

Inspection of Cottons Farm Primary Academy

Sheridan Street, Sinfin, Derby, Derbyshire DE24 9HG

Inspection dates:	8 and 9 July 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Kirsty Patmore. The school is part of the Harmony Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Antony Hughes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew McCully.

What is it like to attend this school?

Cottons Farm Primary Academy is an absolute haven for pupils and their families. This culturally rich and diverse school has a wonderfully open and positive culture of care and respect. Pupils are known extremely well. As a result, pupils feel very happy, safe and ready to learn.

The school is a calm and purposeful place of learning. Everyone understands and applies the behaviour policy consistently. Pupils behave extremely well. They are incredibly polite to adults and to each other. They are a credit to the school and to the community.

The school is highly ambitious for pupils to achieve their very best. Some pupils arrive at the school mid-year, are new to the country or have limited English language skills when they arrive to school. Pupils make strong progress through the curriculum. They learn well. However, because of these complex starting points, they do not always achieve the standards expected in national tests.

A world of opportunity is opened to pupils through the 'Harmony Pledge'. This pledge widens pupils' education beyond the curriculum. Pupils are supported to follow interests, develop talents and pursue their dreams. They are all encouraged to 'believe, achieve and succeed'.

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

The school has improved markedly since the previous inspection. The curriculum is now focused on the knowledge that pupils need. It is well designed so that pupils remember their learning long term. Teaching across the curriculum is consistently effective in most subjects, but not yet in all. In a few subjects, there are not enough well-planned checks in place to make sure that pupils' learning gaps are fully addressed. This can mean that new learning moves on before pupils are ready.

The development of pupils' language knowledge and skills is an emerging strength. Pupils' oracy is well supported, particularly the spoken language of pupils who speak English as an additional language. They learn in an environment with a rich range of books. Teachers also teach the specialist language that pupils need across most of the subjects within the curriculum. Pupils can speak more confidently about their learning in some subjects than in others.

Reading is a top priority. Well-trained staff teach phonics consistently well. Pupils are supported to keep up with their peers by expert staff. Books are well matched to pupils' reading ability. Pupils show real pride and enjoyment of reading. They are well supported to become confident and fluent readers.

Staff promptly identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Lessons include many well-considered adaptations. However, further adaptations are still needed to ensure that pupils with SEND can fully access the wider ambitious curriculum and achieve as they could.

Children make a wonderful start to their education in the early years. They learn in an ambitious, nurturing and inclusive environment that is culturally diverse and exciting. The curriculum is thoughtfully planned. Children understand routines well and increasingly show independence and emotional security. They demonstrate excitement and pride in their learning.

Dedicated staff do everything possible to make sure that pupils are in school and learning. Pupils' attendance has improved. Pupils arrive promptly to school. Once they arrive to school, they follow routines and settle to their learning without disruption or fuss. They are eager to begin their learning.

This is an incredibly rich and inclusive school community. Different cultures and faiths are welcomed. Pupils are knowledgeable and respectful of faiths other than their own. The annual Global Schools Day is a tremendous celebration of pupils' diverse backgrounds and is enjoyed by all.

The personal, social and health education curriculum is carefully planned and organised to ensure that pupils have the knowledge needed to keep happy and safe. Pupils' learning is enriched by the many visitors that come to the school to share their expertise. Pupils know how to keep safe when in school and in the community, including when on line.

The way in which staff work with its community is a particular strength. The school opens its arms to parents and carers. They have many opportunities to get involved with their child's education. They know that there are trusted people in school to turn to if they need help or advice.

Trustees know the school. They have appropriate oversight. They have taken effective action to improve the school since the previous inspection.

Staff are incredibly proud of the school and the community. They feel well supported and well led. They have worked with great dedication to improve the school. Their work has borne fruit.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some parts of the curriculum are not as carefully planned and taught as others. In a few subjects, the sequencing of key vocabulary, and the checks on pupils' learning are not fully embedded. This means that there are small inconsistencies in the quality of education that pupils receive. The school should ensure that the curriculum is

consistently and securely planned and implemented and that, as a result, pupils achieve well.

- The provision for pupils with SEND is not consistently strong. Some children with SEND do not gain the knowledge and understanding of the curriculum that they could. The school should continue the work to ensure that the curriculum for pupils with SEND is ambitious and successfully adapted so that they achieve at the levels they should.

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	145982
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10379591
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	141
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew McCully
CEO of the trust	Antony Hughes
Principal	Kirsty Patmore
Website	www.cottonsfarm.theharmonytrust.org
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 February 2023, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Harmony Trust.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- The school inclusion unit has been established since the previous inspection. This is part of the school's graduated provision for pupils with SEND. It is not designated as specialist provision.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors conducted 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 wider learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also reviewed pupils' work across the wider curriculum.
- The lead inspector spoke with representatives of the trust board. She met with the CEO of the trust and the director of education.
- Inspectors spoke with the trust lead for pupils with SEND and reviewed a range of documentation, including education, health and care plans, to evaluate provision for pupils with SEND. They visited pupils receiving their education within the inclusion hub and reviewed their work. They spoke with the pupils and staff within this provision.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of pupils' attendance information. They observed the behaviour of pupils as they arrived at school, in lessons and at social times.
- The views of staff and pupils who responded to Ofsted's surveys were considered. Additionally, inspectors reviewed the views of parents through Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free text comments. They spoke with parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Jayne Ashman, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Joanna Hall

Ofsted Inspector

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