

Inspection of Cottenham Primary School

Lambs Lane, Cottenham, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB24 8TA

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 May 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at this school. They develop exemplary attitudes. Pupils regularly support their peers, for example all Year 6 pupils mentor a child in the early years. This helps children settle successfully into school. This also develops responsibility in older pupils. Pupils have high levels of respect for their peers and adults. They are exceptionally polite. Bullying is very rare. Any concerns get sorted quickly, such as by the peer mediators, who resolve any friendship issues.

Pupils learn in depth about risk and safety. They describe clearly what they know about road safety, and the dangers and benefits of climbing trees. As a result, pupils feel safe, and develop high levels of resilience.

Behaviour is excellent. Pupils embody the high expectations for learning and conduct. They take considerable pride in their learning. There is almost no disruption to lessons. During breaktimes, pupils in all year groups play happily and safely together. Children in early years quickly learn to regulate their behaviour.

Pupils enjoy a rich range of opportunities. Pupils initiate and lead well-attended clubs, such as for art and chess. They achieve well at sport and win county competitions. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have put a high-quality curriculum in place across the school. This develops all aspects of pupils' learning, including their behaviour and personal development.

Leaders identify clearly and in depth what pupils need to know to be ready for their next stage. The curriculum builds up this knowledge step-by-step from the early years. For example, children in Reception learn French songs and rhymes, to prepare them for learning French in key stage 2. Pupils secure detailed knowledge, including learning important vocabulary. They remember and apply what they know with confidence.

Teachers deliver the curriculum well. They have strong subject knowledge. Teaching routinely makes connections between different areas of learning. Teachers use the school's chosen approaches well, along with strategies to support pupils' discussion. This consistency supports pupils to understand what they are taught.

Leaders and teachers regularly check how well pupils learn the curriculum. However, leaders do not always use this information effectively. Sometimes, they do not ensure that future lessons are adapted to fill any gaps in pupils' knowledge. This means that some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Reading is prioritised. Leaders have recently reviewed the reading curriculum. They have retrained staff. As a result, staff now teach phonics consistently and effectively.

Pupils learn and blend their sounds confidently. Early readers quickly learn to read fluently. If pupils fall behind, they are given the right help to catch up. In key stage 2, pupils build their understanding and vocabulary by reading ambitious texts. Many pupils are voracious readers.

Pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers and generally achieve well. However, on occasions, teachers do not support the needs of these pupils as effectively as they should. For example, some pupils with SEND have learning targets that lack precision and do not closely match their needs. In these cases, pupils do not make sufficient progress.

In this school, exemplary behaviour is the norm. Leaders have designed a coherent behaviour policy. Staff apply this skilfully. They are fair and consistent. Pupils understand the school's rules and systems. They explain how these help them to behave very well at all times. Children in early years are taught clear routines and well-communicated expectations. These support children to follow instructions and behave sensibly. Leaders and staff successfully support pupils who need extra help to improve their attendance or punctuality.

The curriculum for personal development is highly effective. Leaders provide an extensive range of experiences and opportunities to build pupils' character in preparation for life beyond school. In lessons, pupils gain detailed understanding about important qualities, such as tolerance and democracy. They articulate their understanding with conviction and clarity. Wider activities connect seamlessly with what is taught during lessons. For example, 'House Days' extend pupils' learning about those with different needs and identities. Leaders ensure experiences such as the 'Shine Award' prepare pupils for what they will learn at secondary school. This exceptionally strong personal development programme helps to create what parents typically and accurately describe as 'a fantastic ethos', which 'develops children with a strong moral framework'.

Governors have the knowledge and skills they need to fulfil their role well. They support leaders and staff closely and check on their well-being. Governors challenge leaders where needed such as making suggestions to strengthen safeguarding.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a vigilant culture of safeguarding. Staff are well trained and know how to spot and log concerns. Leaders take appropriate actions in response to any concerns. Leaders regularly review and improve their processes. They carefully consider potential risks, including those within the local community. Staff support families well. When leaders need to seek support from outside agencies, they do so promptly.

Pupils learn how to keep safe through the curriculum. They know who to talk to if they have concerns. For example, pupils suggested leaders designate staff for them to talk to called 'Worry Busters,' and leaders implemented this.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders and teachers do not always use information from what they learn through their assessments to adapt their teaching in order to address gaps in pupils' knowledge. This means that in these instances pupils do not develop as detailed knowledge as they might. Leaders need to make sure that they use information from checks on pupils' progress throughout the curriculum to adapt the next learning, so that it builds precisely on what pupils currently know and understand.
- Teachers do not always support pupils with SEND to learn effectively. Sometimes, teachers set targets that are too broad. Adaptations that teachers make do not always address pupils' specific needs. This means that pupils do not build up their knowledge and understanding as well as they should. Leaders need to ensure that teachers and staff are trained to support pupils with SEND effectively across all subjects.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	110604
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10241741
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	486
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Simon Gibbons
Headteacher	James Kilsby
Website	www.cottenhamprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 May 2017 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The headteacher is seconded by the local authority for two days a week to support another local primary school.
- Leaders do not use any off-site alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, other leaders, staff, and pupils.
- As part of evaluating the quality of governance, the lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of governors and five other governors.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education, history and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. For early reading, an inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- As part of the evaluation of safeguarding, inspectors checked the school's single central record of recruitment vetting checks, considered the safeguarding policy and procedures, and spoke to leaders, staff, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed the 161 responses that were submitted from this academic year by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 97 free-text responses submitted during the inspection. Inspectors considered the 40 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire for school staff. There were too few responses to the Ofsted questionnaire for pupils to consider. Inspectors spoke with large numbers of pupils during the inspection, to compensate for this.

Inspection team

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