



Cotford St Luke Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 133560
LEA Somerset
Inspection number 282315
Inspection dates 6 December 2005 to 7 December 2005
Reporting inspector David Clegg RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bethell Mead
School category	Community		Cotford St Luke
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Taunton, Somerset TA4 1HZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01823 430 831
Number on roll	105	Fax number	01823 433 906
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Denis Compton
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs Frances Rychlik

Age group 3 to 11	Inspection dates 6 December 2005 - 7 December 2005	Inspection number 282315
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a new, purpose built, extended school that opened in September 2003 with 84 pupils. It has since grown to 187 pupils. Growth has been more rapid than anticipated, which has necessitated more building and the appointment of new staff. Over 20 members of staff were new to the school in the last year. For a period of the last year, pupils were being taught in the hall and the library because there was no classroom space. One further classroom was added in December 2004 and two new classrooms opened in November 2005.

The school includes an early years centre that offers day care for young children. It also accommodates a breakfast club and an after school club.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Despite facing a number of unpredicted difficulties since it opened, the school provides a satisfactory education. The school is well led by the headteacher who gives the school a clear sense of purpose and direction. Governors have been instrumental in ensuring that the school has the facilities it needs to cope with the many changes.

Pupils make a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and make good progress. Pupils make steady progress in the rest of the school because teaching is helpful and largely meets the needs of pupils. However, they achieve better in reading and writing than in mathematics. One reason for this is that mathematics teaching is not always stretching the more able pupils. Results in the most recent national tests were broadly in line with the national average. They improved between 2004 and 2005.

The school has an accurate and measured view of its own effectiveness and a keen understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The fact that the school has successfully negotiated its way through significant and unforeseen changes indicates it has the capacity to improve further. There are already signs of improving standards and achievement. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- making sure that all pupils are suitably challenged throughout mathematics lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils reach average standards in most year groups. Results in national tests were broadly average in 2005 and an improvement on those of the previous year. As it is such a new school no pupils who took the tests in 2004 or 2005 began their education at the school. This makes it more difficult to measure pupils' progress over a number of years. What is clear however is that standards and progress are improving as the pupils who start at the school from the beginning of their education move through the year groups.

Children start at the school with broadly expected levels of skills although in language and communication they are weaker than often found for that age group. The children in Nursery and Reception make good progress and the majority reach above the expected levels in most areas of learning by the time they begin Year 1. However, standards reached in reading and writing at the start of Year 1 are average.

In other year groups pupils currently make satisfactory progress in mathematics and good progress in reading and writing. There are occasions when some of the higher attaining pupils could achieve more in mathematics lessons. The work given to them is not consistently hard enough to stretch them. Some pupils commented that there are lessons where 'the work is too easy'. Boys have attained better results than girls.

The school is tackling this issue by giving extra help to those girls who need it. It is too early to judge the success of this.

The school has set itself challenging targets for 2006 and, if attained, will represent a further improvement in standards, particularly for pupils at the end of Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The school successfully helps pupils to develop, mature and get on with others. It has established an ethos that promotes pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development effectively. The younger pupils are benefiting particularly from this. Their personal development is good. The pupils in Years 5 and 6, some of whom have already attended more than one other school, have struggled more to adapt to a new climate. The girls have found it easier than the boys, because some of the latter are still a little immature and have not yet got firmly established work habits.

Nevertheless, most pupils enjoy their lessons, their attendance is good and behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils commented that bullying is rare and the older pupils were very clear that the school is 'a lot calmer than it was last year'. The school actively engages with the local community through, for example, planting bulbs in communal areas and singing to community groups. This adds a further dimension to lessons. The very youngest children also have good attitudes to work. This, and their good concentration, enable them to benefit from the teaching.

Pupils have a good sense of keeping themselves safe. Older pupils were particularly enthusiastic about the work of the Devon CAP. This involved exploring potentially risky situations and thinking about how to avoid them. They also have a keen sense of how to remain healthy, being aware of sensible eating and the need for regular exercise.

Pupils are developing a range of skills and attributes that should help them to succeed later in life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory and is helping pupils to make steady progress. Lessons are often quite lively and some of the teaching is pacy. Good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) for example in accessing on line resources that support some teaching in numeracy. The teaching meets the needs of most pupils although occasionally some pupils find lessons do not demand enough from them because the work is too easy.

In most lessons, the activities are planned well to take account of the mixed ages and abilities. Occasionally, at the start of lessons, too much teaching is aimed at the average pupils and not enough is done to engage and move on the higher attaining pupils.

This is when they find themselves treading water. The teaching assistants give some useful support to the lower attaining pupils and this is helping them to make steady progress. However in some lessons not enough use is made of the assistance in the early part of lessons to make sure the teaching matches all pupils' needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils with the occasional exception of not always stretching the more able. The curriculum in the Nursery and Reception is particularly strong. Good management of the curriculum makes sure that it includes all subjects and that pupils do not repeat work as they move through the school. This is a particular challenge for this school where the number of pupils is growing in an ad hoc fashion and class organisation has had to change year by year.

Lessons are supplemented with a good range of extra-curricular activities. There are regular visitors to school and visits out. These visits out include residential trips to field centres as well as whole school visits to the local theatre. These opportunities contribute effectively to pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils feel safe and secure and have confidence in the staff. They feel that they can approach the adults if they have any problems. The school is good at integrating new children who join the school in mid-year. Several relative newcomers commented that 'teachers and children are friendly and help them to settle in well'.

Procedures for ensuring that pupils are safe and secure are robust. All staff are fully aware of the guidelines.

The school has good systems for keeping track on how well pupils are doing. Teachers use this to set targets in mathematics and are about to set them in literacy. Pupils find the targets helpful and say that they help them to know how well they are doing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has been well led by the headteacher through the challenges it has encountered since it opened. The problems posed by the doubling of pupil numbers, and the consequent lack of teaching space, have been coped with stoically and without any hugely adverse effect on pupils' achievement. Pupils however, commented on how they did not like the recent 'disruption' and how glad there were to 'have their library back'. However, an inordinate amount of management time has been spent on project management and staff appointments to cope with the rapid and unexpected expansion of the school.

Notwithstanding the above, the school has established some good management systems. It uses test results very effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses and to identify those children who need extra help. The school goes about improvements in a systematic and measured way and is clear about the need to evaluate the impact of what it has done. It makes regular checks on teaching and introduces new teachers into the school smoothly. It is simply too soon to judge the impact of much of what the leadership has put in place because of constant, and at times unpredictable, changes in the school's make-up. What is clear is that the headteacher and governors have laid the foundations necessary for a successful school.

Governors are strong advocates for the school and have been at the forefront of championing the school's determination to seek the facilities needed to meet the increasing demand. They are sensibly organised. They have put in place potentially good arrangements to make sure that they know fully how well the school performs as it settles into the next stage of development.

The school has sought the views of parents and pupils about some key aspects of how it operates. It was, for instance, in response to parents that a third consultation evening was put in place. The school also seeks pupils' views through questionnaires, although currently they do not have a regular, formal voice in how the school develops. However, the school is putting in place a school council over the next year.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Cotford St Luke Primary School Bethnall Mead Cotford St Luke Taunton Somerset TA4 1HZ

7 December 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly and helpful. We particularly want to thank all the pupils who gave up their time to talk to us.

What we liked most about your school:

- You are very friendly and welcoming and this helps the new children to settle in well.
- The relationships between children and with teachers are good.
- You enjoy school and like your teachers.
- Your headteacher is leading and managing the school well.
- The youngest children get a good start in school.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- Make sure that all of you have interesting and challenging work to do in your mathematics lessons.

Thank you again for all your help and we hope you go on enjoying your school.

Yours sincerely

David Clegg Lead Inspector