

Inspection of Cotford St Luke Primary School

Bethell Mead, Cotford St Luke, Taunton, Somerset TA4 1HZ

Inspection dates:	29 and 30 January 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Cotford St Luke is a friendly school. The school values encourage pupils to appreciate, believe and challenge. The school has raised its expectations of what pupils can achieve. Published outcomes are now broadly in line with national average for many areas of the curriculum. However, some pupils are not developing the necessary knowledge and skills they need to be successful in their next steps.

Pupils feel happy at school and enjoy their learning. Parents and carers praise the care and nurture that staff provide to their child. In lessons, pupils listen well to staff and work positively with their peers. However, in less structured times, some pupils display challenging and disruptive behaviours. This also includes some children in the early years. Despite this, most pupils feel safe in school.

Pupils benefit from a wide extra-curricular offer. This includes a range of clubs such as gymnastics, archery, chess and dodgeball. Pupils speak enthusiastically about trips and visits. For example, visiting a museum, going to the theatre to watch a pantomime or taking part in a residential trip. These broaden pupils' experiences and develop their independence. Older pupils are proud to take on roles of responsibility. Many are peer mediators or members of the school council.

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

Following the previous inspection, the school has worked tirelessly to make improvements to many aspects of the school. These include increasing pupils' attendance and tackling the weaknesses in the quality of the curriculum. However, there remains a lot to do. Many changes are in the early stages of implementation, so have not had the impact required.

Pupils learn a broad and ambitious curriculum. The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly. They learn alongside their peers, with adaptations made by staff as appropriate. Across most subjects, the knowledge that pupils learn is carefully considered. Staff receive training to develop their subject knowledge. For example, in mathematics, staff confidently use mathematical terminology in their explanations to pupils.

The quality of teaching varies in how well it supports pupils' learning. The poor quality of the outdoor provision in the Reception Year disadvantages children, limiting their opportunities to develop their gross motor skills meaningfully. Across the school, staff do not make precise enough checks on pupils' understanding. They do not consistently use the information about what pupils know and remember to plan the next steps. As a result, many pupils continue to struggle with long-standing gaps in their knowledge.

The school prioritises reading, helping pupils to become confident and fluent readers. From the moment the children start in the Nursery Year, staff support the development of children's speech and language. As children move into the Reception Year, they follow a phonics programme that builds their knowledge of letter sounds. Well-trained staff

identify when pupils need additional help with reading, ensuring they catch up quickly and achieve success.

Staff build positive relationships with pupils. Children in the early years show good levels of concentration. They learn how to share successfully. For example, they take turns with using the trains on the toy track. However, sometimes staff do not have high enough expectations for how pupils should conduct themselves. At times, the school do not consistently apply consequences following incidents of behaviour or record them in sufficient detail.

The wider development of pupils is an area of strength for the school. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe online and in the community. They show a mature understanding of the protected characteristics and why these are important for a tolerant society. The school encourages pupils to be aspirational about their future career paths. For example, female scientists visit the school and speak to pupils about how the curriculum is important in their job. Other visitors, such as a police dog handler, supports pupils' understanding of community.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They support the headteacher and welcome the changes that have been made to improve the school. Staff say that leaders are considerate of their well-being and prioritise reducing their workload.

Governors are positive about the progress that the school has made. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities. However, in some aspects of the school's work, governors do not have the knowledge or expertise needed to provide robust oversight, strategic direction and challenge to leaders about the impact of their actions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

However, leaders cannot always access the information that they need quickly. There is inconsistency in how staff record concerns. On occasion, the chronology of actions taken is unclear. Governors do not have an accurate enough oversight of safeguarding at the school. That said, while the school's record-keeping is not as detailed as it should be, vulnerable pupils are kept safe. This is because the safeguarding team acts promptly on the information it is given. The team readily liaises with external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families get the support that they need. There is an established safeguarding culture in the school. Staff receive regular training and are up to date in their knowledge of government guidance.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teaching does not check pupils' understanding of the curriculum carefully enough. This results in staff not addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge before they

move on to new concepts. The school should ensure that assessment is used effectively in all subjects and that leaders have sufficient oversight of the impact on pupils.

- Staff's expectations of behaviour are not consistent across the school. Incidents of challenging behaviour occur too often and are at times not dealt with appropriately. Therefore, some poor behaviour continues to disrupt school life. The school needs to embed its behaviour policy, and ensure it is fully understood by all stakeholders, so that standards of behaviour improve.
- Some of the school's record-keeping is not robust enough. Most significantly, the actions, decisions and outcomes of incidents around behaviour and safeguarding are not always recorded clearly. Governors do not currently have an accurate oversight of this. In addition, this information is not stored in an accessible and logical way. The school must work urgently to ensure that systems and processes are improved.
- Children in the Reception Year have limited access to meaningful activities in their outdoor provision. Therefore, they have less opportunity to develop their gross motor skills. The school should ensure that the outdoor provision is purposeful so children can develop the skills they need to support their development.
- Governors do not provide robust challenge to the school. They are not sufficiently assured about the impact of the school's work around safeguarding or on improving pupils' behaviour. Governors should ensure that they gather the necessary information to carry out their strategic work and challenge leaders effectively.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	133560
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10344577
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ruth Evans
Headteacher	Michael Wright
Website	www.cotfordstlukeprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 October 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one unregistered provider of alternative provision.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds known as the Fledglings Early Years Centre.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, the chair of the governing body, other members of the governing body, representatives from the local authority, and the school's improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also reviewed pupils' work in English, art and geography.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at social times.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Kelly Olive, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gavin Summerfield

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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