

INSPECTION REPORT

COTSFORD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Peterlee, County Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114150

Headteacher: Mr K Anderson

Reporting inspector: Mr L Garner
25507

Dates of inspection: 20th – 22nd May 2002

Inspection number: 195939

Short inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Junior |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 7 to 11 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Third Street Horden Peterlee County Durham |
| Postcode: | SR8 4EH |
| Telephone number: | 0191 586 4660 |
| Fax number: | 0191 586 3923 |
| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr G Paterson |
| Date of previous inspection: | June 1997 |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Cotsford Junior School is an average sized school with 211 pupils. The national average for primary schools is 226 pupils. All pupils are from a white ethnic background and no pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, at 35 per cent, is above the national average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, at 22 per cent, is broadly in line with the national average, but the percentage of pupils who have more significant problems, at 4.5 per cent is well above the national average. These pupils all have statements of special educational needs. Some of these statements are related to behaviour problems. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is generally below that expected for children of their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school in which pupils do well. The quality of the provision has some outstanding features. The school is in a strong position to improve even further. Pupils are achieving well and, in mathematics and science, attained standards in the 2001 national tests which were above the national average. In the same tests, when compared with pupils from similar schools, standards were well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English. This shows that pupils who are coming into school with below average attainment are making good progress overall, and very good progress in mathematics and science, because of the education the school is providing. Pupils' very good attitudes to their work and their good behaviour means that they benefit from this provision. The very good leadership and management of the school underpin the success it achieves. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is very well led and the assessment procedures the management team have put in place mean that challenging, but attainable, targets are set for pupils who make good progress in their learning.
- Performance in the national tests in 2001 showed that pupils in Year 6 attained standards, compared with similar schools, which were well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English.
- Pupils in the present Year 6 are meeting, in their attainment, the expectations of the National Curriculum in mathematics and science.
- The school's very good provision for social and moral development helps pupils to have very good attitudes to school, behave well and make good progress in their personal development.
- The quality of teaching in school is good.
- The school gives good support to pupils, has very good relationships with parents and has established an ethos in which everyone in the school community is committed to help children to do well.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, which have been improved considerably in recent years, still have areas for further improvement.
- Standards in information and communication technology.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1997 and was given a positive report. There has been very good improvement since then.

There were three issues for action identified in the last report. The first issue was concerned with standards in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. These were all below the national average. Standards in these subjects have, in the last four years, made more improvement than that seen nationally. Standards in mathematics and science have been above the national average for three out of the last four years and standards in English are now close to the national expectations and, last year, were above those seen in similar schools. The second issue concerned standards in ICT. While standards are still below those expected it is clear that the introduction of the computer suite has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Pupils are now covering much more of the required work and the 'gaps' in knowledge and understanding for the oldest pupils have been identified and are being addressed. The third issue asked the school to provide a more coherent approach to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There has been very good improvement in this area and it is now a strength of the school.

Improvement has also been seen in many other areas of school life. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed in this inspection. The curriculum provided by the school was satisfactory, it is now good. The provision for extra-curricular activities was good, it is now very good. Perhaps the most important improvement the school has made is in the areas of assessment and evaluation. The systems put in place by the deputy headteacher have enabled teachers to identify clearly what pupils need to achieve in the time they are in class. The leadership and management of the school are now very good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

| Performance in: | compared with | | | | Key |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|---|
| | all schools | | | similar schools | |
| | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2001 | |
| English | E | C | D | B | well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E |
| mathematics | B | D | B | A | |
| science | E | B | B | A | |

The table shows that standards achieved by the Year 6 pupils in the national tests last year were below the national average in English, but above average in mathematics and science. When compared with similar schools, those with a similar number of pupils entitled to free school meals, the results were even better. Standards were above average for English and well above average for mathematics and science.

The improvement over the last five years has been variable but overall has been above the national trend. This year, there are more pupils in Year 6 who find learning difficult or have problems with behaviour so standards are not as high. In English, standards are slightly below the national expectations but are in line with these expectations in mathematics and science.

Standards in the other subjects of the National Curriculum generally meet expectations, except in ICT where standards are below those expected. There is also a gap in the provision which enables pupils to use programs which give them the opportunity to explore computer models and the effect of changing existing information or rules.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Very good. Pupils have great enthusiasm for, and enjoy coming to, the school. They usually enjoy their lessons and many are involved in the activities the school provides before and after the school day. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Behaviour is good overall and, for most pupils, very good in class and around the school. |
| Personal development and relationships | All adults relate very well to each other and to pupils and the pupils respond very well to this. All members of the school community have a shared aim to enable all pupils to do well and achieve their potential. |
| Attendance | Satisfactory overall. It is close to the national average. Strengths are the low levels of unauthorised absence and the good punctuality of pupils so lessons start promptly. |

Attitudes to work, personal development and relationships are very good and these make a significant contribution to the progress that pupils make.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Years 3 – 6 |
|------------------------|-------------|
| Quality of teaching | Good |

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Judgements are based on the observations of lessons during the inspection and the scrutiny of pupils' work.

Teachers have a good understanding of the subjects they teach and understand what pupils need to learn. In the majority of lessons they have high expectations of what pupils should achieve and manage pupils well. The use of homework is particularly effective with purposeful activities given in a number of subjects.

Teaching of mathematics was particularly strong with two teachers leading as specialist teachers. Teaching of English is satisfactory but not as strong as in mathematics.

In the minority of lessons where some aspects were less than satisfactory, two shortcomings were identified. One was a problem with the match of work to pupils' attainment; pupils were not challenged enough. The second was the lack of pace in some lessons which again did not challenge pupils. This was particularly noticed in lessons for lower attaining pupils when the lack of pace discouraged pupil learning. However in most lessons seen pupils were challenged well.

Pupils in Year 6 make particularly good progress because of the highly focused teaching they receive. Pupils learn well when teaching is good. A strength of learning is the way in which, because of the good target setting, pupils have a good understanding of their own learning. When, in the vast majority of lessons, teaching is effective, pupils work well, have a good interest in the work they are doing and concentrate very well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Good. The curricular provision is enriched by a very good range of activities taking place after school. Particularly helpful are the study support clubs. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good. Individual targets are well identified and frequently reviewed. Pupils are aware of their own targets and therefore what is expected of them. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Very good overall with the very good provision for pupils' social and moral development making a strong contribution to their very good attitudes and good behaviour. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school cares for its pupils very well. Academic developments are very well monitored and this means pupils are set challenging targets. All members of the school community are eager for pupils to do well and this ethos helps with their personal development. |

The school is considered to be a focus for the local community. Parents are considered, and consider themselves, to be valued members of the school's activities and many make a significant contribution to their children's progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Very good. The headteacher has led the school through a period of considerable improvement in standards. He has a clear view of how the school could improve even further. He is very well supported by the deputy headteacher whose management skills complement those of the headteacher's very well. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | The governors fulfill their responsibilities well. They are very supportive but are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The school evaluates its performance very well. All staff reflect carefully on the effectiveness of their performance and constantly strive for improvement. |
| The strategic use of resources | The school manages its resources well. |

Governors recognise the very strong leadership team of the headteacher and deputy. They support this team well and look closely at their decisions to ensure that the principles of 'best value' are met.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like coming to school. • They feel their children make good progress. • They feel the school has high expectations of their children's achievements and behaviour and their children respond to this by behaving well. • They feel the school works closely with parents and feel comfortable about approaching the school if they have a problem. • They think their children are taught well and the school is well led. • They consider that their children get the right amount of work at home and that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small minority of parents felt that the information they got about their children's progress could be better. • A small minority felt the school did not work closely with parents. |

The inspection team agrees with all the positive points made by parents and considers the information provided for parents and the way the school tries to involve parents in their children's education to be very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The school is very well led and the assessment procedures the management team have put in place mean that challenging, but attainable, targets are set for pupils who then make good progress in their learning.

1. The very good leadership of the headteacher has been the driving force behind the very good improvement in standards in recent years and, therefore, the success of the school. He leads by example and has the support of the whole school community.
2. The deputy headteacher has produced detailed analysis of pupils' standards as measured in a number of tests. These include national, local authority and school based tests. This analysis has enabled the school to accurately predict what pupils are achieving by the end of each school year. Hence the targets set for pupils are challenging but attainable. All teachers and pupils know what is expected to be achieved. The headteacher and his deputy make a very effective management team.
3. Teachers are very supportive of the school and the assessment procedures which are in place. Each class teacher has been trained in the assessment systems and therefore has 'ownership' of them. It is not a system imposed from above; teachers see the value of the system to guide their planning for pupils' future learning. Teachers are very reflective about the effectiveness of their teaching and constantly seek to improve their performance. Co-ordinators are encouraged to improve standards in their areas of responsibilities. An example was seen in a staff meeting where the assessment co-ordinator gave a very useful presentation to all staff about the way they should judge pupils' writing against nationally expected levels.
4. The governing body supports the school well. Governors recognise what the school does for the pupils in school but keep a good overview of what the school needs to do to maintain or improve the high standards.
5. The school uses its budget well to provide a good education for its pupils. The amount of money provided is in line with most schools. Governors and senior staff look to match spending to future needs and have kept a reasonable amount of money in reserve to meet unexpected costs. An example of this is when the hall floor lifted and the governors had to find the funds to relay it. This careful financial planning and the good standards the school achieves mean that the school gives good value for money.

Performance in the national tests in 2001 showed that the pupils in Year 6 attained standards, compared with similar schools, which were well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English.

6. Standards achieved by the Year 6 pupils in the national tests last year were, overall, well above the average for similar schools. These are schools in which between 20 per cent and 35 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This overall judgement is made up of standards being well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English.
7. The school figure for pupils eligible for free school meals is at the top of this band and so comparisons, if two or three more pupils were eligible, could have been even better. The school is providing a very effective education for its pupils.

8. When the results for 2001 were compared with all schools they showed that standards were below the national average in English but above average in mathematics and science.
9. Pupils reaching the expected level in these core subjects (Level 4) showed that standards in English were in line with the national average but, in mathematics and science, standards were well above the national average. These figures reflect the effort the school has made to ensure that as many pupils as possible reach the national average.
10. However, when the figures for the pupils achieving higher than the expectations (Level 5) are studied, a slightly different picture emerges. The number of pupils achieving this level in English was well below the national average, in mathematics it met the national average and in science it was above the national average.
11. Therefore although standards are good, the school recognises that they need to work on pupils' English skills to match those in mathematics and science. These issues are addressed later in the report.

Pupils in the present Year 6 are meeting, in their attainment, the expectation of the National Curriculum in mathematics and science.

12. Pupils in the present Year 6 are achieving standards slightly below those shown by the year group who took the national tests last year. This is because there is a larger group this year who have special educational needs and therefore will not reach the standards achieved last year. However it is clear that pupils in the top year are making good progress from the standards they had achieved at the beginning of the year. This is mainly because of the quality of teaching these pupils receive.
13. A very challenging mathematics lesson was a good example of the way pupils are taught. Pupils were asked to use charts and graphs to convert £s to rupees. They recognise that some charts have limitations and that sometimes mental arithmetic gives a more accurate answer. The very good pupil management and pupils' very good attitudes to their work mean that much work is covered and new concepts learned.
14. Another Year 6 group used calculators effectively as they checked their written calculations to find the square root of a number by squaring the answer. They find that the square root of 17 works out at 4.1231057.
15. Pupils have effectively covered a wide range of work in science. Their work shows that, for example, they know that in a flowering plant the different parts have different uses. The petals attract insects by their colour and scent, the insects then spread pollen to other plants to produce the seeds which enable them to produce new plants the following year.

The school's very good provision for pupils' social and moral development helps pupils to have very good attitudes to school, behave well and make good progress in their personal development.

16. The 'ethos' of the school creates an atmosphere in which all feel valued. There are very good relationships apparent between all the adults employed in school and this is recognised by the pupils. They respond to this very well and relate very well to each other.
17. A good example of the way the school encourages pupils' personal development is seen in the way the school council operates. They produce their own newsletter which is available to pupils and parents. This, for example, gives all pupils the opportunity to vote for their 'Teacher of the Month'.
18. A very good assembly, presented by a Year 5 class, addressed the problems of smoking and racism. The pupils were looking at the work they had done in history. They spoke about Francis Drake returning from America with new products including tobacco and the problems this has caused to people's health. They also spoke of the attitudes shown to people of a different race, the Spanish, and linked this well to attitudes in this country today. This assembly gave pupils, and the parents who were present, a strong message that all people should be valued regardless of race, religion or culture.

The quality of teaching in school is good.

19. Pupils are well taught, largely because of the way the school management has monitored and supported teachers. During the inspection no unsatisfactory teaching was seen in full lessons. Nearly 70 per cent of the 24 lessons seen had teaching quality which was good or better and 18 per cent had teaching which was very good or better.
20. Teaching of mathematics was particularly strong because of the emphasis the school has put on this subject during the last four years. Two teachers in school have been recognised, by the local education authority, as being 'leading mathematics teachers'. They have been involved in the training of other teachers in the region.
21. A mathematics lesson for a Year 5 class was particularly effective. It was very well planned and conducted at a good pace so that pupils made good progress. Pupils were introduced to the concepts of 'range' and 'mean' of numbers. Because of the very good teaching they quickly understand these terms and use them to find answers to the problems they are set.
22. A science lesson for a Year 4 class illustrated other strengths of the teaching in this school. The teacher had very good knowledge of the subject and used good questions to involve all pupils in the lesson. Pupils learn about the materials which are insulators and conductors in an electric circuit. They know that a switch can break the circuit and turn a light off.

The school gives good support to pupils, has very good relationships with parents and has established an ethos in which everyone in the school community is committed to help children to do well.

23. Pupils enjoy coming to this school. This is because they recognise that the adults in school, teachers and other staff, want them to do well.
24. Parents are given good information about the progress their children are making. They have clear information about the way their children can improve and the way they can help them to do this.
25. Parents are welcomed into school and they value this. About eight parents come into school regularly to support teachers and pupils. There is good support offered for school visits and some parents have made a good contribution to the work in the garden area outside the school building.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in English, which have improved considerably in recent years, still have areas for further improvement.

23. Pupils' speaking skills are developed in many lessons, but in too many lessons single word answers are accepted by teachers. Pupils need to be able to express themselves clearly in speech so that their written work can develop in the same way.

Standards in information and communication technology.

24. The establishment of the computer suite in school has already begun to make a significant impact on pupils' skills. However, older pupils in particular have not had the opportunity to cover all areas of the curriculum. This means that few are able to 'control' the movements of a 'screen turtle' or explore models in programs in which the effects of changing existing information or rules are understood.
25. These issues will form the basis of the governors' action plan for improvement.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

The governors, headteacher and staff should:

- develop a programme to improve pupils' speaking skills;
- ensure that all the aspects of ICT are covered by all pupils.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 22 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 33 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 1 | 5 | 9 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 4 | 23 | 41 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than five percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Y3 – Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 210 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 61 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Y3 – Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 9 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 66 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 0 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 9 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 8 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|-------------|---|
| School data | |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|-------------|---|
| School data | |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| National comparative data | 5.6 |
|---------------------------|-----|

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| National comparative data | 0.5 |
|---------------------------|-----|

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2001 | 31 | 23 | 54 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 25 | 28 | 31 |
| | Girls | 17 | 18 | 22 |
| | Total | 42 | 46 | 53 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 78 (78) | 85 (70) | 98 (92) |
| | National | 75 (75) | 71 (72) | 87 (85) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 20 | 24 | 29 |
| | Girls | 14 | 16 | 17 |
| | Total | 34 | 40 | 46 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 64 (68) | 75 (66) | 87 (74) |
| | National | 72 (70) | 74 (72) | 82 (79) |

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 |
| Indian | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 |
| White | 210 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 0 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

| | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 | 0 |
| Indian | 0 | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 |
| White | 8 | 0 |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 0 | 0 |

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 10 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 23.4 |
| Average class size | 26.4 |

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

| | |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 2 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 30 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Financial year | 2001/2002 |
|----------------|-----------|

| | £ |
|--|---------|
| Total income | 489,188 |
| Total expenditure | 470,083 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,238 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 41,471 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 60,576 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 1 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 3 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 0.5 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 210 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 63 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 54 | 43 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 49 | 44 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 48 | 46 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 44 | 49 | 5 | 0 | 2 |
| The teaching is good. | 59 | 41 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 46 | 41 | 11 | 2 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 65 | 30 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 79 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 41 | 44 | 13 | 0 | 2 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 54 | 43 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 59 | 38 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 40 | 33 | 2 | 0 | 5 |