

Cowley St Laurence CE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117709
Local Authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	290904
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Thrusell

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	367
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Steve Hardwicke
Headteacher	Mrs Maureen Atkinson (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Worcester Road Cowley UB8 3TH
Telephone number	01895 671966
Fax number	01895 231288

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a large primary school, established two years ago with the amalgamation of adjoining infant and junior schools. There is currently an acting headteacher. The school serves a fairly deprived area, with a higher than average proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Cowley St Laurence is a satisfactory school. It has some good features. Prior to the merger, the junior school lacked established leadership and management, which was detrimental to the progress made by pupils. Since the merger, there have been further unforeseen changes in leadership. Consequently, some parents have expressed concern over the stability of leadership and management. Nevertheless, the acting headteacher, well supported by her assistants, has quickly and accurately identified where the school needs to improve, and taken effective action. During this time of change the school has maintained a high level of care for its pupils.

Learning mentors have been instrumental in supporting pupils with social and behavioural difficulties and the school has reviewed its behaviour policy. As a result, pupils' behaviour has started to improve. Better classroom management has helped to raise the quality of teaching and learning, although it remains satisfactory overall. Good links with outside agencies and the growing support of parents have further helped to ensure pupils' well-being.

The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are now good. The staff here work well together as a team. Greater attention to planning and record keeping now ensures that children make good progress in the different areas of learning from well below average starting points in the Nursery. This good progress continues in Key Stage 1 where teaching is good and at times outstanding. By Year 2, standards are now above average in reading, writing and mathematics. A focus on speaking and listening has helped pupils to develop their thinking skills, clarify their thoughts for writing and improve their reading comprehension, so raising standards. Action to raise achievement and standards at Key Stage 2, where teaching is inconsistent, has been much slower in past years. By Year 6, standards overall are below average and progress is satisfactory overall. From their starting points in Year 3, pupils make satisfactory progress in English. Some headway has recently been made in mathematics, enabling pupils to make up some lost ground. There is now better planning for individual needs, based on assessment; pupils have more opportunities to apply their skills to problem solving. As a result, pupils in Years 4 to 6 are now making good progress in mathematics. The school plans to make similar good use of assessment in other subjects in order to raise achievement and standards at Key Stage 2.

Pupils enjoy school, particularly when actively involved in lessons. They enjoy the creative opportunities provided by the school's good and lively curriculum, especially in art, design and technology and physical education (PE). All benefit from the opportunities to take part in assemblies and drama productions throughout the year. Most pupils have taken healthy lifestyles seriously. Recent successes have been the breakfast club and the healthy break time snacks prepared and served by parents.

Given the success of recent actions to raise standards, the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 by making full use of assessment information to track and monitor pupils' progress, so that all do as well as possible.
- Raise the quality and consistency of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 so that it reflects the school's best practice.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards by Year 6 are below average and achievement is satisfactory overall. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. By the end of Reception, a high proportion are well on the way to achieving the learning goals expected at this age. Children continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1. The latest assessments at the end of Year 2 show that standards have continued to rise and are above average. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall but is not consistent. Records show that most pupils make satisfactory progress in English. Recent work to raise standards in mathematics is bearing fruit, with the result that pupils make satisfactory progress in Year 3 and good progress in Years 4 to 6. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English make similar progress to their classmates, due to the additional, well targeted support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well being are satisfactory. Foundation stage children make good gains in personal development. Attendance is below average, despite the school using a range of strategies for improving this. Good attendance at the breakfast club has had a positive impact on attendance, and adds to pupils' good understanding of healthy lifestyles. Pupils enjoy exercise through the PE curriculum and improved opportunities for playtime games. The school council is very proud of its link with the parent teacher association that has provided exciting playground equipment. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. A very small minority of pupils fail to engage in their learning and occasionally disrupt the learning of others. Pupils said 'Some children are immature and spoil our lessons'. Exclusions have declined since the school successfully made use of learning mentors to support more vulnerable pupils in school. Most pupils feel safe at school although a small proportion of pupils and their parents are concerned about bullying, which the school is addressing. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils explore their feelings through reflection in assemblies and in class. They understand right from wrong and relationships are generally good. Pupils who find it hard to make friends can be part of the Pyramid Club run by learning mentors. Given pupils' satisfactory progress in acquiring both academic and personal skills, they are adequately prepared for their future life and learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory. They are good in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. Here, teachers make particularly good use of assessment information to plan what pupils need to learn next; probing questions help pupils to develop thinking and problem solving skills. Throughout the school, lessons have clear success criteria. 'Must', 'should' and 'could' statements help pupils to see for themselves how well they are doing. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together as a team. In some lessons, however, teaching assistants could

take a more active role throughout in supporting pupils in their learning. Most teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour. However, the activities, particularly for older pupils, do not always fully engage and motivate them. Some tend to lose focus, especially when there is too much direction by the teacher. Marking is inconsistent. It does not always give sufficient comments to tell pupils how well they have done or how they could improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good. A senior leadership review has helped to improve its match to pupils' interests and aptitudes. A whole school project on personal development is helping to promote pupils' social and emotional awareness. English and mathematics are a focus of the curriculum. There are well planned opportunities for pupils to use and develop their literacy skills in different subjects, often with dance or drama as a focus. The development of information and communication technology (ICT) had been hampered by a lack of equipment. Governors' involvement, however, has vastly improved the situation, with the result that the school is now able to provide a full ICT curriculum. The Foundation Stage curriculum is exciting and boosts children's self-esteem, independence and decision making. Pupils have many opportunities for sport, which encourage them to be physically active. A good range of visits and visitors helps to bring learning to life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support of pupils are good. The school has a strong commitment to caring, which is reflected in the good arrangements for safeguarding pupils. Regular checks are made to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. Good support for vulnerable pupils, those with learning difficulties and those who have limited English, enables them to achieve as well as their classmates. Learning mentors effectively support specific pupils, so diminishing incidents of difficult behaviour and enabling these pupils to be more fully included in school life. Assessment procedures have quickly developed. The newly introduced assessment cycle, based on the good practice established in Key Stage 1, now provides regular information with which to monitor and track pupils' progress throughout the school. This information is being used well to plan challenging work in mathematics in Key Stage 2, but this practice has yet to be fully extended to English and science. Targets are set for pupils to aim for. Pupils, particularly in younger classes, know that these are designed to help them improve their work, and are keen to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The acting headteacher and senior leaders have effectively monitored the school's performance and identified where improvements need to be made. Regular monitoring of teaching has helped to improve its overall quality. The school knows what constitutes effective teaching and is working to bring about further improvements in its quality and consistency. The role of subject leaders is developing. They do not yet have a sufficiently clear picture of the provision in their areas throughout both key stages of the amalgamated schools. Full attention is given to the needs of more vulnerable pupils which underpins the school's commitment to inclusion. Governors are supportive of the school's work,

but recognise that their own monitoring role must be developed further. Following the amalgamation, some policies and documents relating specifically to the new school have yet to be fully finalised. Parents are encouraged to take a full part in the life of the school and in their children's learning, through opportunities such as the 'Keeping up with the children' course.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

10 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cowley St Laurence CE Primary School, Cowley, UB8 3TH

I am writing to let you know what we found when we visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke to many of you during our visit and you were always interesting to talk to, polite and helpful. You spoke enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things you take part in. Cowley St Laurence is a satisfactory school and has some good features.

We liked these things the most.

- Children in the Nursery and Reception get a good start to their time in school.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 work particularly hard.
- The school makes sure that you are safe and well looked after.
- The school gives good support to those who find learning or behaviour difficult.
- You enjoy school and are all keen to keep fit and eat the right things. Those playtime snacks look wonderful.
- There are many extra things that the school provides for your interest and enjoyment. I hope the 'Stars in Your Eyes' show goes well.
- Your acting headteacher is doing a good job.

We have asked the school to work on these things now. In Key Stage 2, work in mathematics is starting to get better. You need to continue to work at this and also to improve your English and science. Teachers can help you in this by looking at how well you are doing and carefully planning what you each need to learn next. They need to ensure that all lessons are enjoyable, but also challenge each of you to do your very best.

We did enjoy visiting your school and watching you learn.

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector