

Cossington Church of England Primary School

Main Street, Cossington, Leicestershire, LE7 4UU

Inspection dates 20–21 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress during their time in the school, and reach above-average standards in English and mathematics by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.
- A strong emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development results in their outstanding behaviour and understanding of how to be and stay safe.
- Parents appreciate that their children are happy and safe in school, and are taught well.
- The school is regarded highly by its families because of its focus on pupils' personal as well as their academic development.
- Good leadership from senior leaders and the governing body results from an accurate assessment of the school's effectiveness and a clear focus on improving pupils' progress.
- Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding; this helps lay the foundations for lifelong learning right from the Reception Year.
- The school's constant drive for improvement includes regular reviews of its work and is supported by effective teamwork.
- Pupils cooperate very well, both at work and at play; they show excellent attitudes to learning. They are most polite and considerate towards each other and the staff.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is yet outstanding; the most able pupils are not always enabled to make consistently rapid progress.
- Year 6 national test results in mathematics are not as high as in English; consequently, the school is reviewing the ways in which it teaches mathematics.
- The skilled questions teachers ask individuals and small groups of pupils to extend their learning are not yet a consistently effective feature in whole-class reviews of learning.
- Pupils are not given opportunities to use their mathematical skills for a wide enough range of purposes in different subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 12 lessons; all five teachers and their teaching assistants were seen. Two lessons were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Daily registration time was observed and the inspector attended an assembly.
- The inspector looked at examples of pupils' work, and heard a sample of pupils from Years 2 and 6 reading.
- During the inspection, a meeting was held with a group of pupils selected at random by the inspector. In addition, many informal opportunities were taken to talk with pupils.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of school documents including development plans, policies and reports on the school's strengths and aspects for development, monitoring records, safeguarding and curriculum materials, information provided for families, and governing body documents. The school's data, including records tracking pupils' progress, were reviewed.
- Discussions and conversations were held with the headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team, class teachers, learning support staff, administrative staff, and members of the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- The 28 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into consideration. The 12 responses to the questionnaire for school staff were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Michael Miller, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- There are four classes, one for Reception Year children only and three mixed year classes: Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6.
- Most pupils come from outside the school's normal catchment area, some because it is the only Church of England school within the local benefice of churches.
- Almost all of the pupils come from White British backgrounds. A very few come from other, mixed heritage backgrounds. All pupils speak English as their first language.
- Most of the pupils continue their education at the school from the Reception Year until they leave at the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for particular groups, including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs supported at school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The headteacher is a Barrow Development Group representative on the Leicestershire Primary Headteachers' Executive group and one of four Leicestershire Primary Headteachers on the school forum. She is also a member of the leadership group of the Affinity Teaching School Alliance, promoting partnership between schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching outstanding and improve further pupils' achievement by:
 - using questioning skills consistently well in whole-class situations to assess learning and encourage pupils to think more deeply
 - challenging the most-able pupils through increasingly testing and demanding learning activities in lessons.
- Raise achievement in mathematics further across all year groups by:
 - implementing the new mathematics and calculations policy to support further the teaching of mathematics as soon as possible
 - extending the opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical and problem-solving skills across a wider range of subjects, and through 'real-life' situations
 - ensuring the best practice in the teaching of mathematics is shared across the whole school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children enter the Reception Year class with skills, knowledge and understanding at the levels expected for their age. Teaching and the curriculum have improved since the last inspection, and the monitoring of individual children's progress is now good. Children now typically transfer to the Year 1 and 2 class with levels of development above those expected.
- The success being achieved by younger pupils has raised further all teachers' expectations for what pupils can achieve in all the other classes and year groups. This in turn is having a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning across the school. Excellent working relationships between staff and pupils, and the individual attention and support pupils receive, ensure that all have an equal opportunity to succeed and develop a distinct thirst for learning.
- Over the past five years since the last inspection, national test results at the end of Year 6 have typically been above average. There was a dip towards the average, particularly in 2012; however, leaders responded well and in 2013 attainment recovered to above average overall. It was well above in reading, writing and the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test.
- Reading has developed as a particular strength. In the Year 1 and 2 phonics screening checks an above-average proportion of pupils gained the expected standard. There is a consistently good approach to the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) across the school. The standard of reading achieved by pupils stands them in good stead for all their other work.
- The school has a higher-than-average proportion of more-able pupils. They attain highly overall in reading, writing and mathematics. However, not enough are exceeding the progress expected nationally for similar pupils, particularly in mathematics.
- The pupil premium is used well to support the very few eligible pupils. The close monitoring of such pupils, and those who are disabled or have special educational needs, ensures they achieve well compared with both their peers nationally and their classmates.
- Improving performance in mathematics is a current school priority. Good progress was seen in all four classes. Pupils in Years 1 to 4 were learning well when working on the recording of data from surveys, using tally charts and graphs to demonstrate their findings. When sorting sweets effectively by type and colour, pupils in Years 3 and 4 all resisted the temptation to eat any; this reflects well on their moral development. In Years 1 and 2, mathematics work was reinforced well in a later science lesson following investigations on light and the reflective nature of different materials. The pupils made good progress because they recognised the relevance of their earlier work and enjoyed applying new learning.
- Pupils' success in writing has proved particularly marked as teachers enable and encourage them to apply their skills in writing across a wide range of subjects. Teachers are now looking to similarly extend opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical and problem solving skills across other subjects, and through 'real-life' situations.
- Good use of the new primary school sports funding and the employment of a full-time sports apprentice have enhanced the opportunities for pupils to participate and do well in sports and physical education across the school. This is already starting to have an impact in the ways and frequency with which pupils are engaging in sports and physical activity. Discussions with pupils show it has raised further their awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn. Pupils appreciate that their teachers and assistants have much to offer them; consequently, very positive working relationships and high levels of mutual respect, right across the school, underpin the pupils' excellent attitudes to learning.
- Good teaching was seen right from the Reception Year. Children worked in small groups on a wide range of activities to develop their calculation skills using dominoes, dice, traffic cones, and various other equipment. Constant questioning and the expectation of responses not only enabled staff to assess securely pupils' understanding, but also to explore the best ways in which individual children learn. Such approaches help support teachers' subsequent planning.
- A key strength of the teaching is the way all plan effectively for the different year and ability groups in each of the mixed-age classes. Such groups are not fixed, and different combinations of pupils often work together for different subjects or aspects of work.
- While planning for more-able pupils is good overall, it does not always provide that extra edge of challenge to enable the most able pupils to exceed the progress expected nationally for this group. However, planning is flexible, raises expectations on the part of both staff and pupils and makes clear what pupils are being encouraged to learn. Such adaptable planning is also applied well by the leader responsible for special educational needs. This allows support for pupils to be adjusted effectively according to their individual needs and rates of progress.
- Most teachers use questioning very well, particularly with individuals and small groups of pupils. This good practice is not only used well to check pupils' understanding but also to challenge them to explain their ideas and develop their thinking skills. However, teachers sometimes do not make the best use of such questioning skills in whole-class situations and reviews of learning.
- Outstanding teaching and learning were seen in a Year 5 and 6 English lesson. There were high levels of challenge for the pupils in writing a letter explaining a science experiment. In this, they showed they understood very well the importance of drafting, redrafting and correcting work in order to achieve quality. They rose splendidly to the teacher's high expectations of them.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The foundations for pupils' excellent attitudes to learning are laid securely from the Reception Year. All staff play their part in helping to create a very positive atmosphere for learning. There is also a sensitive approach to behaviour management to which pupils respond very quickly. Incidents of any inappropriate behaviour are rare. The latest data show that attendance is above average; this is because pupils' want to come to school, have fun and enjoy learning.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding because pupils develop self-confidence, trust the staff, and are enabled to develop very well both their independence and social skills. Almost all pupils show persistence and concentration when learning. Pupils understand very well how to keep each other safe and take on responsibility readily. They also show a well-developed awareness of the implications, dangers and consequences of the different types of bullying. All pupils spoken with were adamant that bullying is not an issue at this school.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally well developed. In

many lessons, pupils are encouraged and enabled to reflect on their learning and each other's achievements. Pupils celebrate readily each other's successes, which also reflects their understanding of the importance they all play within the school community, and the character of their social development.

- The school has done much since its last inspection to improve the breadth of pupils' cultural understanding, and has developed a wide variety of links with schools in other countries. Older pupils, in particular, show a good understanding and appreciation of the ways individuals' similarities, beliefs and differences add significantly to the character of a community.

The leadership and management are good

- All four main class teachers take on some element of responsibility for leadership, and all take their teamwork responsibilities very seriously. There are no subject leaders, and both key stage leaders are also members of the senior leadership team. Together with the headteacher, they set a good example for their colleagues. The school has gained a justifiably good reputation within its local community for the balanced ways it promotes pupils' personal development as well as their academic achievement.
- Discussions with staff show they are open to the sharing of good practice and new ideas; they are particularly keen to ensure the success they have achieved for their pupils in English is transferred to the teaching of mathematics. A new mathematics and calculation policy is being developed in preparation for the introduction of the new national curriculum from September 2014.
- The school has already developed a good range of subjects and topics which make pupils' learning interesting, and is in a good position to build further on this. Learning is also complemented by a programme of trips, visits and additional activities which broaden and enhance well pupils' experiences. The appointment of the sports apprentice enhances this further and reflects a well-considered approach to the use of the new school sports funding.
- Work and thinking around improving further the quality of teaching in mathematics, and ensuring increased challenge for the school's most able pupils, is starting to make a difference but has not yet had a marked impact. Shared lesson observations show that the headteacher evaluates accurately the quality of teaching and has the qualities to work alongside colleagues to secure the necessary improvements.
- The local authority provides only 'light touch' support for the school because it is not considered to be at any risk. However, it does check on the pupils' attainment in tests and teacher assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6, and helps confirm the school's own assessments of children in the Reception Year.
- All in the senior leadership team are noted by the local authority as making important contributions to the development of work in other local authority schools. This ranges from work on supporting and advising other schools about the teaching of writing and literacy to taking a leading role in twinning activities with schools in other countries in order to promote pupils' cultural development and international understanding. This experience benefits the school well.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors contribute effectively to the school, both personally and professionally, and use their skills and expertise to very good effect in support of the school. They undertake regular training, and are consequently well informed about their roles and responsibilities. They place

a high priority on ensuring the school's legal requirements are met, including those for safeguarding. They have worked to ensure clear guidelines for staff as to how salaries are linked to pupils' progress, teaching quality and national teaching standards. They monitor spending closely and check that pupil premium funding has a good impact on the achievement of eligible pupils. The governing body knows how the school is performing in relation to others nationally, and works closely with the staff to ensure continual, further improvement.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120124
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	425081

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	108
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ruth Muldoon
Headteacher	Heather Sewell
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2008
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