

Cotford St Luke Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133560
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	328708
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Jane Neech

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	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	270
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	Catherine Tindale
Headteacher	Alison Botarelli
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bethell Mead Cotford St Luke Taunton TA4 1HZ
Telephone number	01823 430831
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Cotford St Luke Primary School is of average size. The school and its local community are relatively new and continue to expand. Families move to this new village from other parts of the country and the school draws from a mix of private and rented homes. The majority of pupils come from the Fledglings Early Years Centre, which is situated on the site. The uptake of free schools meals is relatively low. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than the national average. Their needs mostly relate to moderate learning difficulties or behavioural and social problems. A small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Cotford St Luke Primary School is a good school. The school quite rightly feels proud of the route it has taken since it opened six years ago, and is now at the heart of a thriving local community. The school benefits from having the Fledglings Early Years Centre on its site, where children and families receive high quality care and support. Pupils throughout the school receive good pastoral support. Parents praise the school enthusiastically. As one parent wrote, 'My son enjoys school; he is challenged and is encouraged to have high expectations of himself.'

Happy pupils thrive personally and academically in this encouraging environment. Their good personal development and well-being are particularly evident in lessons, where they show warm affection and respect for each other. Pupils' positive attitudes make a significant contribution to their good progress across the school. However, there is less opportunity for pupils to contribute their opinions on school issues.

Pupils enter the school with skills and understanding that are broadly at the levels expected for their age. Transition arrangements from the Fledglings Early Years Centre are outstanding and the school supports the children well as they spread their wings in a seamless learning journey through the Reception classes. They also do well in Key Stages 1 and 2, making a particularly flying start in reading. As a result, by the time the pupils leave in Year 6, standards are above average and they have met the challenging targets set. Comprehensive tracking and analysis is securely in place. This has a positive impact on achievement by ensuring all pupils move forward in their learning and has had a particular impact on standards in mathematics, which have lagged behind those reached in English and science. Pupils are now making good progress in all three subjects. Timely interventions for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enable them to make good progress.

Teaching and learning are good. The successful teaching makes effective use of skilful questioning. Pupils respond confidently and enthusiastically as a result. Pupils can talk about their targets and there are good examples of marking which gives pupils an understanding of the next steps in their learning. However, not all marking shows the pupils clearly how to improve their work. The curriculum is inclusive and well planned, with good opportunities to enhance a wide range of skills. Pupils' involvement in the local community, for example through the local farmers' market, is good. However, there is less opportunity for pupils to become involved with other communities outside their locality. There is a wide range of clubs and the take-up from pupils is high, as is the level of enjoyment. Residential visits are well supported and enjoyed by pupils.

Leadership and management are good, with some strong features. One of these is a well-thought-out approach to school improvement, clearly identifying strengths and weaknesses. Senior leaders monitor performance well, leading to the setting of realistic and challenging targets which ensure pupils progress well. Governors are fully involved in the life of the school and hold it to account well. The school has made good progress since its last inspection. It has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. One of the many strong features is the way the Fledglings Early Years Centre and Reception classes work together. This joined-up

approach is focused well on children's individual needs, and as a result they make good progress. In the Fledglings Early Years Centre the relationship between the key worker and the child has a high priority and as a result, they play happily. Children flourish in this stimulating environment and readily select their own play activities inside or outside. However, some activities occasionally limit children's imagination because of the resources provided. The seamless transition from Fledglings to the Reception classes ensures children enjoy their learning. Special attention is given to children who have not attended Fledglings and are new to the Reception classes. Children's skills at the beginning of Reception are in line with the levels typically seen. At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage they reach standards that are broadly average overall, and have made a good start on reading skills. A range of learning experiences inside and outside supports children in making good progress. The school is aware of the restricted access to outside learning for one Reception class and has plans in place to rectify this. The continuity of learning from Reception to Key Stage 1 is planned carefully and pupils thrive as a result. The Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator has a good understanding of how young children learn and provides good direction. Consequently, the well-trained team has a clear view of the strengths and areas for development. Tracking systems, including attention to children's welfare, are thorough and, as a result, all adults know how children are progressing. The school responds to those children who need extra help by putting in appropriate support.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further develop marking, so that pupils of all ages understand the next steps in their learning and can improve their work.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness of the diversity of communities beyond their local community.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to express their views and be involved in decision making.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement overall is good. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in reading. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are above average overall and are exceptionally high in reading. The whole-school focus on reading has a positive impact on standards achieved. Consequently, results in the Key Stage 2 national tests in English continue to improve and they were above average in 2008 in both English and science. Results in mathematics were broadly average. Progress in mathematics has improved this year as a result of well-focused initiatives. A detailed tracking system shows that pupils currently are now making good progress in mathematics and are set to meet their challenging targets for the end of Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from timely intervention and effective support and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and a high number take part in the wide choice of extra-curricular activities. Attendance is good and this reflects pupils' enjoyment of school and their enthusiasm. Relationships are good so that pupils behave well and show respect for each other in lessons through willingly talking to each other about their work. The good level of supervision at playtimes makes pupils feel safe, because they know they are well looked after in a secure

environment. Pupils report they are confident to talk to staff if they have difficulties or concerns. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and pupils say these are rare. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies contribute to pupils' personal development well through activities such as greeting one another in sign language.

The school has successfully gained a Healthy School award. Pupils have good knowledge of healthy diets and the need for regular exercise. Pupils develop good skills for their future economic well-being through selling home-made cakes and biscuits at the local farmers' market. As a result, the school and local community benefit from and enjoy the good contribution pupils make. They are less secure in their awareness of different communities beyond their locality. Members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously and the opinion of pupils is sought, such as improvements to the Trim Trail. However, the wider pupil voice is not always fully represented in decisions made.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In the most effective lessons observed, pupils quickly responded to opportunities for collaborative and independent work. The commitment and enjoyment of pupils were seen in a poetry lesson where everyone contributed enthusiastically, leading to high quality work. A younger class were enthused to write a space report because the teacher took them on a pretend journey to Mars using dimmed lights and special effects! Good use of information and communication technology adds interest and pace to lessons and has a significant impact on progress, such as when younger pupils discussed right angles, displayed on an interactive whiteboard, in a mathematics lesson. Very good relationships help create a positive learning environment and ensure that pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations of behaviour and work. Targets are realistic and challenge all groups of pupils, including the more able. The contribution made by teaching assistants in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is effective so that they make good progress as a result. Early identification of pupils not making the expected progress ensures that interventions are timely and effective. While teachers mark and discuss work regularly with pupils, comments written in books do not always help pupils move on to the next steps in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The topic-based curriculum supports pupils' academic and personal development well. Careful monitoring of curricular planning ensures key skills are covered and statutory requirements are met. A strong focus on English, mathematics and information and communication technology provides pupils with good opportunities to develop their basic skills. Initiatives such as Athletics and Table Olympics have been particularly effective in improving speed and accuracy in mathematics calculations, especially when competing against teachers! Pupils say they enjoy the challenge and competition. Pupils who do not have computers at home benefit from the opportunity to practise computer skills in the lunchtime computer club. Pupils have the opportunity to learn Spanish and French and the school benefits from strong links with the local secondary school, which support the learning of French. Clubs and a Year 6 residential visit add to pupils' enjoyment and personal development. An interesting range of visits and visitors, such as storytellers and authors, extend learning beyond the classroom and inspire

pupils. However, there are few opportunities to visit and compare more urban areas of the country to pupils' own locality. The environmental area supports science well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is a strong element of the school. Intervention programmes successfully develop pupils' learning and raise their self-esteem. As a result of good teamwork by experienced staff, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from effective support. The school works well with outside agencies to support children and their families and this individual approach is valued by parents. The seamless partnership between the Fledglings Early Years Centre and the school is a strong feature of pastoral care, leading to a nurturing, child-centered environment. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and meet government requirements. Academic guidance is rigorous and systems to track progress are well used by teachers to inform next steps in learning. Challenging and realistic targets are set. Pupils know what their targets are and they are readily available for pupils to refer to. However, pupils are less secure in their awareness of how to work towards their targets by improving their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership team provide a clear direction to the school's work, resulting in good standards and achievement. Their accurate evaluation of the school's work identifies priorities leading to action, such as the whole-school focus on reading skills, that are based on the needs of all pupils, involving the views of governors and staff. The school looks after all its pupils well and is proactive in ensuring that their personal development and well-being are a high priority. Community cohesion is promoted well. Pupils benefit from good opportunities to be involved in the local area, such as involvement with local schools in sporting and fund-raising events, and internationally. However, there are fewer opportunities to learn about British communities beyond the local area. Governors provide a good balance of support and challenge. The governing body evaluates its own performance and the performance of the school closely. The governors have developed a structure with clearly defined roles centred on the 'Every Child Matters' agenda. Governors play a full part in the life of the school and hold it to account well. As one governor put it, 'The school is in the most secure position it has ever been for the future.'

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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?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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	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 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?	2

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

15 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cotford St Luke Primary School, Taunton TA4 1HZ

I am writing to thank you for making the inspection team feel so welcome in your school when we visited recently. I enjoyed meeting the black cat sitting on the visitors' book when I arrived! This is what we found out about you and the school.

We agree with you and your parents that your school is a friendly and caring school. We judged it to be good overall, which means that it does lots of things well. Here are some of the things that we particularly liked about Cotford St Luke Primary.

- You enjoy school, are enthusiastic and make good progress.
- You read very well, especially those of you in Key Stage 1.
- If you are new to school everyone helps you to be happy at school.
- You behave very well in school.
- Your headteacher knows you well and puts things in place to make sure you are making good progress at school.
- All staff work together to keep you safe and healthy so you feel confident in all that you do.
- You are learning good business skills by selling produce at the farmers' market.
- Many of you take part in clubs and sporting events.
- The governors are working hard with your headteacher to make the school even better.

We would like you to make even more progress in your learning, and have asked your teachers to work on three things. We have asked your teachers to give you clear and helpful hints when they are marking your work, so you have lots of opportunity to improve your work. We have asked the school to give you more opportunities to learn about other people in Britain and the different ways in which they live. We would also like you to have more chance to talk about the things you would like to see happening in school.

You can help to improve your school by continuing to work hard and make the most of the opportunities available. I am sure that you will.

Yours faithfully

Jane Neech

Lead inspector