

Cookham Dean CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109960
Local Authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	310156
Inspection date	13 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Graham Lee

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Elizabeth Hillier
Headteacher	Mrs Penny Thompson
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 2004
School address	Bigfrith Lane Cookham Dean Maidenhead SL6 9PH
Telephone number	01628 482734
Fax number	01628 476804

Age group	5-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- The standards and achievement of pupils.
- How well the most able pupils achieve in writing.
- The consistency of teaching throughout the school.
- Provision for the Foundation children.
- The strengths of personal development and care, guidance and support.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with senior staff, governors, pupils and parents, school documentation and observation of lessons and other features of the school's work. In addition, the inspector analysed questionnaires returned by parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail.

Description of the school

The school serves an advantaged rural community. Most pupils are of White, British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well below average. Children join the school in the term after their fifth birthdays. There are currently 11 children of Reception age. These children started school in January 2008 and work alongside pupils in Year 1. Cookham Dean is recognised as a Healthy School and has gained an Activemark Plus award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'Cookham Dean is a little gem', commented one parent, summing up the views of many. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of parents and pupils are right to be proud of the school because it is outstanding. Governors and many parents correctly believe that the exceptional leadership of the headteacher lies at the heart of its success. The school has a warm and welcoming atmosphere based on its strong Christian ethos. It cares extremely well for its pupils and provides them with a rich range of experiences during their time in the school. It also has high expectations of their academic achievement. Pupils thrive in this supportive environment. They are extremely friendly and polite and most are buzzing with enthusiasm for all that the school has to offer. They feel safe and secure and are generally very considerate of one another. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and achieve exceptionally well. They are extremely well prepared for secondary school and the world beyond.

From their generally good starting points, pupils of all abilities make very good progress to reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are exceptionally high. In 2007, for example, the vast majority of Year 6 pupils reached the highest level possible for their age. All reached the expected level, including some pupils with specific learning difficulties. This illustrates the very good progress these pupils had made during their time in the school because of the exceptionally good support they receive from teachers and a team of highly skilled teaching assistants. Pupils are also developing very good skills in information and communications technology, an area that is much improved from the last inspection.

Pupils are doing so well because of their enthusiasm for learning, good teaching in relatively small classes and very good systems to track their progress. These ensure that those who are in danger of falling behind are given the extra help they need at an early stage. They are also used to set challenging targets for all learners, who are clear that these 'show you what you need to work harder on.' Teachers have good relationships with their classes and 'engage with the pupils and excite them in their learning' as one parent put it. There are examples of very strong teaching throughout the school although school leaders are aware that it is not entirely consistent in Key Stage 2, where occasionally activities are not sufficiently challenging to allow all pupils to achieve as well as they might. This is being addressed through rigorous monitoring and support.

One of the reasons pupils enjoy their education so much is the wide range of additional activities that many of them attend. The school works in close partnership with other local schools and a range of sports clubs to provide high quality activities. On the day of the inspection, for example pupils were enjoying kickboxing before school and were preparing for their participation in a dance festival in the afternoon! All of these activities contribute to pupils' exceptionally good understanding of the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle. The curriculum is also enriched through French and the many visits, visitors and themed weeks, which help bring it to life. Pupils are also very aware of environmental issues and one of the 'ECO Warriors' explained how they ensure that lights are switched off and that goal posts are moved regularly in order to regenerate the grass. The school promotes community cohesion very effectively in a rural setting through its strong links with local schools, and its considerable involvement with the church and the village. Pupils are very well prepared for life in a diverse society through its close links with a school in Maidenhead.

The headteacher is well supported by a very able deputy and dedicated staff. They work effectively as a team and all manage a number of responsibilities successfully. Together they have a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses through rigorous monitoring and evaluation. They are not complacent and are relentless in striving for improvement when required. For example, in response to a dip in standards in writing in 2006, a number of strategies were put in place to improve pupils' motivation to write. This has resulted in accelerated progress and higher standards in 2007. Governors are committed and knowledgeable and offer a good balance of support and challenge to school leaders. They have been very successful in managing their resources imaginatively in order to maintain the high quality of education. Issues from the last inspection have been addressed and exceptionally high standards have been maintained. Together with the drive and determination of all associated with Cookham Dean, this indicates that the school is in an outstanding position to improve ever further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children spend one or two terms in the Reception group, depending on their age. They begin school with skills and understanding that are generally well above those of the typical five year old. In the short time they are in Reception they make good progress and many exceed the goals set for children of their age by the time they enter Year 1. For part of the day, they work alongside children in Year 1. The curriculum is planned carefully so that activities meet the needs of the youngest children. At other times they work in the designated Foundation area with a teaching assistant or nursery nurse, under the supervision of the class teacher. Children's progress is assessed closely and the provision is managed effectively by the deputy headteacher. The facilities in the Foundation area have improved greatly since the last inspection, both inside and out. However, the outdoor area is not covered, which means that it not yet used to its full potential to develop children's skills and understanding in all areas of learning. School leaders are well aware of this and have plans to address it in the near future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching is of a consistently high standard in Key Stage 2 and challenges pupils to achieve as well as they can in every lesson.
- Develop the use of the outdoor area in Foundation to promote children's skills and understanding in all areas of learning.

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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?	1
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	1

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

28 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cookham Dean CofE Primary School, Maidenhead, SL6 9PH

You may remember that I came to your school recently. I am writing to thank you all for being so friendly and helpful. I really enjoyed my day at Cookham Dean and I thought you would like to know what I found out.

You and most of your parents are right to be proud of the school because it provides you with an outstanding education. You told me how much you enjoy all aspects of school life and particularly the many opportunities you have to take part in sport and other activities. I was impressed with the kick boxing and I hope the dance festival went well.

I was really impressed by your politeness and excellent behaviour and your enthusiasm in lessons. Well done! You told me how your teachers make lessons interesting and how they help you if you don't understand. You make very good progress as you move through the school. By the time you leave you are reaching very high standards in English, mathematics and science and are very well prepared for secondary education.

Your headteacher is an outstanding leader who gets lots of help from the staff and governors. They make sure that you are all safe and well cared for. Together, they have done a lot to improve the school and are determined to make it even better. I have asked them to do a couple of things that I think might help.

- I agree with you that your teachers are doing a very good job. I have asked the school to make sure that teaching is always of a high standard in Key Stage 2 so that you can all do as well as you can.
- The Foundation area needs to be improved even more so that the youngest children have a chance to make better use of the outdoor facilities. Your headteacher is making sure that this happens soon.

Best of luck to you all

Yours truly

Graham Lee

Lead Inspector