

Inspection of Cottesmore St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

The Upper Drive, Hove, East Sussex BN3 6NB

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 2023

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high expectations for pupils at this school. Pupils are supported to believe in themselves and to become resilient and curious learners. They enjoy their lessons and take pride in their work. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. They particularly enjoy reading and listening to their teachers read to them from the wide range of books in the 'Cottesmore Reading Spine'.

Relationships across the school are positive and caring. All staff take responsibility for developing a culture of support, respect and positivity. Pupils help each other in class. They feel safe. Pupils are happy and behave well. Playtimes are sociable and harmonious occasions, with pupils from all year groups playing well together. Bullying is rare and, if it does occur, pupils are confident that it will be dealt with swiftly and effectively.

Pupils have extensive opportunities to learn above and beyond the curriculum in a broad and meaningful way. They have access to a wide, rich set of experiences, including forest school and beach school. Pupils are offered a substantial range of opportunities through clubs and trips, including choir, computing, drama and a variety of sports. These enable pupils to develop many skills and talents.

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

Leaders have devised an ambitious curriculum. They are determined that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), will achieve well. The curriculum is planned to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education. Leaders have supported staff to teach the curriculum effectively through well-sequenced plans and appropriate training. Teachers know what to teach and when. In reading and mathematics, pupils remember what they have learned well.

The wider curriculum has also been carefully planned and sequenced. However, some pupils do not always remember what they have learned. For example, in science and geography, only some pupils were able to articulate their learning and link it to what they have learned previously. Leaders are currently working to ensure that there are more opportunities for pupils to revisit gaps in their learning in all subjects.

Reading is at the centre of the curriculum and has a high profile. Highly effective phonics teaching ensures that pupils acquire secure early reading skills. Children in Reception explore letter sounds and patterns enthusiastically and confidently. Teachers make sure that reading books are carefully matched to pupils' phonic knowledge so that they can experience success as readers. Regular training ensures staff expertise in teaching phonics. Pupils with SEND and those who find reading more difficult receive the help they need. Consequently, pupils in all year groups enjoy reading and achieve well.

The mathematics curriculum is ambitious and well sequenced. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They strive to present information clearly, taking time to recap prior learning at the start of lessons. Teachers support pupils confidently and model correct vocabulary and strategies. Children in Reception enjoy the practical aspects of finding different ways to make numbers. Pupils build on the secure foundations built in Reception as they move through the school. They are confident mathematicians.

Leaders ensure that staff are able to identify the needs of pupils with SEND carefully and precisely. These needs are met well, both in the classroom and through additional input when needed. Teachers ensure that pupils receive any necessary support to help them to access lessons.

Personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils understand their role as active citizens. They have written to their local member of parliament and started a crisp packet recycling project. Pupils have a strong moral compass. One pupil explained, 'we treat others as we would like to be treated'. In addition, pupils have a strong social awareness. The school council leads a campaign on 'Fairtrade purchasing'. Pupils learn about different cultures and communities. They shared a Burns Night experience in forest school, where they made neeps and tatties while listening to a poem by Robert Burns.

Leaders' high expectations and well-established routines support pupils to behave well. Pupils are kind and helpful. They support each other well and value sharing and listening to each other's ideas and thoughts.

The school is well led and managed. Staff well-being is important to leaders. They pay close attention to ensuring staff are able to manage their workload. Staff feel valued. Governors are determined to support the school to continue to improve. They work with the headteacher and senior leaders by visiting the school and discussing the school's progress against development priorities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have developed a strong culture of safeguarding. All staff are well trained and know how to report concerns. This helps to keep the children safe. Adults carefully identify when pupils are at risk of harm and act swiftly to help. They work closely with families and outside agencies to help keep children safe. Leaders ensure that required checks are carried out so that they can be sure that all adults are safe to work in school.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They learn about what healthy relationships look like and how to keep themselves safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few foundation subjects, subject leaders have not yet ensured that there are enough opportunities for pupils to revisit gaps in their learning. As a result, pupils do not learn as well as they could in these subjects. Senior leaders should continue to refine the curriculum to enable pupils to remember their learning across the curriculum and achieve well in 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	114567
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10256393
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sue Hollow
Headteacher	Rachel Breen
Website	www.cottesmore.brighton-hove.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a voluntary aided Catholic primary school under the Roman Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. As a school of religious character, the school was last inspected under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in March 2022.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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 met with the deputy headteacher, the phase leaders and the inclusion leader. The lead inspector spoke with the headteacher by telephone during the

inspection. The lead inspector also met with governors, a representative of the diocese and a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, geography and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements in the school by speaking with the designated safeguarding lead and members of the safeguarding team about their work. They also spoke to staff and pupils. Inspectors also sampled case studies and documentation, including the single central record.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff through the confidential online staff survey.
- Inspectors met with pupils, formally and informally, around the school, in lessons and at playtime.
- Inspectors met with some parents and carers at the start of the school day and took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Debbie Bennett, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gillian Lovatt-Young	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Howie	Ofsted Inspector

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