

Cove Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116141
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	357888
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nick Pearson
Headteacher	Jan Sampson
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 13 lessons, and nine teachers and other members of staff were seen. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers, and groups of pupils. The school's work and a wide range of documentation were reviewed. This included the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school improvement plan, leaders' monitoring records and pupils' work. Questionnaires from staff and from 65 parents and carers were analysed and their responses taken into account.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent of pupils' progress in mathematics.
- How well teachers ensure that work is challenging for all groups of pupils.
- How the changes in subject leaders have affected the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures.
- What the school needs to do to enhance its contribution to the promotion of community cohesion.

Information about the school

Cove Infant is smaller than most primary schools. A large majority of pupils come from the area close to the school, although an increasing number come from the surrounding area. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is about half the national average, as is the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

There has been a substantial turnover of teaching staff since the previous inspection with only one of the six class teachers still serving at the school. The school has gained a number of awards, among them, Investors in People and Healthy Schools status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Cove Infant is a good school. There is effective and purposeful leadership by senior leaders and the headteacher's commitment to improvement is shared by the governing body and staff. All are dedicated to improving provision and outcomes for the pupils. The good quality provision ensures that pupils achieve well and make good progress in both their academic and personal development.

The good quality care, guidance and support provided by all the adults ensure that there is an inclusive and warm ethos. Pupils are known well and supporting their well-being is at the heart of the school's provision. Consequently, the pupils behave well, and have positive attitudes to learning and school, and these factors help to create a happy and harmonious community. Pupils have an outstanding understanding of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle. This is reflected in the school gaining Healthy Schools status and in pupils' awareness throughout the school. A Reception child, for example, commented after one of the many 'activate' sessions, 'That was good for me because it made my heart beat really fast.' The school's outstanding partnership with parents and carers is reflected in their unanimous support shown in the returned questionnaires. Their views are reflected in the parent or carer who told an inspector, 'The school is wonderful. I'd like to keep my daughter here until she is 18!' A further example lies in the enthusiastic way in which parents and carers make use of the school's excellent 'home learning' packs which are prepared for each topic to aid further learning at home.

Pupils enjoy school, though this is not fully reflected in their levels of attendance, which are average. Levels of attendance are reduced, in the main, because some parents and carers choose to take holidays during term time. However, there is a high incidence of pupils having odd days of absence, although there are no pupils that are persistently absent. The curriculum is carefully planned with a range of themes and projects which build successfully on pupils' interests and stimulate their curiosity. Staff ensure that there is a good balance between increasing pupils' personal development and academic achievement, and this prepares them well for their move to the partner junior school. Teaching is consistently good and is sometimes outstanding. Teachers ensure that classrooms have a calm and purposeful atmosphere because they manage the pupils exceptionally well. They provide stimulating and interesting activities and generally match work well to their needs. However, there are occasions when work is not sufficiently challenging for higher-ability pupils, particularly in mathematics. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. These pupils' needs are identified early and they benefit from well-conceived individual learning plans. Because they receive effective support from well-trained teaching assistants, they make good progress towards their targets, whether they be for academic or emotional needs. Teachers use assessment information well to plan work, though marking is inconsistent. It

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is of high quality in English, though less successful in mathematics, because the school policy is not always followed.

There are good arrangements in place to monitor the quality of provision and pupils' progress. Even though some leaders and teachers with responsibility are new to their posts, good and well-founded systems have enabled them to quickly make a positive contribution to the monitoring of the school's good quality improvement plan. This is an effective tool for securing further improvement. The senior leadership team operates effectively in driving improvement and, when linked to the good improvement made since the previous inspection, this provides a clear demonstration of the school's good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Lift the quality of teaching and learning to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that the work set in mathematics for higher-ability pupils is consistently challenging
 - improving teachers' marking of pupils' work, ensuring that the school's policy is applied equally as well in mathematics as it is in writing.
- By January 2012, lift levels of attendance to at least 95%.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils are keen to be fully involved in the interesting and well-prepared activities that characterise lessons. Teachers ensure that pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed well because they provide many opportunities for them to work in pairs and small groups. Pupils enter Year 1 with skills and abilities that are broadly average, although their communication, language and literacy skills and their calculation skills are below average. Although, in the past, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 has been generally average, it rose significantly in 2009. After a slight dip in 2010, current Years 1 and 2 pupils are achieving well and are on course to meet their challenging targets. This marks good learning and progress from their starting points.

In almost all lessons, all groups of pupils make good progress in reading, writing, science, and information and communication technology. However, in mathematics, progress is good for lower- and middle-ability pupils, but is satisfactory for higher-ability pupils, because work is not always sufficiently challenging for them. Progress in literacy is particularly good. This was evident in an outstanding Year 2 lesson when the pupils were learning to select the most suitable adjectives to describe a character in the African folk story of Anansi and the Turtle. Here, the teacher engaged the pupils outstandingly well because she provided challenging activities. Pupils were delighted to be able to use these powerful adjectives and the most-able pupils achieved levels of attainment more typically expected at the end of Year 4.

Pupils enjoy making friends and they feel secure in the supportive environment. They make a strong contribution to the school community. They are proud to be elected members of the school council and speak enthusiastically about their achievements, such as how to make lunchtime better. Others are pleased to be able to answer the telephone during lunchtime, but are dismayed because it does not ring often enough for them to

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show their skills. Pupils' good behaviour and strong personal development makes a good contribution to their learning.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Pupils learn well because good teaching inspires them. Excellent relationships, good quality learning routines, provision for collaborative learning and well-prepared support staff are key strengths in teaching. In addition, teachers invariably make the purpose of lessons clear and, in Year 2 in particular, pupils are helped to understand what they need to do to meet the lesson's intentions.

There are some outstanding features to the curriculum. Topic themes are carefully planned with a clear commitment to making learning first hand and relevant for the pupils. Teachers' planning is sufficiently flexible to enable any 'big questions' that pupils raise for topics to be investigated well. Work across subjects is planned well to make learning meaningful. For example, the current Year 1 topic with a Great Fire of London theme includes work in most subjects. Pupils benefit from high quality specialist music teaching. In an outstanding lesson, for example, the music teacher enabled all pupils to be included very successfully as they retold the story of the Great Fire from its inception in Pudding Lane, represented by pupils beating their mixing bowls with spoons rhythmically, to the rush and horror of pouring water on the fire from the Thames. All had an instrument that represented part of the story and all the pupils thoroughly enjoyed the experience. The

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curriculum is enlivened by a wide range of visits and visitors as well as extra-curricular clubs. However, the curriculum for numeracy is not sufficiently well developed to enable consistent challenge for higher-ability pupils.

Staff take care to ensure that the school environment is highly positive and conducive to learning. An excellent range of displays of pupils' work adorn every classroom and all the shared areas. This makes an important contribution to the effective learning environment. In addition, the outside environment is cared for exceptionally well with carefully-developed provision to support animals, insects and, in particular, birds with many bird boxes around the school. This leads to the pupils being very proud of the environment and they are keen to show their work to visitors.

Good quality care, guidance and support underpins the strong and inclusive learning ethos of the school. All pupils are known well as individuals and good quality support is provided for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. There is particularly strong support for those that have emotional needs. However, the school's approach to securing good levels of attendance is not yet sufficiently rigorous. The school is aware of this and there are good plans in place to address this issue.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The high quality of the leadership and management of the headteacher is pivotal to the school's good effectiveness. She is supported well by all staff. There is a strong focus on securing further improvement to which all are committed. The school supports equality and tackles any form of discrimination well. Strong and inclusive management procedures are demonstrated by the school gaining Investors in People status.

The governing body is firmly committed to the school's improvement and plays a clear and important role in ensuring that the school is effective. Governors are well informed about the school's provision and they find out for themselves, by regular visiting to the school and discussions with linked class teachers, what the school's strengths and development points are. The governing body ensures that the strong pastoral care is underpinned by good safeguarding procedures. Site security and safety are a core priority and they successfully ensure that pupils are safe in school.

The school's evaluation of the effectiveness of its contribution to community cohesion is too modest. The school provides a cohesive community and its effectiveness in this area is good. There are good links with the local community and schools, and link with a contrasting school in Southampton is being developed. There are close links with a

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kindergarten in Ethiopia which includes exchanges of work and emails between pupils, and this helps to broaden the pupils' perspective and horizons of education and life in other parts of the world.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's welfare is at the heart of all that the staff do and they ensure that the children are safe, protected well and enjoy learning. This is recognised by parents and carers who made many supportive and positive comments about how quickly their children settled into school in September.

Children enter the school with skills and abilities that are in line with those expected, though their calculation and writing skills are lower. They achieve well and make good progress because the teaching is good. By the time that they leave, a majority of children attain the expected goals, although their writing and calculation skills are below expected levels. Children learn well and are happy in school because they thoroughly enjoy the imaginative and stimulating activities prepared for them. There is a good balance between activities that are led by staff and those that the children choose for themselves. As a result, they become increasingly independent and able to show responsibility in choosing sensibly, sharing with others and concentrating on tasks for extended periods. Both classrooms are organised well and shared areas, both indoors and outdoors, are used well, with children mixing freely together. All the staff work closely together as a team and they take joint responsibility for noting down the children's achievements. Assessments are thorough, though not always accurate, because some staff lack confidence in making evaluations of children's work.

Leadership and management are good. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader is secure in her knowledge of young children's learning and the required curriculum, and she has

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already identified and developed aspects such as strengthening resources for outside learning and staff deployment. There is also a good training plan in place to strengthen confidence in the use of assessments.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are unanimous in their support of the school in 12 of the 13 questions asked. Many parents and carers made highly positive comments about both the school's provision and the progress that their children make. There were also many affirmative comments about the leadership of the headteacher, the approachable nature of the staff, and also the very positive and safe environment which they create.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cove Infant school to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 65 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 177 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	82	12	18	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	82	12	18	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	47	71	18	28	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	71	19	29	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	50	77	15	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	49	75	16	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	72	18	28	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	38	58	23	35	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	69	20	31	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	60	24	37	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	60	25	38	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	58	89	7	11	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	91	6	9	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



3 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cove Infant School, Farnborough GU14 9DP

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school. This letter is to tell you what we found. Yours is a good school. The teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and they plan lots of exciting activities for you to do. This helps you to make good progress in your learning. We were particularly impressed with your beautiful singing in assembly.

You told us that your school is a very happy place and that the adults look after you well. We agree with you and so do your parents and carers. We were impressed with how well you get on together. Your behaviour is good, you have an outstanding understanding about being healthy and also you feel safe in school. We think that your headteacher is doing a good job and she is helped by all the staff. They are always checking on how well you are doing because they want you always to do as well as you can.

Even in a good school like yours, there are things to improve. We have asked your headteacher and the governing body to make sure that your lessons are always as good as the best so that you make even more progress in your learning than now. To do this, we have asked that the jobs that your teachers give you in numeracy are always challenging, particularly for those of you that find learning easier. We have also asked that your teachers' marking of your work is as helpful for you in numeracy as it is in literacy. We have also asked for one other thing to make your school even better, and this is where you can help! At the moment, the school's levels of attendance are not high enough. Although many of you do attend school regularly we would like all of you to always attend school unless you are ill.

We really enjoyed our time in your school. Thank you for taking time to talk to us and watch your lessons. We hope that you continue to find your time in school enjoyable.

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler

Lead inspector

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