



Copford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115074
Local Authority ESSEX
Inspection number 290121
Inspection dates 27–28 September 2006
Reporting inspector George Wallace

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Copford, Copford
Age range of pupils	4–11		Colchester, Essex CO6 1BX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01206 210439
Number on roll (school)	182	Fax number	01206 210149
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	David De'ath
		Headteacher	Mr David Bome
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school principally serves the villages of Copford and West Stanway, although its growing reputation means that many children come from further afield. The school has expanded significantly over the past two years and is now an oversubscribed one-form entry school of average size. Over the past two years there have been significant improvements to the buildings through a combination of refurbishment and new build. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Nearly all pupils come from White British backgrounds and all have English as their first language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which is well led and managed. It has improved significantly over the past two years since the new headteacher's arrival. He has 'hit the ground running', has quickly and efficiently identified strengths and weaknesses, and brought about many successes in a short time. He has been aided by staff and governors who are committed, knowledgeable and who work very well together to improve the school. The school knows itself well because its ways of checking its effectiveness are good. Governors and staff know what needs to be done to ensure that the school continues to improve. All issues from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. The school has a good capacity to improve and become an even better school. Governors, children, parents and staff are highly positive and show great commitment to the school. This has been enhanced by the growing involvement of the church and local community in the educational experiences offered to children. The result is children who are happy, and confidently say that 'the school has become a fun place to work hard in and enjoy learning'. Parents overwhelmingly support the work and efforts of the school. They feel that teaching is good, that their children make good progress and that it does a 'great job' in supporting their academic and pastoral development. Except in 2003, standards fell until 2005 when results improved. The headteacher has reversed the decline and the most recent test results are even better. These indicate that all pupils in both key stages have made good progress. Standards are above average at Key Stages 1 and 2 and particularly high in English at the end of Key Stage 2. Reading and writing are core strengths across the school. However, in mathematics, although standards are above average and progress good overall, more able girls do not do as well as they could. The strong focus on raising standards has been supported by the sharpening of the assessment procedures, tracking of pupils' progress and the action that arises from the staff's analysis of individual pupils' progress. Teaching is good and teachers know their pupils well. They generally use assessment information effectively to aid their lesson planning so that pupils' needs are accurately met. Although children's standards and progress are satisfactory in Reception, assessment does not always identify accurately enough what children have achieved or need to learn next. In addition, their outdoor area is poorly equipped and their opportunities to learn from playing outside the classroom are limited. Teachers and the learning support assistants provide constant encouragement, guidance and support which further promote pupils' enjoyment of learning. Pupils feel safe and secure. They behave and relate very well to each other. They are polite and talk easily and confidently to adults and to each other. The school provides pupils with good, varied and interesting experiences. This, together with good personal support and guidance by staff, has resulted in pupils' good personal development. The emphasis on physical well-being has enabled pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles exceptionally well. Pupils are aware of the progress they are making. Teachers' marking is generally thorough and they provide pupils with very clear helpful feedback on ways to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the progress and achievement of more able girls in mathematics. - In Reception, make better use of assessment, improve the quality of the outdoor play area and provide more opportunities for children to learn outside the classroom.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall attainment on entry is marginally above average. Pupils achieve well, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities. By the end of Year 6 pupils have made good progress, especially in English. Standards in English are very high, and are above average in science and mathematics, although the most able girls are underachieving in mathematics. In 2006 the school exceeded both national targets and its own targets. At the end of their Reception year nearly all pupils have reached the expected levels of attainment for their age, and have made satisfactory progress. By the end of Year 2 standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress is largely good but strongest in reading and writing. The school's results over recent years show that the gradual decline in standards has been reversed over the past two years and improvements are continuing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school. Throughout the school there is a highly positive atmosphere. The work generally challenges the pupils and makes them think. Pupils feel safe and have adults that they trust and feel confident to talk should they have any issues worrying them. Behaviour is good and pupils get on generally well together. Pupils show very good attitudes towards learning. They listen carefully to teachers and to each other when answering questions or expressing personal feelings. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good overall. While moral and social development are excellent features, cultural development is satisfactory. The school does not draw extensively on literature to support this. Pupils choose healthy, nourishing meals. The school has achieved an Advanced Healthy Schools award and an Active Mark further indicating the considerable success of its range of sporting activities and on the healthy lifestyles of pupils. The school council is active and influences change in the school. Pupils actively support the local community and beyond. They acquire good literacy, numeracy, computer and personal skills which they need for the next stages of education and beyond.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good because staff have high expectations and pupils respond well in lessons. Teachers and learning support assistants work effectively as a strong team to ensure that the work motivates pupils and they find learning interesting. Relationships are excellent and this helps to create a very supportive environment where pupils feel able to tackle new tasks and ask for help, if needed. Significant improvements have been made in the way teachers check pupils' work and use the information gained from this to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Consequently, appropriate challenges are usually set for pupils and they make good progress. In Reception, teaching is particularly effective in developing children's good attitudes to learning because activities are fun. However, progress in some areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum is only satisfactory because assessment is not sufficiently accurate or used well enough to plan for the children's future learning. The school has recognised this and has already begun to make improvements. The recent focus on identifying and developing pupils' learning styles has resulted in improvement in the way lessons are planned and taught.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Recent improvements to the curriculum, which focus on the teaching of skills through a topic, are proving to be successful. Pupils can more easily make connections between subjects by applying their knowledge, skills and understanding in one subject to their work in another. For example, in Year 3 they developed knowledge and understanding in history and science, and skills in art through a 'Dig for Victory' topic. Information and communication technology is used effectively and its impact has increased significantly through the use of the new computer suite. Current provision for the Foundation Stage is underdeveloped as children do not have sufficient opportunities to work and play outside the classroom. The very popular after-school activities support healthy lifestyles exceptionally well through a wide range of physical activities and also help pupils to develop new interests. School visits and visitors add another valuable dimension to pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils feel safe and happy in the school and this reflects the good quality care, guidance and support provided by staff. Clear procedures are in place for health and safety and child protection and, consequently, the needs of pupils are well safeguarded. Pupils have no concerns about speaking to staff if they have problems because their comments are taken seriously. Support and guidance for pupils' academic work is good. Pupils' needs are quickly identified and appropriate additional support provided for those

who find learning difficult. Learning support assistants work well with pupils and make a significant contribution to their learning. Pupils know how to improve their work because clear targets are set and staff frequently tell them how well they are doing. The school's system for tracking pupils' progress is exceptionally well organised. However, it is new and not all staff know how to use it properly, as yet.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are clearly focused on promoting pupils' personal development and well-being and on raising standards. The headteacher has been particularly effective in developing a staff team who share an enthusiasm for their work based on his clear vision for the future. Staff and pupils acknowledge many positive changes in the school since his appointment two years ago. Staff morale is high and they are excited about the new initiatives. Staff are involved in the developments and have already recognised the success that several changes have brought. The new senior management team has introduced effective structures so that communication is good throughout the school and the day-to-day running of the school is good. Governors carry out their work diligently and are very supportive of the school. Alongside staff, they check the quality of the school's work and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The school works well with parents who in return are very positive about the school. Parents and pupils are pleased with the way their views are taken into account and acted upon. Although much has been achieved, there is still work to do to embed improvements, such as aspects of the provision in the Reception class.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

29 September 2006 Dear Children Copford Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School, School Road, Copford, Colchester, Essex CO6 1BX As you know, your school was recently inspected and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. Firstly, it was lovely to meet you and thank you for making us feel so welcome. We enjoyed talking with you and finding out about the work you have done and the activities you are involved with. It is clear that your school has improved over the past two years. This is because you have new buildings and because Mr Bome, staff and governors are all working very hard together to make sure your experiences in lessons, at playtimes and after school are really good. It is also because you have good ideas on ways in which the school can improve. We were impressed with your behaviour, the way you talk with and listen to each other and your eagerness to do well in lessons. Very well done and keep it up! We spoke with a large number of you at different times and were very pleased to hear from you and your parents how much you enjoy school and that you are keen to learn. We noted the good progress you make in English, mathematics and science and that the quality of your work is especially high in English. Physical education and sport are very popular and together with the good food you eat at lunchtime and the encouragement to eat healthily we understand why your school was given an Advanced Healthy School award. You also said that you feel safe at school and that there was always an adult you feel comfortable talking to if you had problems or were worried about something. We know that you do well in your learning of mathematics, but we also know that some of you could do even better than you do at the moment. We also thought that the Reception children needed to learn more outside the classroom and what they learn could be better checked. It is very pleasing for us to see that all the adults who work in your school feel very strongly that your already good school could become even better. We hope that you continue to enjoy going to school, and as a result of what we have seen we feel confident that the school will continue to improve. We wish you all well for the future. George Wallace Lead inspector