspectors considered the 11 responses to the online Parent View survey and spoke to parents informally before school. The questionnaire responses from 10 staff were also reviewed;
- e. A range of information provided by the school was checked carefully, including the school's own information about how well pupils are doing, checks on the quality of teaching, planning documents, as well as records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Information relating to the school which provides background includes:

- a. Pupil numbers reduced significantly after the previous inspection. They almost quadrupled during the last school year due to two large influxes of families moving into the community. The school is now a little smaller than the average-sized primary school;
- b. Three-quarters of the teaching staff, subject leaders and a deputy headteacher have joined the school since the previous inspection;
- c. The very large majority of pupils are White British. Other pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, although there is no other significant group;
- d. The school receives pupil premium funding for the vast majority of its pupils (this is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and other groups);
- e. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is similar to national levels. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average;
- f. The proportion of pupils who join or leave partway through their primary school education is above average;
- g. It is not possible to make a valid judgement against current floor standards, the minimum expectations for attainment and progress set by the government, as there were not enough pupils in Year 6.

3.12 Further information

The Ofsted report states that to improve further the school should:

Improve teaching so it is consistently good or better and pupils make good progress across Key Stages 1 and 2 by ensuring that:

- a. teachers insist on a high work rate in lessons, so they proceed at a faster pace and pupils are involved in activities more quickly;
- b. pupils are given work that is closely matched to their ability levels, so it is challenging but achievable;
- c. teachers check on learning more regularly and intervene where necessary so pupils remain focused on activities and make rapid progress;
- d. pupils have more opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning by working independently or in groups;
- e. pupils are given clear next steps so they know how to improve their work.

Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:

- a. focusing observations of teaching sharply on pupils' progress in lessons, and giving teachers clear feedback on how their teaching can be improved;
- b. involving subject leaders more fully in monitoring the quality of teaching and driving improvements;

- c. ensuring that governors monitor actions in the school development plan more closely, so they can hold school leaders rigorously to account for teaching and achievement being good.

Further information is available within the content of the inspection report.

3.13 As the school 'Requires Improvement' the role of the Local Authority consists of the following targeted support:

- a) Regular Strategy Meetings chaired by the Local Authority;
- b) Support to develop and oversee delivery of an Action Plan;
- c) Support to provide a Local Leader in Education or a National Leader in Education;
- d) Support to ensure that additional training, school to school support and peer support is provided.

3.14 HMI Monitoring Inspection Visit 11 December 2013

The visit on 11 December 2013 was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the Section 5 inspection in October 2013. The monitoring inspection visit was carried out under Section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Main Findings:

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent Section 5 inspection.

The school should take further action to:

- a. increase the frequency and improve the accuracy of the systems in place for monitoring the quality of teaching, and ensure that all leaders' roles and responsibilities in this process are clear;
- b. ensure that the support the school receives from external sources, including other schools, is appropriately tailored to meet the particular improvement needs of the school.

School leaders have responded positively to the inspection findings and have acted swiftly to put in place more effective systems by which they can improve the quality of leadership and teaching in the school. The school improvement plan has appropriately challenging targets for the progress pupils should be making in reading, writing and mathematics. These have been broken down into termly milestones, by which governors can hold school leaders to account for the progress pupils make in their work. Alongside this, leaders have made improvements to how they monitor the quality of teaching. They now use a wider range of first-hand evidence in order to make judgements about how effective teaching is across the school. This includes talking to pupils and scrutinising their work, as well as tracking the progress they make over each term. However, these systems for monitoring the quality of teaching have not had enough impact on improving the school because they are too infrequent and are not sufficiently sharply focused on the areas for improvement from the last inspection.

Subject leaders have conducted an extensive review of teachers' assessments in writing and mathematics. From this, the school has a much more accurate picture of pupils' abilities and the gaps they have in their learning. However, there is little evidence to show that teachers are using this information to ensure they plan work for pupils that is closely matched to their ability levels. The action plans subject leaders have written lack precision. The local authority adviser is aware of this and has arranged to support these leaders in their role from January.

Governors have reviewed how they challenge school leaders and hold them to account for the progress pupils make. They are committed to improving the effectiveness of their monitoring role and, because of this, have scheduled additional opportunities for visiting classes and looking at pupils' work. The emotional wellbeing of pupils is of paramount importance to them. However, they know they need to balance this with a more informed analysis of the progress all pupils and groups of pupils make. Governors are aware that they would benefit from support in developing this aspect of their role and have brokered an external consultant to work with them over the next term.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

It was noted that:

The local authority deems the school to be of 'high priority' and has allocated an adviser to work with the leadership team to put in place an appropriate improvement plan. The local authority has rightly identified the need to co-ordinate the support for the school, and is arranging for a National Leader of Education to strengthen the capacity of school leaders to drive school improvement. Half-termly meetings will be held in order to closely monitor the progress the school is making until its next inspection.

3.15 The Parks Special School, Oakham

Key Judgments:

Inspection Dates 17-18 December 2013

Overall Effectiveness

Previous Inspection	Grade 2	Good
This Inspection	Grade 3	Requires Improvement

Key Judgment Area	Grade	Outcome
The achievement of pupils	Grade 3	Requires Improvement
The quality of teaching	Grade 3	Requires Improvement
The behaviour and safety of pupils	Grade 2	Good
The leadership and management	Grade 3	Requires

		Improvement
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3.16 Main Findings

The **attached** Ofsted inspection report provides background information about the inspection carried out – in summary:

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not ‘Good’ because:

- a. Leaders and governors have not provided sufficient challenge to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good;
- b. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are not always given the opportunities they need to progress through active learning and discovering things themselves. As a result they do not make sufficient progress in all areas of learning.
- c. Staff do not explain the next small step children need to take to help them to improve their progress.
- d. The school does not use all of the data and information it collects to identify what children need to learn next or to evaluate how much progress the children are making.
- e. Leaders’ evaluation of the school’s performance does not have a sharp enough focus on children’s achievement and is not related closely enough to improving the quality of teaching and learning.

The school has the following strengths:

- a. Federation with Oakham CE Primary School has strengthened governance, leadership and management. The school now has access to the effective policies and practices of its partner school;
- b. The headteacher has managed the move to the new premises very effectively and has ensured that the two staff teams are working together cooperatively;
- c. The school promotes children’s spiritual, moral and social education particularly effectively;
- d. Staff relationships with children are excellent;
- e. The staff are dedicated, enthusiastic and provide a very high standard of care;
- f. Parents value the school very highly and say that the staff have transformed the lives of their children, particularly in enabling them to communicate;
- g. Behaviour and safety of children are good;
- h. Staff work particularly effectively with families and colleagues in health and social care to support families and meet medical needs.

Information about this inspection:

- a. The inspector observed five lessons, and visited several play sessions. The headteacher watched most of the lessons with the inspector;
- b. Discussions were held with senior leaders, representatives of the local authority, parents and the governing body;

- c. There were insufficient responses from parents to the online parental survey (Parent View). The inspector considered the schools' parental survey and letters from parents, and she also met parents;
- d. The inspector looked at a range of documentation including the school's information on keeping children safe, children's progress, self-evaluation, development plans and reports from the local authority.

Information about this school:

- a. The Parks provides specialist nursery provision for children with severe and complex learning difficulties. Many of the children also have associated learning needs such as autism, communication difficulties, medical needs or developmental delay;
- b. Most children attend on a part-time basis. The school can accommodate children in Key Stage 1, but there are currently no children in this phase;
- c. All children either have a statement of special educational needs or are being assessed. The school currently has places for 10 full time equivalent places;
- d. At the last inspection, the school was located on a separate site and educated 16 children. There was a different headteacher who shared her post with an acting headteacher;
- e. The Parks moved to a new purpose-built school in September 2011 and is co-located with Oakham C of E Primary School, which was last inspected in November 2011. The two schools are now federated and have a single governing body and headteacher. The new headteacher was appointed in 2011 and the new single federated governing body was confirmed in July 2013;
- f. The school currently has a lead teacher, supported by a team of teaching assistants. Some additional teaching is being provided by staff from the federated partner school.
- g. The Parks works closely with parents and professionals from health and social care services to assess and identify young children's special educational needs.
- h. The school receives additional pupil premium funding for two children. This is additional funding for children who are known to be eligible for free school meals, are looked after by the local authority or who are part of a service family.
- i. A children's centre and a private nursery are also located in the new purpose built complex. Both are inspected separately.

3.17 Further information

The Ofsted report states that to improve further the school should:

Ensure that the teaching is consistently good by:

- a. making sure that adults' feedback is constructive and helps children to understand what they need to learn next;
- b. giving children more opportunities to learn for themselves through active investigations and exploratory play;

- c. ensuring that planning and assessments follow the guidance in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework for both inside and outside the classroom;
- d. Use the data and information the school has collected about children's achievements to identify what children need to learn next and to provide a clear evaluation of how much progress children are making in all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.
- e. Ensure that the school's evaluation of its own performance has a sharp focus on children's achievement and is closely related to improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Further information is available within the content of the inspection report.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

RISK	IMPACT	COMMENTS
Time	Low	The Local Authority will provide targeted intervention and support to non- academy schools who are in 'Special Measures' or 'Requires Improvement' OFSTED categories and has developed a 'Learning and Achievement Strategy' to ensure that all schools maintain consistently high standards.
Viability	Low	The Local Authority is committed to improving outcomes for children and young people and endeavours to support and challenge schools to improve teaching and learning.
Finance	Low	Reduced levels of funding are available to the Local Authority to support schools. The introduction of the school funding reform on 1 st April 2013 delegated the Dedicated Schools Grant to schools. Funding needs to be used effectively to support learners.
Profile	High	Any school inspection outcomes will create interest in the community.
Equality and Diversity	Low	No issues

Background Papers

Cottesmore Inspection Reports
 The Parks Inspection report
 Ofsted regulations for inspection and monitoring visits and support

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A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.