



Cotsford Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114150
Local Authority Durham
Inspection number 289817
Inspection dates 13–14 September 2006
Reporting inspector Christine Graham HMI

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Third Street
School category	Community		Hornden, Peterlee
Age range of pupils	7–11		County Durham, SR8 4EH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 5864660
Number on roll (school)	154	Fax number	0191 5183923
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr G Patterson
		Headteacher	Mr K Anderson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
7–11	13–14 September 2006	289817

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Cotsford Junior School is smaller than it was at the time of the last inspection. This is because of the declining birth rate in the area. The area suffers from high levels of unemployment and social disadvantage. At the time of this inspection three of the six staff, including the deputy headteacher, were newly appointed to the school. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage and no pupil is at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties has risen since the last inspection and is now higher than that found nationally. Some of these pupils have emotional or behavioural difficulties. The school has an ActiveMark Gold award and the Healthy School Award.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Cotsford Junior School provides pupils with a satisfactory education; however, within this there is much to be proud of. The care and support that pupils receive are excellent. Investment in the counselling services, which are available throughout the school day, is money well spent. These additional services provide help for any pupil who may feel anxious, lonely or in need of a little extra care. Procedures for keeping pupils safe are very good. Parents speak very positively about the school and feel that they are kept well informed. Attendance and behaviour are good because pupils enjoy coming to school. The very popular breakfast club has done much to improve punctuality and provides a very pleasant start to the day. The above initiatives have provided a good base from which to bring about improvements in learning.

The standards reached by pupils are satisfactory. In recent years, standards in mathematics and science have improved. They are now above national averages. A similar improvement can be seen in reading for the tests taken in 2006. But writing, which has been a weakness in the school for a number of years, has not shown the same improvement. The school has not checked the achievements of pupils in writing rigorously enough. All pupils make at least satisfactory progress by the end of their time in school. They make very good progress in science but much poorer progress in English, making satisfactory progress overall. The progress made by pupils with learning difficulties is at least as good as that made by other pupils.

At the time of the inspection, three of the six full-time teachers were new in post; this included the deputy headteacher. Teaching is satisfactory, although there was a small amount of teaching which is better than this. All pupils make satisfactory progress during lessons but not enough account is taken of the starting point of individuals. Pupils are tested regularly and the school collects a lot of information about their achievements. However, this information is not used consistently by staff to ensure the work that is given to individuals accurately meets their needs. The pace of teaching is slow in many lessons and pupils are very reluctant to answer questions or admit when they need extra help. There are too few opportunities for them to demonstrate their understanding or to discuss their ideas with others. Methods through which pupils can assess their own learning or convey to staff their levels of understanding are being introduced by the new deputy headteacher and, even at this very early stage, are proving to be very effective.

The personal development of pupils is good and is considerably enhanced by extra-curricular activities. All pupils are taught French and the school organises a residential visit to France every two years. The involvement of the local school sports coordinator has considerably broadened the range of sports which are available both during and after school. Pupils understand how to keep healthy and safe and are involved in decision making through the school council. They experience the world of work and learn about other cultures and traditions. Pupils have a secure knowledge of their own culture and Christian beliefs and support a number of charities to help the less fortunate. Most pupils are very sensible and they carry out responsibilities carefully and with regard for the feelings of others. The school is piloting the use of

additional resources for information and communication technology (ICT) and this is providing additional benefits to Year 6 pupils. Although pupils' skills in speaking and, to a lesser extent, listening are identified as weaknesses in the school, there has been too little systematic teaching of this important area.

The headteacher has successfully managed the challenges associated with falling pupil numbers and seeks other funding to give pupils extra learning experiences. Whilst this is very positive for the school, the management of these different initiatives places a heavy burden on his time. As a result, the monitoring of teaching and learning has not always been rigorous enough and the feedback to staff is not always sufficiently detailed. He has managed the changes in staffing well and the new appointments place the school in a strong position to bring about further improvement. The school's self-evaluation correctly identifies strengths and weaknesses but it is a little too positive. The governing body are very experienced and have close links with staff and pupils. They are kept well informed by the headteacher but do not hold the school sufficiently to account. The capacity for further improvement is satisfactory. Most issues from the previous inspection have been satisfactorily resolved, although a few issues remain.

- Improve attainment in writing.
- Ensure that work is accurately matched to the needs of individual pupils.
- Improve the pace of teaching and learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve attainment in writing.
- Ensure that work is accurately matched to the needs of individual pupils.
- Improve the pace of teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are above average in mathematics and science but below average in English. When they enter school the ability of pupils varies. In some year groups they are able to do as much as other pupils of their age; in others their abilities are below this. However, by the end of their time in school, pupils achieve well in mathematics and science and, more recently, in reading. The progress made by pupils is at least satisfactory across all subjects with much better progress being made in science and not enough progress being made in English. Results in national tests at age 11 show that, with the exception of writing, results are the same as, or above, those attained nationally. Despite some efforts being made to improve it, writing has been a weakness of the school for a number of years. Analysis of writing shows that handwriting and presentation are weak and that many pupils across the school are unable to use basic punctuation accurately. The organisation of writing and pupils understanding of different types of writing are not well developed. While the pupils' gains are satisfactory overall, the school's data show there are some

inconsistencies in the progress they make from class to class, with the greatest gains in Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are considerably enhanced by the involvement of parents and partnership work. A local minister, who is also a governor, visits the school regularly and takes weekly assemblies. Pupils spend some of this time in quiet reflection and concentrate on the part of the message they feel is important to them. They have a good understanding of their own culture and Christian beliefs and are also introduced to the belief systems of other cultures. They are given good opportunities to discuss moral and social dilemmas and to explore their feelings and the reasons for their behaviour. However, the ability of pupils to speak in a variety of situations and to be active listeners is not good enough. Pupils help people less fortunate than themselves and are involved in community events. Pupils of all ages receive regular opportunities to experience a working environment. The teaching of physical education (PE) and the good range of sports coaching available help pupils understand that staying healthy can be fun. Pupils enjoy the healthy options which are available at lunchtime and throughout the day. One boy, showing his empty plate, commented that his mum did not think he would enjoy the lunchtime options that are available, but he had!

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and carefully plan lessons so that pupils can understand new learning and ideas. However, the pace of learning is too slow in many lessons, and not enough attention is paid when setting tasks for different groups of pupils or for individuals which exactly meets their needs. As a result, although all pupils make progress during the lesson, for some the work is too easy and for others too challenging. In all classes, pupils are reluctant to answer questions set by the teacher to the whole class although, when individual pupils are asked the same question, they can provide an answer and in most cases the answers are correct. In one class, the teacher is using methods to help pupils respond to questioning and gives information about their level of understanding. In this lesson, where teaching and learning were outstanding, pupils made rapid progress. They were given frequent opportunities to ask for extra explanations or support and by the end of the lesson had mastered some difficult mathematical calculations. Pupils with learning difficulties are sensitively supported by staff so that they can contribute to the lesson. The progress they make is as good as that made by other pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school has plans to adapt the ways in which the curriculum is taught in order to improve pupils' understanding and strengthen learning but these are not yet in place. The curriculum is enhanced by the good range of extra-curricular activities which is offered and the determination of the headteacher and staff to provide all pupils with experience of workplace learning and a modern foreign language. Work on staying healthy and safe is a priority and pupils are very much aware of the actions they should take to maximise their health and fitness. The school benefits from the input of a school sports coordinator who works in the school one day a week. Coaching in a number of different sports is provided. Governors and parents also make a valuable contribution to the learning of pupils during the school day or through clubs and activities. For example, a very useful and practical gardening club encourages pupils to grow and sample their produce.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care for pupils is outstanding. A number of useful extra resources provide very good support for pupils who may be experiencing anxiety or upset. Relationships with parents and carers are very positive and most parents feel that the school responds promptly to any concerns they may have. The very good, often unobtrusive, support provided for pupils helps them to develop self-confidence and self-esteem. The school provides a safe environment for pupils. Effective partnership work with parents and other agencies ensures that pupils get the help they need when it is most needed. Because of these measures, any difficulties are dealt with promptly and effectively so that the learning and development of all pupils can continue without disruption. However, while the guidance given to pupils on social, moral or health issues is good, the guidance given to them about how to improve their learning is not so well focused.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear sense of purpose and is committed to improving the life chances of every pupil. He actively seeks and manages a large number of initiatives which are all designed to provide additional resources for pupils. However, the management of these takes a great deal of his time and attention and, while most issues from previous inspections have been tackled successfully, some important areas like writing and the improvements which were required to the quality of teaching have still to be resolved. Staff are given good opportunities for development and the induction of new staff is thoughtful and well planned. The school's self-evaluation accurately identifies strengths and areas for development, although judgements about the quality of the school's provision are a little too positive. The monitoring of teaching and learning is regular but not yet

rigorous enough to help staff improve. The newly appointed staff have made an encouraging start. The deputy headteacher has quickly familiarised herself with the school and has sensible ideas as to how improvements might be made. Governors are kept well informed by the headteacher, and have established effective relationships with the school over a number of years. They too are firmly committed to the welfare of pupils. However, they do not yet hold the school sufficiently to account.

Document reference number: HMI 2507 03 October 2005
Inspection Report: Cotsford Junior School, 13–14 September 2006
Document reference number: HMI 2507 03 October 2005

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Cotsford Junior School

Third Street

Horden

Peterlee

County Durham

SR8 4EH

15 September 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the warm welcome which you gave to Mr Massey and me when we visited your school. We think your school is satisfactory and does some things well and there are some things which need to be improved. We could see how much you enjoy coming to school and how much you appreciate all that the school does for you. The extra activities and events which are provided help you to become healthy and active individuals. We think that you are very lucky not just to be able to learn French but also to be able to visit France with the school. We are also very pleased to see how much the school tries to involve the people who look after you in your education.

Children at your school now achieve good results in the Year 6 national tests in every subject except writing. When we talked to you, many of you said that you liked literacy, so we did not know why your results are not very good. When we looked in your books we could see why. Many of you do not take enough care with the presentation of your work and your handwriting. You forget to write in sentences and you do not organise your writing very well. We want you to try very hard to improve this.

We were also a little surprised to see that so few of you answer the questions your teachers ask the whole class. However, when teachers ask individuals, you nearly always know the right answer. We would like you to be excited about learning, always put your hand up when you know the answer and ask questions to find out more information. In the next few weeks, your teachers will begin to give you strategies through which you can tell them if you understand the work or if you need a little more help. Please use these. Some children in Year 5 are already doing this and we could see how much more they were learning in only one lesson.

We very much enjoyed our visit to your school.

Very best wishes for the future

Mrs C E Graham

Her Majesty's Inspector