

# Codicote Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117392
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326595
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Georgie Beasley

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	228
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Debbie Williamson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Elizabeth Pollard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 April 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Meadow Way Codicote Hitchin Hertfordshire SG4 8YL

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 June 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average size school draws most pupils from Codicote village. A small number come from surrounding areas. Nearly all pupils are White British. Socio-economic factors are very positive. There are 51 children in the Nursery and Reception classes which make up the Early Years Foundation Stage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who speak English in addition to another language are below average. The governors run an after school care club for 26 pupils.

The school has a Healthy School Award, Basic Skills Award, Active Mark Gold, Hertfordshire Quality Standard for Early Years, Bronze Eco Award, Silver Travel Plan and FA Charter Mark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. The high levels of care and welfare, coupled with excellent relationships with staff and each other, ensure that pupils feel safe. Every member of staff embraces a very strong vision for how to achieve the highest possible success for every pupil. Since the previous inspection, the school has created an exciting curriculum and this, coupled with excellent teaching, ensures that pupils enjoy school immensely and learn constantly throughout the day. Every pupil's contribution is valued. They are given the freedom to grow as individuals and to build on their own talents. As a result, all pupils achieve exceptionally well and are extremely well prepared for their next stages in life. Pupils are fully involved in assessing their own and each other's work and so have an astute understanding of how well they are doing and how to improve further. Their self-confidence enables them to express their ideas and views, and to challenge themselves and each other to do even better, even when the work is of a high level of difficulty. They are proud of their personal and academic achievements and value the many opportunities to share these with parents and friends.

The school has established rigorous assessment procedures that guide teaching and learning exceptionally well. Teachers assess pupils' learning constantly. Subsequent discussions with the headteacher and subject leaders about progress hold teachers to account for pupils' achievement. Teachers and teaching assistants give immediate support to any pupil or group of pupils whose progress slows. This ensures that progress resumes at a fast enough pace for every pupil to reach their very challenging targets. As a result, progress is excellent. Standards continue to rise and are high at the end of Year 6 in reading, mathematics and science. Writing standards are above average at the end of Year 6. While the school's strategies to improve pupils' writing are resulting in higher standards in most year groups, in many lessons they still receive too much teacher guidance on how to structure their writing.

The school monitors pupils' personal and emotional development exceptionally well and, in response to the information gained, targets specific aspects. Consequently, pupils' behaviour, their attitudes to school and respect for themselves and each other are outstanding. Pupils show great respect for the environment and know how important it is to keep themselves and each other fit, healthy and safe. They make an excellent contribution to the school and village communities. The rich curriculum ensures pupils have an excellent understanding of their own cultures. Their knowledge and understanding of people's lives and the cultures in the wider world are good but not of the same consistent high quality as other aspects.

The headteacher gives exceptional leadership and models her extremely high expectations every day. Through rigorous and robust monitoring she knows exactly how well pupils are progressing in their academic learning and personal development. She is fair but forthright with teachers and parents if progress or attendance appears to slip. Governors and every member of staff are adamant that 'the children are at the centre of everything the school does'. They believe it to be their job to make sure that all pupils do as well as they can. This dedication and commitment, coupled with high skill levels, provide excellent capacity to improve. Parents and the local community are viewed as important partners in the pupils' education. As a result, the school is held in high regard.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

Children generally start in the Nursery with levels of knowledge and understanding which are above those expected nationally, although this varies from year to year. In some years, aspects of speaking, reading and writing and personal development are average. The excellent curriculum and teaching in Nursery and Reception quickly closes any gaps in children's early learning skills. A very strong focus on developing the children's personal, social and emotional skills ensures that secure foundations for learning are laid. At all times children's safety and well-being and their independence are promoted outstandingly well. All children make excellent progress and leave the Reception class with extremely good attitudes to learning, the ability to sustain interest in tasks for long periods of time and attainment which is mostly above expected levels in all areas of learning.

Leadership shows an excellent understanding of child development and focuses on a high quality curriculum. Adults enhance children's learning through a well-balanced range of activities. Children have numerous opportunities to suggest or adapt activities and so find things out for themselves. Adults assess children's skills and knowledge regularly. They use the information to ensure activities are always being adapted and extra support provided where necessary to meet individual needs. Inclusion of children who are very able or who experience difficulties with their learning is outstanding. There is excellent communication with parents and carers who are very well informed of their child's welfare and are delighted with the excellent progress they make.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils more opportunities to write independently in response to a varied range of stimuli.
- Check formally pupils' learning about wider world communities and cultures to ensure the school's rich curriculum is as effective as possible.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

Attainment on entry into Year 1 varies each year depending on the numbers, gender mix and ages of pupils in each year group. It is typically above average. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make excellent progress from their starting points in reading and mathematics and reach high standards as a result. They make good progress in writing and reach above average standards in this aspect of their literacy. Pupils sustain their excellent progress in Years 3 to 6. Standards are exceptionally high at the end of Year 6 in reading, mathematics and science. The school acted quickly to implement effective improvement strategies when standards in writing fell last year. As a result, standards in writing in all year groups have improved this year and are well above average at the end of Year 6. Pupils make excellent progress in developing their computer skills and, by the time they leave the school, exceed expected levels of achievement. Due to outstanding teaching of a lively stimulating curriculum, the quality of pupils' work in other subjects is high.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils behave extremely well and have outstanding attitudes to learning. Lessons in all year groups exude happiness and enjoyment of learning so that pupils of all abilities thrive

academically, socially and emotionally. One pupil, expressing the view of many, said 'This is a fantastic school and our teachers are brilliant'. Older pupils thoroughly enjoy taking on additional responsibilities such as managing the school office at break times and ensuring younger children are safe and happy at playtimes. All pupils have an exceptional knowledge of how to stay safe and of the importance of regular exercise and a balanced, healthy diet. The 'pupil voice' is exceptionally effective and has led to a number of developments, including an extensive range of outdoor play equipment and 'Fun Time Friday'.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is excellent. Pupils' lively contribution to school activities, such as Djembe drumming and Morris and maypole dancing, ensures that pupils have a good knowledge, understanding and respect of the beliefs and cultures in this country and the wider world communities. High quality literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, exceptional social skills, willingness to take responsibility and excellent ability to work together means pupils are extremely well prepared for secondary school and for the world of work. Attendance is good, but is reduced by the number of holidays taken during term time.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teachers have extremely high expectations of pupils' achievement and constantly challenge them to think about their learning. When starting new topics, pupils decide what they already know and what they want to find out. This gives them excellent ownership of their learning. Nearly all lessons are fun because teachers think very carefully about how they can best motivate pupils' interest and fully involve them all in lessons. As a result, teaching activities fully meet the many different ways that pupils prefer to learn. Pupils say that they 'love learning because they love what they learn'. Opportunities to assess their own and others' work gives pupils a sharp and independent understanding of their own learning and how to improve. Positive and developmental feedback from adults and classmates and the use of detailed checklists support learning exceedingly well. Teachers know their pupils very well and so plan learning that meets the full range of needs in lessons. They sometimes give pupils too much guidance about their writing and so limit opportunities for them to show what they can do independently.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

Pupils greatly enjoy the extensive range of exciting learning opportunities and experiences. Staff and pupils' ideas are incorporated into interesting topics that link learning across a number of subjects. As a result, learning is relevant and meaningful and pupils practise key skills in different contexts. 'WOW!' days excite the pupils and bring learning to life, whether it be a real trip to the 'Forest School', a virtual trip to Kenya or fighting pretend knights on the playground. An after-school club and an extensive range of extra-curricular activities enrich pupils' learning extremely well. Assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons make an outstanding contribution to pupils' personal development. An excellent focus on caring for the environment has resulted in pupils' high levels of respect for each others' feelings, animal and plant welfare and the school grounds.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

The school has excellent procedures for tracking pupils' academic progress and their personal and emotional development. Teachers consistently give pupils encouragement and celebrate their successes. The high expectations and constant challenge to improve have become 'owned' by pupils themselves so that they consistently strive to do better. Arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe and secure fully meet current requirements. The school provides an exceptional level of care for all pupils in terms of promoting their emotional development from the Nursery upwards. Pupils are confident that if the school knows about any personal or academic problems it will always help find a solution. The inclusion and support for pupils who find learning difficult is excellent. The high levels of staffing mean that pupils are often taught in small groups or receive individual tuition. Arrangements for pupils transferring from and to different stages of learning are excellent and parents value this highly. They are especially pleased that the Nursery is so much a part of the main school.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

The headteacher articulates constantly and very clearly her extremely high expectations for staff, parents and pupils. She is a regular visitor to classes and so knows whether these are being met throughout the school. She knows the pupils and their families extremely well and ensures they are supported both personally and academically to reach the school's very challenging targets. The staff and governing body have comprehensive and rigorous procedures for evaluating whether their work is as effective as it should be. Subject leaders have high expectations of themselves. They constantly evaluate the curriculum and pupils' learning, and are always looking for ways to make the school even more exciting and successful. There are frequent formal and structured opportunities for teachers to share successes, discuss pupil progress and to identify school improvement needs. Governors and staff challenge each other to account for decisions. Consequently, the school targets its resources precisely to pupils' learning needs. The school has excellent partnerships with the local community members, groups and schools. These make a very strong contribution to pupils' learning experiences and academic and personal achievement. Effective partnerships with individual people and organisations in other countries support pupils' good understanding of world-wide communities and cultures.



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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	1

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	1
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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	1
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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Codicote CE Primary School, Codicote, SG4 8YL

Thank you very much for making me feel so welcome when I came with my colleague to inspect your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you all, visiting your classrooms and looking at the variety of work you have done. We were very impressed with your excellent behaviour and the way you worked so hard in lessons. It is clear that you care about yourselves and each other. You told us you had a great school and we agree with you. You should be very proud of yourselves.

Your school is outstanding because everyone works exceptionally hard to make sure you are as successful as you can be. Your headteacher and all of the staff are doing an excellent job to make sure you enjoy school. The way you challenge yourselves and each other to do your best in lessons helps you to achieve so well.

There are a couple of things we have asked your headteacher and teachers to do to make the school even better.

- To help you become more independent and better writers, we have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities to think of your own ideas and to remember how to organise your writing for yourselves.
- We want teachers to check that you really know about what happens in the different communities you study in the world. We think that you can remember what you have learnt with even more detail.

Please enjoy the rest of this school year. I wish you well for the future.

Yours faithfully

Georgina Beasley

Lead inspector