

Coughton CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125630
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	328368
Inspection date	6 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Don Mason

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	138
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Hatton
Headteacher	Margaret Thornton
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Coughton Lane Coughton Alcester B49 5HN
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

In this smaller than average school, almost all pupils are from White British families. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is extremely low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is for children in Reception who share a teacher with Year 1 pupils. The school is emerging from a period of considerable staffing disruption during which the deputy headteacher agreed to stand in as acting headteacher on several occasions. A newly appointed headteacher is to take up the post in September. The school has achieved Active Schools status and received the Healthy Schools' Award and the Eco Schools Silver Award.

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. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection, notably in teaching, pupil achievement and procedures for checking pupil progress. This is despite considerable staffing disruption in recent years. Whilst this uncertainty has inevitably caused some anxiety amongst parents, the great majority express strong support for the school, making such comments as: 'We are very pleased with our child's progress and happy in the knowledge that she enjoys school.' The pupils' good personal development reflects the positive attitudes and behaviour they display in class and the way they support each other in the playground. This is a consequence of the high-level pastoral care that pupils receive from teachers and other staff. It is enhanced by good curriculum enrichment, including residential visits, and a wide range of after-school clubs that are much enjoyed by pupils. The school council plays an important part in the life of the school ensuring that pupils feel their views are listened to and valued. They say that feel safe and secure in the school. Overall, pupils' contribution to the community is satisfactory.

Because cohorts are small, the skills that children display on entry to the school vary considerably from year to year. In 2008, they were above average but in 2007 they were average at best. The children make good progress and the great majority enter Year 1 with above average attainment. However, despite this, the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. This is because the expected requirements for this age group are not fully in place. Progress from Year 1 to Year 6 is good. Standards at the end of Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science. This represents good achievement. It is the result of good teaching and good curriculum provision. In addition, the school has put in place a comprehensive system to check the progress made by pupils and 'pupil progress meetings' are held each term between senior staff and class teachers to ensure that pupils are making appropriate progress towards their challenging targets. Those who are in danger of falling behind are provided with effective support. The same system is used to facilitate early identification of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These pupils make good progress because of the support they receive from well-qualified, conscientious teaching assistants. The involvement of two talented, higher-level teaching assistants allows the pupils to be taught English and mathematics in seven year groups, in the mornings, rather than in the five classes. This also helps to account for the improvement in standards since the last inspection. Standards in writing, however, are still relatively low when compared with other subjects. This is partly because pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write at length on topics that interest them, using the skills that they have been taught. The advice pupils are given about how to improve their work is no better than satisfactory. This restricts their progress, particularly in writing.

It is a tribute to the leadership skills of the acting headteacher and the teamwork of the staff that, despite the staffing disruption that has occurred, the school has successfully moved forward since the last inspection. The recent improvements leading to better achievement and standards indicate the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Good induction procedures and warm relationships ensure that children make good progress in their personal development and learning. Children work well together, taking turns and

helping each other when necessary. The direct teaching of the children is good, particularly in the mornings when Year 1 and Reception are split into their year groups. Activities are carefully planned to meet children's learning needs and adults use questioning effectively to encourage children to talk about their learning. The acting headteacher, who normally teaches this class, provides good day-to-day leadership and support for the temporary teacher. Very good attention is paid to promoting the welfare of the children. Notwithstanding the good progress made by the children, overall effectiveness is satisfactory because the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are not fully met. This is evident in the imbalance between adult-led activities and those that children choose for themselves, the limited opportunities for children to work and play outside and the fact that reception children spent their afternoons with Year 1 pupils following a relatively formal curriculum. The school has not carried out a review of provision to determine how the expected requirements might be implemented more fully.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the advice given to pupils about their achievements and what they need to do to improve their work, especially in writing.
- Carry out a review of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage to determine how the requirements for this age group might be implemented more effectively.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The national test results of recent years show that standards have been consistently above or well above average. In 2008, standards crossed into the exceptionally high category. This success was a result of improvements in teaching and, crucially, closer scrutiny of pupils' abilities and progress. Groups of pupils achieve equally well because those in danger of falling behind are identified early and provided with good support to help them achieve their challenging targets. The school has clear evidence to suggest that improvements in achievement are sustainable and that standards overall are well above average. Standards in writing are less secure. Whilst they improved in 2008, they are still lower than in other subjects. The teaching of writing skills has improved but the pupils have too few opportunities to write at length, or to practise their skills in writing for a purpose.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils' moral and social development is particularly strong. Clear guidelines, warm relationships and positive praise promote the pupils' good understanding of right and wrong and how to care for one another. However, the pupils' understanding of the world beyond their close-knit, village community and the understanding of the cultural diversity of the society in which they live is limited. Pupils' behaviour is good and attendance is well above average reflecting their enjoyment of school life. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, making healthy choices at lunchtime and taking enthusiastic part in the sporting opportunities available. Pupils' above-average standards in the basic skills and high levels of self-esteem and self-confidence ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. However further gains in their personal development are restricted because the pupils have too few opportunities to work on group activities which enable them to make decisions and put the skills they have learnt to practical use.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Most teaching is good, ensuring that pupils make good progress through the school. It continues to improve because teachers are checking their pupils' progress more frequently and using the information to plan activities that meet their learning needs. In addition, teachers use skilful questioning to engage pupils of all abilities and give them frequent opportunities to express their thinking. Teaching is confident because teachers have good subject knowledge. The pace of lessons is good and time is used well. There is usually a good balance between the time the teacher spends speaking to the whole class and the time pupils have to work on their activities. The two higher-level teaching assistants are given considerable teaching responsibility and make an important contribution to the improving standards and achievement. Whilst marking is congratulatory or tells the pupil that the learning objective for the lesson has been achieved, it does not provide enough advice about how the work can be improved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has a positive impact on the progress pupils make throughout the school. It is successful in promoting the basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). The curriculum is enriched well by visits to places of interest and regular themed days and weeks, which promote pupils' learning and enjoyment. For example, during the Ragley Hall day, pupils have opportunities to take part in activities such as pond dipping, bug hunting and building a shelter. A good range of well-attended after-school clubs involves debating, arts, country dancing and sports including cricket and rounders clubs run by the specialist physical education teacher. Lessons in personal, social, and health education and visits from outside agencies involved, for example, with road safety and fitness, promote the pupils' good understanding of healthy lifestyles. Although pupils make good progress overall, the school has not adapted its curriculum in any significant way to meet the needs of its considerable number of very able pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils are very well cared for in this secure, welcoming, inclusive learning environment but academic guidance is no better than satisfactory. The school has strong links with a variety of outside agencies that support pupils' personal development and well-being. For example, through the local authority's 'Treasure Project,' mentoring advice is provided for pupils experiencing difficulties. Parental involvement in school life is enhanced by regular curriculum information evenings and curriculum workshops. The requirements for safeguarding pupils are fully met. Policies to promote equality are secure and governors and parents are kept informed about their impact. Attendance is monitored carefully and parents are contacted promptly if the school has any concerns.

The purpose of lessons is always shared with pupils, and teachers talk to pupils about how to improve their work with the result that academic guidance is satisfactory. A number of strategies to improve the advice offered to pupils about their work have been trialled but none has been consolidated or implemented consistently throughout the school. Each half-term, targets are

set for English and mathematics. However, pupils sometimes find it difficult to recollect them or explain their purpose.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the school has improved since the last inspection from satisfactory to good due to the effective leadership of the acting headteacher, good support and advice from the local authority and the determination of all staff to do their best for the pupils in their care. This improvement is acknowledged by parents who express such views as: 'Given the difficult situation of having no consistent headteacher, the acting head, staff and students have coped amazingly well.' Standards and achievement are good because the school sets challenging targets and checks carefully to ensure that they are generally met. Senior staff know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. The subject leaders for English, mathematics and science support their colleagues in a variety of ways and have been involved in checking the quality of lessons. However, those for English and science are new to the role and are still getting to know the school. Governors are proud of the school and provide good support. They have high aspirations for the future and their aims and requirements when appointing the new headteacher were very clear. All involved recognise the need to consolidate recent improvements and develop the role of middle managers to ensure that the school continues to move forward. The school's contribution to community cohesion is strong locally but limited at the national and global level. It is satisfactory overall.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	3

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	3
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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

7 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Coughton C of E Primary School, Coughton, B49 5HN

My colleague and I really enjoyed our visit to inspect your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. We particularly enjoyed visiting your classrooms, seeing the work you were doing and talking to you about your school. We found that your school has improved since the last inspection and now provides you with a good education.

Things we found out about your school.

- You make good progress in your work and standards at the end of Year 6 are well above average.
- You behave very well in school. You get on well with your teachers and enjoy your lessons.
- You are making better progress because the teachers are checking your progress more often and making sure that the work they ask you to do meets your learning needs.
- The adults in school take very good care of you so that you feel safe and secure.

What we have asked your school to do now to improve further.

- Develop ways to tell you more about how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve your work, especially in writing.
- Look carefully at what is happening in the Reception class to make sure that the changes the Government has asked for are brought about.

You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard, behaving well and keeping up your very good attendance.

We would like to wish you all the very best of luck for the future.

Don Mason

Lead inspector