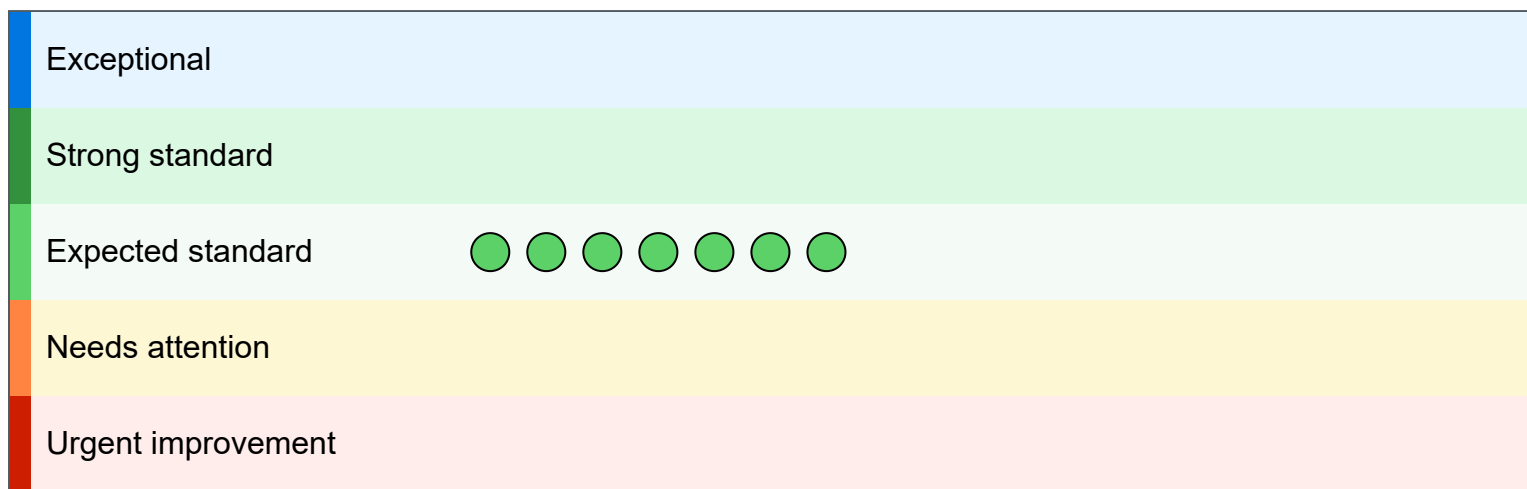


Cotmanhay Infant and Nursery School

Address: Beauvale Drive, Cotmanhay, Ilkeston, Derbyshire, DE7 8RR

Unique reference number (URN): 112570

Inspection report: 17 March 2026



✔ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

The school prioritises the development of pupils' secure foundational knowledge and skills in communication and language, reading, writing and mathematics. This begins straight away, by ensuring that the youngest children in the early years make a great start to their learning. Across the school, any pupils who are at risk of falling behind receive timely and effective support to keep up with their peers.

Pupils typically achieve broadly in line with the national average in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Pupils' achievement in writing is improving. However, this is less secure than in reading and mathematics. Consequently, there is a whole-school focus on improving writing. This work is in the early stages, but there are signs of positive impact. Pupils are beginning to apply their knowledge and skills across a wider range of subjects. This means they are well prepared for the transition to key stage 2.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' attendance. The importance of regular attendance is promoted strenuously with parents and carers, and with pupils. Leaders have an informed and accurate understanding of the significant barriers that prevent pupils from attending school as often as they should. Leaders use their close analysis to implement a wide range of actions to tackle poor attendance. Historically, attendance rates for all groups of pupils have been below the national average. However, there is an improving trend over recent years. As a result of leaders' actions, the number of pupils who are persistently absent has significantly reduced to be much closer to the national average.

Pupils behave very well. There is a happy, calm and busy atmosphere around school. Pupils follow routines with natural confidence and show kindness and respect to each other. They have positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy lessons and try hard in their work. Pupils, parents and carers agree that bullying is not a problem because staff support and care for pupils. Playtimes are happy social times that enhance pupils' social and emotional development well.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The carefully designed, broad and balanced curriculum is taught well across all areas of the school. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. They apply their astute knowledge of pupils' needs and starting points to their teaching. There is a firm emphasis on the development of strong foundations in reading, writing and mathematics, alongside enhancing pupils' language and communication. Teachers largely use assessment well to inform how they adapt their teaching in relation to pupils' individual needs. They step in quickly to enable pupils who need extra support to catch up. Leaders deploy the skilled support staff effectively to enhance pupils' learning and wellbeing.

The school's approach to early reading is well established. Leaders have ensured that staff have the expertise and resources to deliver the school's systematic phonics programme.

Disadvantaged pupils, and any who experience barriers to reading, receive well-considered support to catch up. As a result, pupils develop well as increasingly fluent, confident readers.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders are ambitious for all children in the early years to make the best possible start. The early years curriculum has been designed carefully to provide children with the essential knowledge and skills they need to be ready for Year 1. Children typically make good progress from their exceptionally low starting points, although the proportion who achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is below the national average.

Leaders and staff prioritise early language and communication consistently. This can be seen in the high-quality interactions between adults and children. Staff ensure that phonics is taught systematically, right from the start.

Children who are 2 and 3 years old thrive in the school's Cubs Nursery. They settle quickly and make the most of the well-considered activities provided for them.

Caring relationships support children's wider personal development. The well-equipped environment enhances children's social, emotional and physical development very well. Children across the early years provision follow familiar routines with confidence and independence. Those who experience barriers to learning receive skilled support that is matched carefully to their needs.

The school fosters positive partnerships with parents and carers and a range of external services, in the best interests of children.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders know the pupils well. This enables them to identify the challenges that may affect some pupils' learning. Leaders have a sharp oversight of key pupil groups, such as those eligible for pupil premium, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known (or previously known) to children's social care. These groups represent a majority of pupils at the school. Many have multiple vulnerabilities. There is a clear ambition for all pupils to achieve their potential, regardless of any disadvantage.

There are well-designed systems in place to identify and assess pupils' needs and obstacles to learning. Leaders support and train staff to adapt teaching accordingly. Leaders systematically check how well staff use support strategies to enable pupils to access the curriculum successfully. This includes pupils supported in the school's 'Busy Bees' nurture provision. There are systems in place for staff to share important information to support a smooth transition at key points effectively. The school uses the additional funding that it receives effectively, for example the pupil premium, to address and reduce barriers to learning.

The school works extensively with families, professionals and a range of specialist services. This informs the teaching and shapes pupils' next steps in their education.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders know the school inside out. They understand the local context very well, recognising the challenges that a significant number of pupils face. There is a dedicated commitment to inclusion. Leaders have identified appropriate school priorities accurately, such as improving attendance and aspects of achievement. Leaders make necessary decisions with the best interests of pupils at the heart of all they do, including those who are most disadvantaged. The impact of leaders' work is evident in the improving rates of attendance and improved achievement in reading and mathematics.

Governors meet their statutory duties, for example in relation to safeguarding and the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. They have suitable oversight of the strategic direction of the school. This includes bringing suitable support and challenge for leaders.

The school engages with parents and carers especially well. A high number of parents who responded to Ofsted's survey were effusive in their praise. All of those who responded said that they would recommend the school.

Leaders ensure that staff access appropriate training to enable them to fulfil their roles effectively. Staff value the training they receive and praise the support they receive for their workload and wellbeing.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school's personal development programme is well designed, ambitious and relevant to its context and pupils. Pupils learn about important themes, such as online safety, bullying and healthy relationships. This begins in the early years. The school develops pupils' character through the delivery of the programme. Assemblies include the 'attendance champions' reward for those pupils who are 'superheroes' and come to school 'every day ready and on time'. Through the curriculum and during assemblies, pupils learn about the faiths and beliefs of others. However, pupils' understanding of cultural diversity and the meaning and importance of fundamental British values is variable.

Pupils are chosen as young leaders in a democratic way after applying to be school councillors. They meet regularly to discuss how they can have a positive impact on school life. Recent events have included litter picking to improve the environment and helping with the book café. Pastoral support is matched carefully to pupils' needs, particularly for those pupils who need additional support and guidance.

The school adopts a considered approach to its wider personal development provision. There is a range of well-chosen opportunities that broaden pupils' horizons. For example, pupils speak enthusiastically about taking part in local visits linked to the topics they learn. Pupils' talents and interests are nurtured and developed through a range of enrichment activities, such as boxercise, football and crochet clubs. These opportunities are open and available to all. Leaders describe some of the pupils as joining school with an 'empty rucksack' of experiences. Staff aim to provide opportunities for children to fill their virtual rucksack before they progress to the junior school. The school ensures that pupils with

special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils make the most of this offer. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the opportunities available to them.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

The school is a happy and safe place to learn. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy school, achieve well and thrive because they are well cared for. Highly positive relationships underpin all aspects of school life. Skilled and experienced staff provide effective teaching. Pupils, parents and carers agree that there are no concerns about bullying. The school has a longstanding reputation in the community for providing high-quality care and education for the children of Cotmanhay. The school's support for families who face significant challenges is valued by the community.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make a positive start to their education. There is a sharp focus on children gaining good learning habits from the earliest age, sometimes as young as 2 years old. Pupils go on to develop secure knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics. A very high proportion of pupils at the school are disadvantaged or experience various barriers to learning. These pupils receive close support to achieve well from their starting points. The school quickly identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they can access the curriculum. Pupils in the 'Busy Bees' nurture provision benefit from a bespoke approach to learning. This enables them to gradually reintegrate into their classes when the time is right.

Pupils enjoy a range of opportunities to develop their wider personal development, such as through outdoor activities, clubs and visits. Pupils talked enthusiastically about a visit to Nottingham Castle and their enjoyment of a visit from an author. Attendance is improving, due to the success of leaders' work with parents. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for their transfer to the junior school at the end of Year 2.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that pupils' foundational knowledge and skills in writing are of an equal standard to those already achieved in reading and mathematics, and that pupils begin to apply these skills successfully across the wider curriculum.
- Leaders should ensure that pupils develop an age-appropriate secure understanding of fundamental British values and cultural diversity in modern Britain.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Sabrina Malik.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

During the inspection, inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior and curriculum leaders, the chair of governors and other members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.

The school does not use any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Katy Latchford

Lead inspector:

Christine Watkins, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Karen Slack, Ofsted Inspector

Amanda Greaves, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 17 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

250

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

240

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

72.11%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

2.40%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

34.80%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	7.0%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	7.2%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	8.4%	5.9%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	27.9%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	26.1%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	27.4%	16.2%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional ●

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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