

Cottage Grove Primary School

Chivers Close, Southsea, Hampshire PO5 1HG

Inspection dates	3–4 February 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Cottage Grove Primary's happy, inclusive and hard-working atmosphere permeates the school.
- The headteacher leads the school with a single-minded determination to ensure every pupil achieves well, regardless of ability, background or belief.
- Senior and middle leaders play a fuller role in leading developments than at the time of the previous inspection. This has increased the pace of improvement in the school during the past year.
- Improved teaching has quickened pupils' progress since the previous inspection, so that they learn well and make good progress. Pupils take pride in producing consistently good-quality work.
- Leaders have successfully reversed a dip in the results of the Year 1 phonics check in 2015. (Phonics means letters and the sounds that they make.)
- Children make good progress during early years.
- Friendly, well-behaved pupils welcome visitors warmly and politely. They like school and feel safe and secure.
- All members of staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning.
- The school makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders pay close attention to pupils' safety. Rigorous safeguarding arrangements mean pupils can play and learn safely and confidently.
- Governors share the headteacher's commitment and know the school's work well. They use their experience and expertise effectively to support and challenge senior leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Recently introduced systems for checking pupils' progress are not yet fully developed.
- Some pupils, including some of the most able, make slightly slower progress in mathematics than they do in reading and writing.
- Some of the activities in the early years outdoor areas are not of the same high quality as those in the classrooms.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Fully embed recently introduced systems to track and record pupils' progress.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics, including that of the most able, by giving pupils activities which are sufficiently demanding.
- Make sure activities in the early years outdoor areas are of the same high quality as those in the classrooms.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have developed a cohesive staff team with a strong sense of purpose and direction. All staff share the headteacher's passion for the school's work and her determination to ensure all pupils achieve well. The deputy headteachers make a valuable and increasingly confident contribution to the school's leadership, complementing the headteacher's strengths very well.
- Leaders have improved the quality of teaching since the previous inspection, successfully working with the local authority to secure an effective team of teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, pupils make faster and more consistent progress across the school in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leadership responsibilities are more widely shared among senior and middle leaders than at the time of the previous inspection. For example, subject leaders have an accurate view about the quality of teaching through regularly looking at pupils' books, considering information about pupils' progress and leading training for their colleagues.
- The relatively recent involvement of one of the deputy headteachers in the leadership of mathematics has brought rapid improvements to mathematics teaching. Training in the teaching of reasoning skills has led to teachers becoming more confident about teaching this aspect of mathematics. However, this is an area which leaders continue to improve.
- The phonics and English leaders have worked closely with teachers and teaching assistants to ensure the dip in the Year 1 phonics check does not recur. The teaching of phonics has improved, with the school back on track to reverse the 2015 dip in results.
- Leaders make sure teachers feel valued and supported. As a result, teachers talk confidently with colleagues about their own practice. They make good use of training, adopting ideas and approaches to improve pupils' learning even further.
- The curriculum has been updated very well over the past year. It is lively and interesting so that pupils want to learn more and are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Subjects such as history and geography include opportunities to study current world issues, helping pupils to broaden their view of the world. For example, older pupils study challenging topics during geography, such as the effects of pollution in Chinese cities. As a result, pupils learn how to consider different perspectives and develop an awareness of the personal contribution they can make to society.
- Learning makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's ethos of respect and understanding underpins learning in all subjects. Differences are not only tolerated but are welcomed and celebrated. Pupils warmly welcome newcomers, quickly making them feel at home. British values are woven throughout the everyday life and work of the school. Trips and visitors extend pupils' experiences effectively and broaden their horizons.
- Pupils learn about a balanced range of world religions. They speak confidently about their beliefs, and listen carefully and respectfully to the views of others. They treat religious artefacts with appropriate respect when using them in the classrooms because teaching is helping them to appreciate their significance in different religions.
- The local authority provides good-quality support for the school, helping leaders to secure further improvements. For example, local authority training has made an important contribution to strengthening subject leadership and in securing pupils' rapidly improving progress in mathematics in the past year.
- Leaders make full use of additional funds, including primary physical education and sport premium, to enhance pupils' experience of school. For example, involvement in a local sports partnership is building teachers' confidence in teaching dance and gymnastics and providing more opportunities for pupils to participate competitively with other schools.
- Pupil premium funding represents a significant proportion of the school's budget. It is used effectively to ensure disadvantaged pupils have the same opportunities as their classmates and make similarly good progress. Leaders and governors check its use closely to ensure it is spent appropriately.
- Leaders engage well with parents to make sure that all pupils are supported and safe. Parents speak highly of the school. For example, several spoke to inspectors about the school's success in promoting tolerance and understanding between different ethnic groups. Most who completed the online questionnaire say that pupils are happy in school.
- Leaders have updated systems for tracking pupils' progress to reflect changes in the curriculum. Teachers have made a good start in using new procedures to record pupils' attainment. However, these are still in the early stages of development. Leaders have appropriate plans in place to ensure these arrangements provide a fuller overview of pupils' achievement, with a sharper view of pupils' progress.

- Leaders liaise regularly and appropriately with staff at the alternative provision used by the school for a very small number of pupils. This ensures they know how well those pupils who attend are learning and progressing.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governors know the school well. They have a good understanding of the school’s context and community. They fully share the headteacher’s vision for the school’s future. They are well informed about its work and about which aspects need further improvement.
 - Governors have worked very successfully with the headteacher and local authority to secure a more settled teaching staff. This factor has been significant in ensuring pupils make more even progress as they move up through the school.
 - Effective training for the governing body on the use of nationally published achievement information means they confidently raise questions about the school’s work. Governors use information about pupils’ achievement to explore aspects of teaching and learning, meeting with subject leaders and looking at pupils’ work. For example, governors focused on phonics teaching following the dip in the Year 1 phonics check in 2015, meeting regularly with the phonics leader to discuss improvements. They are appropriately focused on gauging pupils’ progress from their differing starting points. Governors are working with the headteacher to develop the best way of presenting this information to help them to do their job even more effectively.
 - Governors manage school resources effectively, keeping tabs on how different funds are spent and the impact this is having on pupils’ achievement. Governors are closely involved in making decisions about the use of pupil premium funding and in checking how successfully it is used to ensure disadvantaged pupils achieve well.
 - The governors are well informed about any safeguarding issues through regular reports from the headteacher. They regularly check that records are complete, and join in with school staff when completing the training.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and governors give safeguarding a very high priority, with rigorous procedures in place to ensure pupils are safe. Training is up to date and all staff are diligent in keeping pupils secure. Staff and governors have completed ‘Prevent’ training and are vigilant about the potential risks of extremism and radicalisation. They are confident about what to do if they have a concern, consistently following the school’s robust policies and working closely with agencies in the local authority.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **is good**

- At the time of the previous inspection, numerous staffing changes were hindering pupils’ progress and leading to gaps in pupils’ learning. This is no longer the case. Consistently good teaching across the school means that pupils make even progress as they move up through the year groups. Teachers confidently build on pupils’ learning and understanding in a wide range of subjects.
- Teachers use questioning well during lessons to check that pupils are attentive and that they understand. Pupils are quick to give a response or answer a question so that most stay focused on learning.
- The school’s policy for feeding back to pupils about their learning is well established. Teachers give pupils effective advice about where they have been successful and what they need to do next. The quality of feedback has made a particularly significant contribution to pupils’ achievement in writing.
- The school’s revised calculation policy ensures teachers are clear about what they need to teach in mathematics and when, so that learning builds more securely than previously. However, the recent introduction of more demanding tasks in mathematics to extend pupils is still in the early stages and tasks are not always sufficiently challenging, particularly for the most able.
- Improvements in the teaching of writing since the previous inspection mean that pupils regularly complete good-quality written work. Trips and visits give pupils opportunities to write for a range of different purposes, making learning interesting and fun.
- Reading is taught through a wide variety of books and texts. Events such as the current poetry competition ignite pupils’ interest in reading, as well as increasing their spoken skills and self-esteem. Pupils diligently complete their reading homework, with many reading regularly and often.
- Better phonics teaching is quickly lifting pupils’ achievement in reading and writing in Key Stage 1. Leaders have re-organised the teaching of phonics skills to ensure there are no limits to pupils’ progress. For example, those pupils who take advantage of regular opportunities to learn more complex phonics

skills at an earlier stage than before are ready and able to move on more quickly.

- Teaching assistants are well deployed to support pupils of differing abilities. They provide good support for pupils with disability and for those with special educational needs, clarifying and reinforcing learning. They give pupils the confidence to contribute during class discussions, so that they have an equal opportunity to explain and strengthen their thinking.
- Teachers are knowledgeable about the needs of those pupils for whom English is an additional language, including those new to English. They work closely with agencies, seeking and acting on specialist advice where needed. Bilingual teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and well-being, particularly those pupils who are new to the school.
- Skilful French teaching gives pupils a secure grounding in vocabulary, with plenty of opportunities for pupils to practise speaking French.
- Teachers use displays well to support pupils' work in the classrooms. For example, pupils refer to samples of their previous learning on display for help and ideas as they work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The school's values give pupils a strong framework for their behaviour and learning. For example, respect and tolerance are key features of school life. Pupils have a keen interest in learning, and enjoy being with each other.
- Pupils proudly wear their school uniform and warmly welcome visitors. They enjoy school and most attend school regularly and punctually, with one pupil commenting, 'this school is cool'. Attendance has improved this year, and is currently the highest it has been for three years.
- Pupils confidently ask questions during lessons, knowing that their teachers and classmates will listen seriously and value their views.
- Pupils feel safe and secure. They say that adults listen to any concerns and sort out any worries. They know how they can play a part in staying safe, including when using the internet.
- Most parents feel pupils are safe and well looked after. Many commented on the friendly and inclusive ethos, with one commenting: 'There is no discrimination in this school. Everyone strives for happiness and success'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most pupils behave well and act sensibly. They want to do well in lessons, and listen carefully to adults. However, occasionally a few pupils switch off during lessons, so do not benefit as fully from the teaching as their classmates. This view is reinforced by the pupils themselves, who say that, while behaviour is good, at times a very few pupils find it difficult to listen properly.
- Well-established routines and consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour ensure the school day runs smoothly. Pupils move in an orderly fashion between lessons, politely holding doors open for adults and for each other. Some of the older pupils do a good job in their roles as 'squabble busters', helping adults to sort out any minor disagreements in the playground.
- Pupils say that everyone gets on well and that there are no problems such as name-calling or teasing. They know about different types of bullying, with events such as 'anti-bullying week' providing helpful reminders about what to do if they are worried. Incidents of bullying are rare. Adults deal promptly and effectively with any misbehaviour.
- The breakfast club provides a warm, welcoming and secure start to the school day for those who attend.
- Most parents who completed the online questionnaire feel pupils are well behaved.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Nationally published achievement information does not accurately reflect the good-quality teaching and learning in the school. Achievement information is regularly affected by a number of complex issues, including high numbers of pupils joining and leaving the school during each year group and some pupils' low starting points. This was exacerbated in 2015 by numerous staff changes.
- While attainment was below average at the end of both key stages in 2015, including at the higher levels, the work in pupils' books gives a strong picture of the good progress they make in reading, writing and mathematics, as well as other subjects.
- Pupils like books and enjoy receiving rewards for reading regularly. They pick up their teachers'

enthusiasm for reading class books, such as *Holes* by Louis Sachar, often going on to read the books for themselves. They regularly borrow books from the school library and this helps them to develop personal preferences for authors and types of book. For example, one pupil proudly showed an inspector the book on dinosaurs he had recently borrowed, chatting to another pupil about its content. Pupils use strategies such as phonics well to help them to read more difficult words. For example, one commented that if he got stuck with a word he 'sounds it out and then sticks it together again'.

- The results of the Year 1 phonics check in 2015 were affected by pupils moving in and out of the school during the year. However, while results dipped to below average levels, records indicate that many pupils made exceptional progress from their starting points. Leaders have put additional teaching in place to make sure that those who did not achieve expected levels in Year 1 have caught up in Year 2. More of those currently in Year 1 are on track to achieve at least expected levels in 2016 than in the previous year.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics has accelerated during the past year. Pupils have more opportunities to explore more challenging mathematics tasks, including those involving higher-level reasoning skills. However, improvements in the teaching of reasoning skills are still at an early stage, so that pupils' progress is still not quite as strong in mathematics as it is in reading and writing, particularly for the most able.
- The quality of pupils' written work is impressive. They work consistently hard, completing writing in a wide range of genres, such as poetry, letters, stories and debates. Pupils develop a neat, consistent handwriting style which helps them to write fluently. They take pride in the quality of their work.
- Pupils with disability and those with special educational needs learn well. Some with complex additional needs make extremely good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress as others in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2015, the gap in attainment between this group and other pupils nationally narrowed, substantially so in writing. Pupils new to speaking English settle quickly and make rapid progress.
- The most-able pupils learn well. They make fastest progress in reading and writing, where the school's focus on English teaching has clearly impacted on the quality and depth of pupils' work. Occasionally they make slightly slower progress in mathematics. However, recent improvements in mathematics teaching are giving these pupils more opportunities to tackle challenging tasks and so their progress is quickening.
- Pupils make good progress in science. They gain a firm grasp of scientific knowledge, as well as learning how to work scientifically by, for example, raising questions, selecting variables and drawing conclusions.

Early years provision

is good

- Teachers plan a wide range of good-quality activities to appeal to children's interests. As a result, children quickly settle and thoroughly enjoy their time in school. They behave very well because they are busy and relationships are strong. Children respect adults and each other, happily playing and learning with their friends.
- Consistently good-quality teaching in the early years prepares children very effectively for Year 1. Children make good progress during Nursery and Reception classes, from starting points which are often lower than typical for their age. The proportion achieving a good level of development is consistently in line with the national average. A further increase in 2015 reflects the school's successful focus on reading and writing.
- Effective teaching ensures all groups of children make equally good progress, including disadvantaged children and the most able. Focused support for children with disability and for those with special educational needs ensures they get off to a good start. For example, during the inspection adults reassured and encouraged those children who find learning more difficult. As a result, they confidently showed the rest of the class how to complete a number activity, glowing with pride when successful.
- Teachers focus appropriately on developing literacy and numeracy, with children rapidly acquiring fundamental skills to support their learning. Teachers make sure children are surrounded by language, with books attractively arranged in the book corners, key words displayed around the classroom and lots of inviting activities to engage children in writing.
- Teachers use practical equipment very well to strengthen children's knowledge and understanding of number. For example, during the inspection children concentrated hard to successfully match practical equipment with the number it represented.
- Children know that they are learning well, and so quickly become more confident. For example, during

the inspection a group of boys proudly pointed to their writing displayed on the wall, reading it aloud to the inspector.

- Adults are alert to children's needs and are quick to give extra support where needed. For example, if children are confused about how to write a particular letter during phonics sessions, they learn to practise on a whiteboard to reinforce this aspect.
- The outdoor areas are attractive, safe and tidy so that children enjoy playing and learning. Adults interact well with the children, encouraging and supporting them to participate. For example, during the inspection children safely used the climbing frame and persevered to overcome problems when building a shelter. However, activities in the outdoor areas are not of the same good quality as those in the classrooms, with opportunities missed, at times, to extend children's learning.
- The early years leader provides strong leadership for her knowledgeable staff team. She ensures parents are well informed about their children's learning. For example, monthly events for parents of children in Nursery keep them up to date with children's learning, giving them tips and advice about how they can help at home. Parents are very positive about their children's learning in the early years. One said: 'The curriculum is incredible. It's amazing what the children have learnt', while another commented: 'I cannot praise the Reception teachers highly enough – they are brilliant'.

School details

Unique reference number	116203
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	10009204

This inspection 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	441
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicola Waterman
Headteacher	Polly Honeychurch
Telephone number	02392 341133
Website	www.cottagegrove.co.uk
Email address	admin@cottagegrove-prim.portsmouth.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 February 2014

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is much higher than that found in most schools. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children.
- The proportion of pupils with disability and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils who join the school at times other than expected is above average.
- The school meets the government's 2014 floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school provides full-time early years provision in a Nursery class and in two Reception classes.
- The school makes use of alternative provision, which is registered with Ofsted, for a very small number of pupils.
- The school runs a breakfast club, which was included in this inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning in 23 lessons or part lessons, including one completed with the early years leader.
- The inspection team held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, members of staff, parents and pupils. A meeting also took place with the Chair of Governors and three other governors.
- The inspection team took account of 17 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, they considered the views expressed by parents who spoke with them informally at the start of the school day.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and considered a range of documents, including the school's improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, attendance records and safeguarding policies.
- The inspection team looked at a sample of pupils' work provided by the school, as well as looking at pupils' work in lessons. They also listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 reading.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sara Benn	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Dunmall	Ofsted Inspector

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