

Copford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	115074
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	378997
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2012
Lead inspector	Cheryl Thompson

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David De-Ath
Headteacher	David Bome
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2006
School address	School Road Copford CO6 1BX
Telephone number	01206 210439
Fax number	01206 210149
Email address	admin@copford.essex.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Cheryl Thompson

Additional inspector

Kanwaljit Singh

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed ten lessons taught by seven teachers. The work of learning support assistants supporting small groups of pupils and individuals was also observed. Meetings were held with staff, parents, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. Inspectors heard a small number of pupils read in most classes. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at school evaluation documents, safeguarding documentation, data on pupils' progress and development planning. Responses from questionnaires completed by 123 parents and carers were analysed, as well as those from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This is a popular and oversubscribed average-sized primary school. It serves the local village and surrounding areas. Almost half of the pupils live outside the school's catchment area. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also well below average although there is an above-average proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. There is one class for each year group.

Over the past three years, the school has consistently exceeded government minimum standards for attainment in Year 6 national tests and for the rate of pupils' progress from Year 2 to the end of Year 6.

The school has achieved Advanced National Healthy School status, the Activemark for high quality physical education provision and Investors in People award. The school is a leading literacy school for its School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) partnership.

Since the last inspection, there has been considerable building work completed, providing better facilities.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Its strong commitment to Christian values permeates all its work. The headteacher has a clear vision and high aspirations for the school’s future which all staff and the governing body share.
- There is a strong capacity for further improvement because the school’s self-evaluation is rigorous and provides an incisive picture of what the school does well and what it needs to improve next.
- Pupils’ achievement is good. Their outstanding behaviour contributes significantly to them attaining significantly above average standards by the end of Year 6. From their start in the Reception class, pupils of all abilities make good progress.
- Teaching is good with outstanding teaching in Years 2 and 6. There are occasional instances when teaching is satisfactory and lacks pace, but the leadership team are providing good coaching and support to help teachers improve their practice.
- Teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is a high and successful priority in the school. From their start in Reception, pupils learn, reinforce and consolidate their skills well. Pupils who find learning difficult have good support.
- The school’s good curriculum has particular strengths in its provision for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. However, in Reception, opportunities are missed for children to further their knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development through learning outside.
- Pupils develop an excellent understanding of right and wrong and well-developed social skills. They empathise with characters in stories.
- Through links with their Kenyan partner school pupils have a good understanding that children of their own age have similar needs and aspirations regardless of their country or circumstances. Their knowledge of faiths other than their own, though satisfactory, is limited.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all teaching is consistently good or better by:
 - checking on pupils’ understanding during lessons so teachers can challenge or refocus them to enhance learning
 - ensuring an appropriate balance of time for teachers to talk and pupils to

work independently.

- Increase further the Reception children's progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development by:
 - providing carefully structured opportunities for children to use the outside areas for purposeful play.

- Increase pupils' understanding of different faiths and how faith can influence the way people choose to live their lives.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers are correct in their view that their children develop good skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics and achieve well. In most years, children start in the Reception class with skills and aptitudes that are similar to those expected for their age. By the time they leave the school, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average. For example, Year 6 pupils have a very good understanding of spelling conventions and are avid readers, keen to discuss their preference for different authors' styles.

In the Reception class, children make a good start in developing early literacy and numeracy skills and this good progress continues through the school. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are quickly identified and appropriate support provided to help them make good progress too. These pupils receive support and special teaching to meet their identified needs from their teachers and learning support assistants. Attainment in reading at the end of Year 2 has been broadly average, but this year has improved and is currently above average. At the end of Year 6, attainment in reading is above average with a significant proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5.

More-able pupils thrive on the high level of challenge in lessons which promotes their excellent and confident attitudes to attempting difficult work. For example, a number of pupils are working at Level 6 in mathematics which is the level expected of pupils in secondary schools. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable have good teaching and pastoral support. This support enables them to make good progress from their starting points and have good self-esteem. A particularly strong feature for these pupils is their understanding of how well they are doing and what they have to learn next to attain their special targets. There are no gaps in the performance of different groups of pupils within the school; all make good progress from their starting points.

Quality of teaching

Almost all parents and carers agree that their children are well taught and many commented on the high quality of care and support for their children within classes. Inspectors support parents' and carers' view that teaching is good. The key strength

in the quality of teaching is that, within a framework of excellent relationships, teachers set high expectations for behaviour and application to tasks which pupils try very hard to meet. Pupils are in total agreement that their teachers are 'brilliant' even though they make them work hard! Teachers plan their lessons in detail, ensuring that work and support is carefully matched to pupils' abilities and builds on previous learning. In almost all lessons observed, teachers encouraged their pupils to think or reflect on issues with such questions as 'How would you feel?' or 'What do you think the right thing to do would be?' This made a good contribution to their spiritual development. In outstanding lessons, the pace is brisk with teachers always checking pupils' responses to ensure the right level of challenge. In an outstanding Year 6 English lesson, questioning was brisk to help pupils recall previous events in the story and expectations very high for pupils to answer audibly and in a well-structured manner. Excellent use was made of subject specific language such as 'What does inference mean?' Through careful links between subjects, pupils were helped to develop their vocabulary, for example the meaning of 'hostile' in terms of feelings compared to 'hostile' in terms of the Antarctic climate. Pupils' love of reading stems from their teachers' enthusiasm and the support from parents and carers.

Where teaching was satisfactory the pace was slow because pupils spent too long sitting on the carpet and consequently did not have enough time to work, and teachers did not adjust their teaching during lessons to match pupils' responses. Consequently, teachers did not fully extend pupils' learning.

Reception children make a good start in school and settle happily into routines. Recently purchased reading books are having a good impact on children's pride in their ability to use the sounds they have learned to blend sounds together to read a word. Children make satisfactory rather than good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative development because insufficient structured opportunities are provided for them to work and play in the outside area.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Scrutiny of the school's records indicates attendance is consistently above average and outstanding behaviour is the norm at Copford. The headteacher has received several letters from places pupils have visited commenting on their exemplary behaviour. The school is a calm and orderly community. In lessons pupils listen attentively, contribute to discussions confidently and work very hard. Around the school, they play well together and are kind to one another. Relationships are excellent. Pupils know they are valued as individuals. In lessons and discussions they display a thoughtful maturity which is frequently beyond their years. They relish the opportunities to take on responsibilities around the school, especially helping the youngest children. Pupils know the high standards of behaviour expected of them and meet these even when unsupervised. For their age, pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and are very proud of their achievement in securing the construction of a pavement along the busy road near their school. Pupils have confidence in the school's procedures for keeping them safe and say they feel safe at school. This view is confirmed by parents and carers. Discussions with pupils indicate they understand what constitutes bullying behaviour

and that they are confident there is none in the school although they think there may be 'an odd playground disagreement' which they settle themselves or is dealt with swiftly by staff.

Leadership and management

There is no complacency in this successful school. Principled leadership and attention to detail are at the heart of the school's success. The school tackles discrimination robustly and equality of opportunity is promoted very effectively. Priorities are well focused with high expectations of pupils' academic and personal growth. The subject knowledge and talents of the headteacher and two assistant headteachers are deployed very effectively to ensure a clear overview of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. For example, one assistant headteacher is the special needs coordinator and as such has a good understanding of the nature of pupils' difficulties, the provision made for them and the progress they make. The decision to adapt the curriculum to include 'life skills' for a small group of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable has had an excellent impact on their self-esteem, independence and enjoyment of learning. They have thoroughly enjoyed paying their fare on the bus to the supermarket, finding and paying for specific ingredients and cooking these back at school. The Key Stage 2 curriculum has good links between subjects so that pupils can reinforce their literacy and information and technology skills in subjects such as geography and history. At Key Stage 1, the curriculum is developing more relevant links between subjects and in the summer term, all the classes have a shared theme, such as the seaside.

The school has a strong capacity for further improvement. There is good evidence of sustained high standards as well as improvements in the school's provision and pupils' attainment at Year 2 over time. The findings from analysing pupils' progress are used rigorously to set targets for improvement. For example, the school has successfully raised standards in writing and is currently tackling raising standards further in reading in Key Stage 1. The focus on making sure more-able pupils read more and at a challenging level is paying dividends; standards have risen this year. The school sets realistic targets for attainment in English and mathematics and aspires to better these. However, it does not include its aspirational and challenging targets in the school development plan to make it clear to staff and governors what the school is trying to achieve and to enable the governing body more easily to hold the school to account.

Teaching and learning are monitored regularly and rigorously and teachers helped to improve their practice. When observing lessons alongside inspectors, the headteacher and assistant headteacher demonstrated an astute awareness of where improvements were needed and could detail ways of achieving these. There is a very strong commitment to making sure teachers and learning support assistants have good opportunities to extend their skills and knowledge. The involvement of the school in the SCITT partnership has had a significant impact on teachers' skills of monitoring and judging the quality of teaching. Staff are confident and always seeking to improve their practice.

The governing body knows the school well and its members are active within it. They share the headteacher's high aspirations for the school and provide excellent links to

the local community. These links have a good impact on pupils' understanding of citizenship. For example, older pupils have attended parish council meetings and been involved in choosing play equipment for the nearby park. The governing body are developing their skills in analysing the data provided about the school. They are very supportive and ensure the school meets statutory requirements. They are very aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. Risk assessments are well-developed and safeguarding systems adopt recommended good practice.

Well-established links with a primary school in Kenya have done much to widen pupils' good understanding of similarities and differences between the Kenyan and their own communities.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Copford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Copford, CO6 1BX

Thank you all for welcoming us to your school and for sharing your thoughts and ideas about it. This helped to make the judgements about your school, which is providing you with a good education. The best things about the school were:

- you enjoy school, work hard and attain above average levels
- your behaviour is outstanding and you work and play very well together
- your teachers look after you and usually make sure you have work to make you think hard and make good progress
- your headteacher and assistant headteachers lead and manage the school well.

There are some areas where the school can improve. I have asked your headteacher, assistant headteachers and the governing body to:

- make sure that teaching is always at least good, and that your teachers always plan work to make you think hard
- make sure that Reception children have more opportunities to work outside
- make sure that you have more opportunities to learn about faiths other than your own.

You already make a good contribution to the life of the school. You are very positive about learning and we were very impressed with your good manners and how welcoming you are to visitors. You can help the school improve even further by continuing to work hard.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Thompson
Lead inspector

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