

Cottage Grove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	116203
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	379213
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2012
Lead inspector	Michael Pye

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	328
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marc Waters
Headteacher	Polly Honeychurch
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 June 2010
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Michael Pye	Additional inspector
Anthony Mundy	Additional inspector
Carolyn Steer	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 23 lessons, including those involving linking letters and sounds (phonics). A total of 12 teachers were seen. The inspectors looked at pupils' work and heard pupils read. They held meetings with members of the governing body, pupils and staff. The inspectors took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at data relating to pupils' attainment and progress. The school's development plan, lesson and curriculum plans, governing body documentation and school policies and procedures, particularly those relating to the health, safety and safeguarding of pupils, were scrutinised. The inspectors also analysed 58 questionnaires completed by parents and carers as well as those returned by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

The pupils in this larger than average-sized primary school come from a great variety of ethnic backgrounds. The largest group are of White British heritage and the next largest are of Bangladeshi heritage. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The proportion of pupils at school action plus is above average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The main groups consist of pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or speech and language difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in two full-time Reception classes. A Nursery, overseen by the governing body, is situated on the school site and this was inspected during the visit. The school runs an on-site breakfast club. A well-above average proportion of pupils join and leave the school other than in Reception and Year 6.

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	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. It is improving fast but is not yet good because the progress and attainment levels of some pupil groups are lagging behind the levels expected nationally, there are inconsistencies in teaching, and there are some aspects of leadership and management that require further development. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from a White British background do not do as well as nationally expected. However, pupils who remain in the school from the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve well. Children's progress in the Nursery is good.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Focused monitoring has led to an increasing number of good or better lessons. There remain inconsistencies in the extent to which pupils respond to teachers' marking and the quality of the challenge in some lessons for pupils of different abilities. In English, good marking clearly challenges pupils and sets targets for improvement; it is not as strong in mathematics. On occasions opportunities are missed to reinforce pupils' literacy skills in subjects other than English.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils show respect and have good attitudes to learning. Improving attendance rates are the result of a wide range of successful school actions.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The experienced headteacher has established and shared a vision for school development based on raising pupils' achievement levels while developing all aspects of their personal development. Monitoring and the management of teachers' performance are embedded and accurate self-evaluation takes place. Leadership in English and mathematics is good but in other subjects there is a need to further develop managers' skills and their knowledge of achievement levels. The governors monitor and know the school well. They acknowledge they have more to do to forge links with the local community and parents and carers.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the progress levels of all pupils, especially those known to be entitled to free school meals and those of a White British heritage, by eliminating the inconsistencies in teaching through:
 - ensuring that pupils are given regular opportunities to respond to teachers' comments in marking and that marking in mathematics is as good as that in English
 - all teachers maximising the opportunities for pupils to speak and listen and write at length in all subjects
 - ensuring that in lesson planning the challenge for pupils of different abilities emphasises the learning expected of the various pupil groups.
- Maximise the impact of leaders and managers through ensuring that all:
 - have a clear understanding of levels of attainment and progress across the school in their subject area
 - action plans have a clear link to how the subject supports the priorities in the whole-school development plan
 - action plans contain benchmarks and measurable objectives against which progress can be judged
 - subject leaders and governors identify strategies to enhance the links with the local community and parents and carers.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The very large majority of parents and carers returning the questionnaire believe progress to be good. Inspectors judge that, overall, pupils make satisfactory progress. However, pupils who have been in the school since Reception, and this is less than half in the current Year 6, attain above the national average and their progress is good.

Children in the good Nursery react well to the support and praise given to them by adults. The children are happy to play independently and relate well to each other. Children enter Reception with well below the expected levels of skills and knowledge for their age. The children make good progress and most meet their early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. For many, writing and aspects of mathematics remain challenging.

Reception children showed eagerness to play a game where they learn how to sound out letters and become more aware of 'tricky words' like 'my'. Year 2 pupils have progressed to identifying the short 'i' in 'pin' and extend their learning to identifying and writing words such as 'spin' and 'bin'. This phonics work is undoubtedly having a positive impact on readers. For example, in Year 2, pupils separate difficult words

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into letter sounds and then blend them to identify the word. During some good guided reading classes the pupils respond well when asked to show what they have understood about their reading book. While in Year 6 pupils write in more complex sentences using harder connectives.

In mathematics progress is satisfactory. In Reception the children show positive attitudes and have a good understanding of how to take away. By Year 3 the pupils show interest when asked to estimate and check aspects of books, such as measuring size and weight. By Year 6 pupils show a determination to tackle harder word problems.

Attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2011 was low. This was largely the consequence of well-below average attainment in mathematics. By the end of Years 2 and 6 attainment in reading is broadly average.

The impact of high mobility levels on keeping attainment lower than average is seen because later arrivals to the school do not do as well as their peers. There is insufficient time for the school's teaching to accelerate their progress. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs or at school action plus and who have remained in the school achieve well as a consequence of good intervention and support work. This is similarly so for pupils from a White British background and for those believed to be entitled to free school meals. Pupils from other ethnic backgrounds, including Bangladeshi pupils, achieve well. In lessons observed there was no perceived difference in the progress of these pupil groups.

Quality of teaching

The very large majority of parents and carers believe teaching to be good. Inspectors judge teaching over time to be satisfactory because inconsistencies exist, as in aspects of marking, and pupils' progress slows. The quality of teaching is improving with examples of outstanding teaching being seen. Typically the pace of lessons is good. An outstanding mathematics lesson for older pupils saw the end of session plenary quickly checking pupils' understanding, and reinforcing learning well. However, this is not the norm. Very good and pacy intervention 'Torture Tables' sessions saw Years 3 and 4 pupils strengthening their knowledge of times tables. Where teaching is less than good not all pupils are challenged enough by the work set. For example in a Year 5 English lesson aimed at the writing of an information text, opportunities were lost to make the learning more personal and to test pupils at their own level. One pupil said, 'Sometimes repeat work is not hard enough.' In the better lessons, as a result of secure subject knowledge, teachers are good at building challenge and their questioning is focused and stretching. In English, teachers' marking is good with clear information about the next steps, but this is not always the case in mathematics. Talk partners give some good opportunities for speaking and listening but, at other times, including in the Reception and Nursery, opportunities for pupils to speak at length are missed and this hinders the progress they can make. Similarly the teachers' expectations of how much writing the pupils should complete are inconsistent. As a consequence of good support individually and

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in small groups, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve in line with their peers.

Secure relationships in the Nursery ensure that the children are well settled, and together with consistently good teaching, these help them to make good progress. Expectations of behaviour have been well established: for example, the children readily accept the need to clear up after activities.

During lessons the pupils are given some good opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Pupils in Year 5 learnt well about the culture of a range of countries, including India, Saudi Arabia and Romania.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour over time is good, including for children in the Nursery. The vast majority of pupils feel safe. The overwhelming majority of staff, parents and carers support this view and believe the school deals well with unacceptable behaviour, for example bullying. Pupils believe the school is a friendly place where older pupils help younger pupils. For example, Squabble Busters have been trained to help pupils in the playground. A pupil said, 'The school is really friendly, you make friends and the children understand you.' Pupils know who to approach if they have a problem and say that the school deals effectively with bullying when told about it. Pupils have a secure understanding of what constitutes bullying, are well aware of the dangers surrounding cyber-bullying and know the school's internet rules. The vast majority of pupils are happy to come to school.

Pupils take a pride in their work. However, a few do not have the same secure behaviour for learning as others. For example, some work remains unfinished despite teachers' comments in marking.

This is a caring school where many pupils have barriers to learning. The school is very proactive and this results in many of those barriers being overcome. For example, the breakfast club has encouraged better attendance and pupils to settle well. Buddies for the many new arrivals are appointed to help them settle. Those pupils with little or no English on entry to the school have fans which inform the adults of their basic needs. One parent summed up the views of others when writing, 'My child has been at Cottage Grove for nearly six years. He has never had a day when he didn't want to come to school!'

Leadership and management

The very large majority of parents and carers believe the school is well led. Inspectors judged that there are areas of strong leadership, for example at the senior level and in the core subjects. Progress tracking systems are secure and allow for effective progress meetings to take place. These make a good contribution to ensuring equality of opportunity for pupils. Through the curriculum and the school codes of conduct pupils, know that discrimination is not tolerated. Performance

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management is embedded and is well linked to professional development. However, inconsistencies exist in some aspects of the leadership of subjects other than English and mathematics. These relate to the knowledge of progress and attainment levels across the school and in the precision by which development points are identified and success measured. Action plans do not sufficiently show how the subject is going to support the priorities identified in the whole-school strategic plan. In English and mathematics, a regular cycle of monitoring and evaluation has led to relevant development priorities being identified, for example, the coaching of support staff and more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills in mathematics. Similarly in English a review of guided reading led to the introduction of progress books in this specific area of pupils' work. Leaders and managers monitor teaching well and this is bringing about improvement, though inconsistencies remain; the introduction of 'Professional Partners' is encouraging the spread of good practice. Further improvements, for example to the pupils' rates of progress, particularly in mathematics where more high attainers are achieving at expected levels, and attendance and behaviour, all point to a secure capacity to sustain improvement. Leadership in the Nursery is good and the welfare needs of the children are well addressed.

The governing body has established good links with pupils and staff which enable governors to learn about the school and raise questions of it. Their self-evaluation is detailed and self-challenging and it is reviewed regularly. Safeguarding arrangements are good with clear systems for monitoring, tracking training needs, and in the recruitment of and oversight of checks for adults working in the school. Strategies for engaging with the local community and involving more parents and carers in their children's learning are underdeveloped.

The curriculum is under continual review by senior and subject leaders and is increasingly meeting the basic skill needs of pupils. Topics are making learning more fun and relevant to pupils. However, teachers miss opportunities to encourage pupils to speak and listen and to write at length during topics such as the ancient Greeks work relating to the Olympics. The pupils benefit extremely well from numerous visits, for example the one to the Police College and the residential in Stubbington. These undoubtedly contribute well to the social and cultural development of pupils. A further strength of the curriculum is in the provision and operation of various intervention groups to support pupils' learning.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



29 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cottage Grove Primary School, Portsmouth PO5 1HG

You may remember our recent visit. You were eager to tell us about your school and we listened carefully. We judge Cottage Grove to be a satisfactory school. This means that it does some things well and that there are other areas it could improve on. We also believe it is improving fast.

Some of you completed a questionnaire for us – thank you. These showed that almost all of you are happy to come to school and that you learn a lot in lessons. We especially liked the way that you all get along together. You show respect for each other when listening carefully in class. You told us you feel safe and that any bullying is sorted out by the school. You behave well and are willing to get involved in lessons. Well done! A few of you are not as good as others in taking note of your teachers' comments when they mark your books. We have asked the school to make sure that this happens. We also liked the way your attendance is improving.

While many of you are making satisfactory or better progress, there are some of you who are not. We have asked the school to concentrate on these groups of pupils so that they can catch up. You told us that you enjoy lessons and that teachers make learning fun. We judge teaching to be satisfactory. We liked the way that teachers ask you to work quickly and that you have a good range of resources to work with. Not all of you are challenged enough in lessons and we have asked the teachers to look at this. You can help them by telling them when you are finding the work too hard or too easy. We have also asked the school to make sure you get plenty of chances to practise your speaking and listening and your writing, for example, during topic work.

Your headteacher and the other adults want to improve things even more. They have a clear idea about how to do this. We have asked that they ensure that all leaders have a clear idea about how well you are doing in your work and that they can measure the effect on your progress of any changes they introduce.

Thank you once again for your help and I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely
Michael Pye
Lead inspector

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