

Cosgrove Village Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121811
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	292226
Inspection date	10 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Ted Wheatley

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	49
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Norman Rackham
Headteacher	Elizabeth Behrens
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2002
School address	3 Bridge Road Cosgrove Milton Keynes MK19 7JH
Telephone number	01908 562641
Fax number	01908 562641

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Introduction

One Additional Inspector carried out the inspection.

Description of the school

This is a small school. Pupils come from the local village and from nearby villages, and a small number come from Milton Keynes. Most are from White British backgrounds. A very small number of pupils speak English as an additional language and receive support. A significant minority of pupils leave or join the school during the year. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average and it varies from year to year.

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 and improving school. It has some outstanding features. The great majority of parents are pleased that their children are here and most value the closeness and good personal contacts brought about by small classes. A typical comment, summing up many parents' feelings, is 'Cosgrove is a lovely, friendly school, where the parents are encouraged to speak to the staff about any concerns they may have. We are always well informed by newsletters.' Standards are broadly average but vary from year to year because year groups are small and have different strengths. However, most pupils achieve well whatever their prior attainment or ethnic background, although occasionally higher attainers do not do as well as they could. Those pupils joining the school during the year also achieve well because of the careful attention and support they receive. The small numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups receive effective support and soon join in all class activities fully. Achievement is improving in all subjects, at a noticeably faster rate in writing where there have been past weaknesses. The headteacher drives improvement. Her evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate. Strategies to deal with the areas of relative underachievement are successful, although the impact for higher attainers is not yet fully evident. Teachers plan lessons well to deal with the wide range of pupils in their classes and for the most part provide challenging, interesting work that catches pupils' attention and encourages them to work hard. They provide many opportunities for pupils to discuss their own ideas and build confidence in their own abilities. However, occasionally teachers allow too little time for pupils to work independently and do not challenge higher attainers enough. The curriculum is enriching with a wide range of visits and visitors that make work interesting and relevant to pupils. The school supports a wide range of sports, art, music and clubs out of school time. The curriculum is improving with increasing links between subjects, though this is at an early stage. Pupils have excellent attitudes to work and behave exceptionally well. Their attendance is good and they are extremely considerate and helpful to each other. For example, they make sure that other pupils are not alone in the playground and go out of their way to make new pupils feel welcome. They have an excellent grasp of the importance of staying healthy. They eat sensibly and all take part in physical activities. Pupils take responsibilities seriously and treat the election of class members to the school council maturely. They are involved effectively in activities in the local community. The school has first class partnerships with external agencies that contribute significantly to the excellent care and support provided for pupils and, where necessary, their families. Safeguarding procedures are thorough and secure. Academic guidance is exceptionally good, and all pupils have targets which are regularly reviewed, and guidance on how to reach them.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle into the daily routines of the Reception class rapidly because there are effective links with homes. Teaching and support are sensitive and focussed on helping children make progress in all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum, and especially in literacy skills. Curriculum planning is good and recent improvements to the outdoor area mean that children experience all areas of learning fully. Children enter the school with levels of skill and knowledge below those expected. They make good progress overall and most reach the expected levels in the goals set, with the exception of literacy skills. Here, skills are below average, but the improved focus on helping children speak and write is leading to an increasing pace of achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement by ensuring that work is always challenging, especially for the most able pupils,
- Ensure there are enough planned opportunities for pupils to work independently.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well, often from very low starting points. Standards are broadly average and a significant minority of pupils reach above average standards. Standards have improved recently, particularly in writing, where there has been a focus on extended writing and sentence structure. However, occasionally, the highest attainers do not do quite as well as they could, as there are too few opportunities for independent work. Pupils speak and read well. Their mathematical problem solving and investigative science skills are sound, and improved since the previous inspection. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well. Those pupils who join the school during the year make good progress because of the sensitive way in which support and help is given to settle into the school. Standards in the Reception class are broadly average and children make good progress, although their literacy skills are below average on entry to Year 1.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils really enjoy school. Their behaviour and attitudes to work and all aspects of school life are excellent. They behave safely and are well aware of how to avoid potential dangers. Pupils are exceptionally kind and considerate towards each other, and especially to new pupils. They feel safe and readily turn to adults for help if they need it. They have an excellent grasp of the importance of healthy lifestyles and all pupils take part in at least one physical activity. Almost all eat healthily. They take an active part in the local community and have close links with the church. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and they have a good understanding of the beliefs and values of other cultures in Britain. They take on responsibilities willingly and have a very good understanding of democratic processes through electing school council members. They are well prepared for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are well prepared and organised to take account of the wide range of pupils' abilities and ages in each class. Teachers provide a range of activities that engage and interest pupils and, while work is usually challenging, occasionally the most able pupils receive insufficient stretch. In most lessons, teachers ask questions and encourage discussion so that pupils express their ideas confidently and develop good speaking and listening skills. However, teachers sometimes speak for too long themselves and limit the time that pupils have for working independently. Marking, with a few exceptions, is generally good, giving pupils a clear idea of how well they are doing and how to improve their work. The support provided for pupils with learning difficulties, or who have recently arrived at the school, is good and helps pupils learn well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the learning needs of pupils and enriched by a wide range of trips and activities in school. For example, pupils visit museums, experience a canal barge trip, visit a safari park, see African drumming, and go to concerts and art exhibitions. Displays around the school are vibrant and exciting and add an extra element of enrichment for pupils. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good and improved significantly since the previous inspection. The programme of personal, social and health education is effective and helps pupils develop high levels of self-esteem. The range of out-of-school activities is very good, and the level of participation is impressive. Pupils' initiated some activities, for example, dance and high-five netball. Links between subjects are broadly satisfactory. Despite some parents' concern about physical education taking place in the village hall, the school manages this well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Excellent relationships are the basis for the school's exceptional care and support, and pupils' outstanding personal development. Relationships with families are extremely close. Parents are extremely well informed and, typically, feel that staff are 'always on hand to talk with if you have any concerns'. The support for pupils with emotional or social difficulties and those with learning difficulties is very good; external agencies are used to excellent effect where further expertise is required. The school is safe and secure. Academic guidance is very good. Staff review pupils' academic targets regularly and the great majority know what their targets are and how to reach them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides very good leadership and gives clear direction for how the school should improve. Staff give effective support and all those in management positions carry out their responsibilities well. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school has already started with strategies to improve writing skills and to make sure the most able pupils always receive sufficient challenge. The impact is evident in better standards of writing, but is more slowly having a visible effect on the achievement of the most able pupils. Governors are supportive and played a significant role in improving the quality of ICT provision. Governors challenge the school and new governors are rapidly gaining the experience and expertise they need to contribute to school improvement. The school has addressed previous inspection issues and the school in a good position to improve further.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	1

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

- 11 July 2008 Dear Pupils Cosgrove Village Primary School, Milton Keynes, MK19 7JH Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school. I spoke to several of you in meetings and around school, and you told me a lot about how much you enjoy being there and what your school is like. You were really helpful. These are the main things I found out about your school.
 - You are at a good and improving school where teaching is good and you make good progress.
 - The headteacher knows what the school needs to do to be even better and she and all staff are working hard to make that happen.
 - The school is a very safe place and relationships between staff and you, and your families, are outstanding.
 - Your behaviour and attitudes are excellent! You treat each other kindly and with consideration for their feelings.
 - You enjoy school, your attendance is good and you join in all activities enthusiastically.
 - You know it is important to have a healthy lifestyle. All of you take part in at least one physical activity, and you eat healthily most of the time. To improve things further, I have asked the school to:
 - improve your achievement by making sure that work is always challenging, especially for the most able of you, and that there are enough opportunities for you to work by yourselves. You can help. If you think you could do better than you do, ask an adult to tell you how.
- With best wishes
Yours sincerely
Ted Wheatley
Lead inspector

11 July 2008



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