

Cockwood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113194
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	338120
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Martin Kerly

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 of pupils on the school roll	73
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joy Taylor
Headteacher	Jessica Humphrey
Date of previous school inspection	6 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons, and held meetings with staff, governors and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documents, including the school's records of pupils' progress and its monitoring activities, school policies and notes of procedures, teachers' plans and 43 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- reasons why standards have fallen since the previous inspection and actions taken by the school to reverse this trend
- pupils' abilities when they join the school and their progress, especially in Years 3'6
- the quality of provision in order to meet the needs of all pupils in the mixed-age classes
- the balance between outstanding and good elements in pupils' personal development and the care, guidance and support they receive.

Information about the school

The school is much smaller than average, although numbers on roll are stable. There are three classes, each with pupils from three year groups. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage share a class with pupils in Years 1 and 2. Almost all the pupils are White British. The numbers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with a statement of special educational needs have increased significantly since the last inspection, when they were below average. They are now much greater than usually found in a school of this size. Almost all the teachers, including the headteacher, have been appointed since the last inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It has some outstanding elements and makes very imaginative use of its limited accommodation and site. Particular areas of excellence include the outstanding care, guidance and support provided for all the pupils by the entire staff team. Pupils feel exceptionally safe and secure in school, and have a highly developed awareness of the importance of leading healthy lifestyles. Pupils take on many responsibilities around the school with exceptional enthusiasm and diligence, frequently taking the initiative in helping out both in school and in the wider community. Parents appreciate these qualities, with unanimous support for most questions in responses to the inspectors' survey. 'My son has enjoyed his whole learning journey at this school' and, 'It's a very friendly and caring environment and she loves it,' reflected the pattern of comments received from parents.

Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6, having fluctuated considerably over time. This fluctuation is not uncommon in such a small school, where each pupil accounts for 10% of the group. However, the fall in academic standards since the last inspection is mainly a reflection of the considerable increase in those with special educational needs and/or disabilities joining the school, either on entry into the Early Years Foundation Stage or further up the school during that time. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is built on well throughout the school and pupils achieve well, especially those with special educational needs. Nevertheless a few of the more able pupils do not make progress as fast as they should, with relatively few pupils exceeding standards expected for their age. Teaching is consistently good and occasionally outstanding, with teachers and their assistants working strenuously to ensure the particularly wide range of abilities in the mixed-age classes are fully addressed. Nevertheless, at times parts of lessons and some activities are not sufficiently matched to this wide range, particularly for the older and/or more able pupils. The good curriculum is further enhanced by an excellent range of enriching experiences and opportunities, and the school has several awards in recognition of its innovative approach. The curriculum is particularly well adapted to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, but there has been less focus on provision for the more able pupils. The school has recognised that computers are not used to their full potential and that there is scope for making more use of emerging computer technologies to support both learning and teaching across all aspects of the curriculum.

The headteacher has established effective and robust systems for checking the school's performance, increasingly involving staff and governors. The school has a very accurate view of its performance and plans effectively in response to information gathered. There

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is a tangible commitment to maintaining existing strengths and raising standards and there is a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase by at least 10 percentage points the proportion of pupils working at higher levels and exceeding standards expected for their age in all classes by the summer of 2011 by:
- ensuring all teachers consistently make full use of assessment information to refine the match of work to the wide range of abilities in each class, particularly those who are more able
- strengthening the way the curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of more able pupils.
- Make more innovative use of new computer technologies by:
- improving staff expertise and
- increasing the opportunities for pupils to use computers to support their learning across the curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage and by those who join further up the school has declined since the last inspection and is frequently below average. Boys and girls make good progress in lessons and over time and achieve well. The rate of progress has accelerated in the last year. Pupils currently in Year 2 are on track to exceed national averages. A higher proportion than normal of the pupils in Year 6 is expected to reach the nationally expected Level 4 by the end of the year, but relatively few pupils across the school are working above national expectations for their age. In a small minority of lessons, the progress of more able pupils slows while teachers ensure that the less able pupils are keeping up. School records show that some older pupils are in the process of catching up, having made limited progress when they were in Year 4 as the youngest members of an exceptionally large class. This class structure has now changed and improved. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from frequent skilled support from the large team of teaching assistants. They make good, and sometimes excellent, progress and are fully included in all activities. Pupils clearly enjoy their work, listen attentively, respond keenly and collaborate well in small groups. This helps prepare them well for their next stage of education and adult life, although their basic literacy, numeracy and computer skills are average rather than good. Attendance is above average and pupils arrive promptly ready for 'wake and shake' exercise sessions.

Behaviour in all lessons is good, and sometimes it is exemplary, for example when in assembly watching intently a visitor from Zambia dance while dressed in traditional national costume. This, together with other experiences, strongly supports the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They have a good understanding of cultural diversity across the globe and are developing links with pupils in an urban

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British school. Although they cannot always resist sticky toffee pudding at lunchtime, pupils are exceptionally knowledgeable and thoughtful about how to stay healthy and are very keen to participate in physical education and sport. Given the very limited accommodation and site, the school has done exceptionally well to obtain the Activemark Award. Pupils' highly developed sense of care and support of one another in school, for example by being play leaders or school councillors, are features of the outstanding contribution they make to the community in school, and this is extended beyond school, for example by their recent initiative in raising £490 to buy a shelter box for an appeal.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

All the pupils are exceptionally well known to the staff and there are excellent and frequent links with parents. The school is particularly effective in its care, guidance and support of potentially vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It works very effectively with families and other professionals to see that the pupils' needs are met. Staff have undergone considerable extra training to enable them

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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to support specific pupils.

The new team of teachers has very quickly developed consistently good practice and effective partnerships with the experienced teaching assistants. Together they make imaginative use of the limited space, and all three classrooms are full of stimulating material and displays to help pupils with their learning and celebrate achievements. Teachers carefully plan activities for different years, and flexible grouping systems enable pupils to be moved between groups and classes regardless of age, helping ensure there is usually a good match to their particular needs. Imaginative activities with a wide range of teaching and learning styles maintain pupils' interest and motivation. Occasionally, lengthy whole-class explanations or summaries at the end mean that the more able pupils in particular are not fully challenged or usefully occupied. Teachers are good at assessing pupils' learning, helping the pupils to be clear about what it is they are learning and providing feedback on how they can improve. These are key features of the good learning in all three classes.

The school has a number of awards in recognition of the good curriculum, including Healthy Schools and the International School award. Frequent visits, visitors and special events make every day interesting. The school is considering how it can make even better use of computers in lessons and strengthen the opportunities for using new technologies across many aspects of the curriculum. Major progress has been made in developing a curriculum which ensures a progression of skills, links subjects to make them relevant to the pupils and responds to the interests of pupils in year groups where there are more boys than girls. The school is developing partnerships with local schools to provide special experiences for the most gifted and talented pupils but has not fully developed opportunities for the more able on a day-to-day basis.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides very clear and effective leadership, balancing professional rigour with care and compassion, ensuring a clear focus on both academic progress and personal development for all pupils. She has established efficient systems for tracking the progress of pupils and this information is used very well to set realistic yet challenging targets designed to raise standards. All teachers are involved in this process and the recent creation of a standards team is a good step in spreading the leadership responsibilities between the staff. This new team, combined with effective and

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well-informed governors, means the school is focused on continuous improvement and well placed to improve further. There have been several significant improvements to curriculum planning, and to the site and accommodation since the last inspection, providing additional spaces for working in and out of doors with small groups of pupils, and creating an exceptionally stimulating environment. Equal opportunities are promoted well and discrimination is not tolerated. Safeguarding procedures are implemented rigorously and sensitively, ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils at all times. The school works effectively to promote community cohesion locally and globally, with many links and activities, including pupils serving lunches for the Women's Institute and the school forging links with the local Polish Society.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Sensitive and careful induction arrangements, including home visits, enable children to settle quickly into their class alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2 who have already established classroom routines. 'It was invaluable for us and helped a great deal with my son settling into school life,' is how one parent described these visits. Children move confidently around the allocated areas, after just a month in school. They join in whole-class activities with the older pupils, such as playing number games, and play independently in and out of doors. Children make good progress from their wide range of starting points in all areas of learning and achieve well. They benefit from the skilled and well-qualified team of class teacher and two assistants, all of whom are involved in careful observations and assessments. These enable them to respond to the children's

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individual development needs, even though they share the room with older pupils whose needs, at times, have to take precedence. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage, in close partnership with the headteacher, has established a good balance of experiences for the children and works very effectively to minimise the constraints imposed by the difficult accommodation and limited outdoor provision.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The large majority of parents responded to the inspectors' questionnaire. Almost all the responses were positive, often with additional comments citing the support received, the way pupils new to the school had been made to feel welcome, and how well the school makes best use of its limited accommodation. Parents were unanimous in their support for the school in more than half the questions, including those about keeping their children safe, children enjoying school and parents being informed about their progress. This is a very clear message and inspectors found strong evidence to support these views. There was no clear pattern in the areas of least agreement identified by very small minorities.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cockwood Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 73 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	75	11	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	68	14	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	26	59	17	39	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	55	16	37	3	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	30	68	13	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	59	18	41	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	61	16	36	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	26	59	14	32	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	71	9	21	3	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	50	19	43	2	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	71	12	27	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	31	71	10	23	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	80	6	14	3	7	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cockwood Primary School, Exeter EX6 8RB

Thank you for welcoming us to your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you, seeing some of your work, spending time in lessons and walking around the school. You were very helpful in answering our questions. We are pleased you like your school. It is a good school and here are some of the highlights we found.

- You feel very safe and well cared for in school. Every one who works there takes exceptionally good care of you all and makes sure that those of you who have problems from time to time have the extra help you need. Your parents agree and are pleased you go to Cockwood School.
- Lots of you take on important jobs around the school, such as being councillors or play leaders. You are particularly thoughtful towards one another and those less fortunate than you are. We were particularly impressed by your recent decision to raise 490 for the appeal and the way you set about this.
- You make good progress in lessons in all three classes. Your teachers plan interesting things for you to learn about. You listen carefully and work hard, and the teaching assistants give lots of extra support to those of you who need it.
- Everyone, including the staff, governors and some of your parents, has worked exceptionally well to make the best possible use of the inside and outdoor areas of your school. You have more interesting things to do in your small school than in many schools, even those with more rooms and much bigger playgrounds.
- Your headteacher is always thinking of ways to make the school even better and is good at getting everyone to work well as a team.

We have asked the school's leaders to concentrate on two things to make the school even better:

- Help those of you who sometimes find the work a bit easy to make even more progress and reach higher standards in your work.
- Provide more opportunities for you and your teachers to make the best use of computers and other new technology in your work across all subjects.

We are sure you will have your own ideas about ways to improve the school and will want to talk to your school councillors and teachers about these.

Yours faithfully

Martin Kerly

Lead Inspector

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