

Culvers House Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131103
Local Authority	Sutton
Inspection number	366512
Inspection dates	15–16 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Carmen Rodney HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	348
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Susan Smith
Headteacher	Mr Robert Eyre-Brook
Date of previous school inspection	26 November 2009
School address	Orchard Avenue Mitcham Surrey CR4 4JH
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. All teachers were seen teaching in the 11 lesson observations, all of which were undertaken with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors evaluated the schools provision and its progress since the last monitoring visit. They looked at a range of documents including pupils work, the schools raising achievement plan, pupil tracking data and arrangements for safeguarding. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body, three groups of pupils and the local authority adviser. Parental and pupil questionnaires were not distributed as part of this inspection.

The inspection team reviewed the schools progress since the last inspection and the previous monitoring visit and looked in detail at the following.

- To what extent has the school improved the quality of teaching and marking to meet the needs of individual pupils and accelerated their learning?
- How well has the school developed the curriculum to ensure that pupils are actively engaged in their work and making better progress?
- How successful are actions taken to raise achievement and improve the use of assessment information to track pupils progress and meet their learning needs?
- Has the school demonstrated that it has the capacity to sustain improvement?

Information about the school

Culvers House is much larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average but few are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high and includes an above average number with a statement of special educational needs. The school has a special educational needs resource base for 10 pupils with specific needs including dyslexia, moderate and severe learning difficulties, medical, physical, speech and language and behavioural difficulties. There are more girls than boys.

The school provides a range of extended services. It has gained a number of awards relating to its provision including: Active Mark, Eco Schools Bronze Level and Sustainable School Travel.

When the school was inspected in November 2009, it was deemed to require special measures. Her Majesty's Inspector made monitoring visits in May and October 2010 and in March 2011 to evaluate the schools progress. There have been several staff changes since the previous inspection. The current and substantive headteacher took up post in January 2010, following the retirement of the previous headteacher. Other key senior posts were filled during the current school year, 2010/11.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Culvers House Primary is a satisfactory school which is on a clear and upward trend of improvement. Since the previous inspection, the school, under the leadership and management of the new senior team, has strengthened its capacity to improve the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils. It has successfully tackled weaknesses in provision. Improvements in teaching and the use of assessment, combined with curriculum development and a much strengthened leadership team, have resulted in pupils making better progress. As a result, attainment has improved and is satisfactory. Attendance has risen, and is satisfactory. This improvement is linked to the tough and effective measures taken by senior leaders to ensure that pupils can enjoy the benefits of attending school regularly. Nevertheless, the school recognises that there are a few pupils who do not attend on a regular basis.

Since the previous inspection, the school has increased its capacity to sustain improvement. This has been possible because first, the senior leadership team has been strengthened: key and experienced leaders and managers are in posts. They have a clear vision for improvement and have not flinched from focusing on introducing changes and steering staff. Accountability is much improved and flows from the governing body through to all tiers of staff within the school. Second, there is a sharp and sustained focus on teaching and learning through monitoring, coaching and training. Lessons are increasingly engaging and resources are often used imaginatively and effectively through targeted support to sustain pupils' interests. Third, clear systems for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of provision have been developed. This has created a consistent and reliable approach to appraising progress and taking action to address weaknesses, for example, in literacy and numeracy. Fourth, a new and enriched curriculum is leading to pupils demonstrating an increasing enjoyment of their learning. These are leading to much improved outcomes and better communication and partnership work with parents.

Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes contribute very well to the learning culture. This is linked to the good quality care, guidance and support to meet the needs of each pupil, in particular, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school's inclusive approach is a notable strength.

The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well. The leaders are accurate in their assessment of teaching and learning but recognise that middle leaders are still developing their leadership and management skills. They know there is still more to do to embed the changes because although standards have risen, pupils' progress, based on their starting points, is not yet rapid and the outstanding practices in Reception are not fully developed in the Nursery.

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

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Up to 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress of all groups and sustain the upward trend of improvement by:
 - ensuring that all teaching is consistently good or better in all year groups
 - building on the resources, assessment and procedures used to develop pupils literacy and numeracy skills
 - ensuring that the new curriculum is fully implemented and there is progression and full coverage of all subjects in the National Curriculum.
- Ensure that attendance is consistently in line with or above the national average by:
 - exploring with external partners very early intervention work when the pattern of attendance begins to show a slight variation from the norm
 - increasing the number of formal and informal meetings with parents of pupils who are persistent absentees to consider the negative impact of poor attendance on their child's future when discussing progress over time.
- Improve the leadership and management skills of middle leaders so they are well equipped to perform their roles by:
 - organising further training and development opportunities for them to deepen their grasp of assessment procedures so they can accurately monitor and moderate pupils progress over time and guide staff to use assessment information consistently well
 - ensuring that modelling and coaching are used rigorously to develop their skills when observing lessons and monitoring and evaluating provision.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

When compared with the 2009 results, attainment in 2010 in the national tests for Year 6 pupils improved significantly with the majority reaching expected levels of attainment in English and mathematics. Although these were the best results over the last three years, there was a slight decline in English and the overall results were lower than the national averages. Pupils did not reach the targets expected in writing. Pupils with special educational needs, those eligible for free school meals and pupils of White British and Caribbean heritages did less-well than other groups.

The lower than expected results were affected by the absence of a permanent literacy coordinator. Nevertheless, the better attainment in 2010 is consistent with current performance. In Key Stages 1 and 2, current tracking data for 2011, based on reliable assessments, which have been moderated, show that the school is narrowing the gap with the national averages, particularly in Key Stage 2. Current assessment information shows that the systematic approach to focusing on well-organised strategies to develop literacy and numeracy skills is contributing to pupils not falling behind. The literacy and numeracy clubs and individual booster sessions for targeted pupils are key factors to the school's success in tackling underachievement.

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Pupils take their work seriously and are very keen to do well. They relish their learning: they buzz with excitement and behave well in lessons and around the school. Relationships are strong and pupils mature and responsible approach towards their peers with emotional and behavioural, physical or speech and communication difficulties is a testimony to their caring approach for others. For example, playground mediators are adept at bringing pupils together. Pupils say that lessons are rarely disrupted and teachers deal effectively and quickly with all forms of misbehaviour, including bullying. They feel safe and recognise that their school takes all necessary precautions to protect them. Pupils understand the importance of following a healthy lifestyle; in particular, older pupils are knowledgeable about nutrition. Although pupils are happy and most enjoy coming to school, they would like to be more actively involved in activities in the school and wider community.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving strongly. There is a sharp focus on ensuring that in all lessons, pupils can and will make better progress. Most planning therefore includes clear success criteria which teachers and pupils explore so there is a clear understanding of the skills pupils will use. The proportion of good teaching is not yet consistent in Key Stage 1. However, effective teaching includes the following features: a positive learning environment with a sharp focus on specific learning

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outcomes; well selected resources matched to needs and carefully planned support from teaching assistants who review and consolidate learning; a range of activities and group work to ensure that pupils can share ideas and work independently; and whole class teaching and focused group work which use very good questioning techniques to assess and extend learning before applying the taught skills. Additionally, excellent relationships with staff and carefully crafted examples of modelling work help pupils to achieve well. Where teaching is only satisfactory, planning and the use of resources are not well matched to the needs of pupils and time is not always used well. Teaching assistants work well with class teachers modelling, and supporting groups and individuals with specific needs. This targeted support ensures that pupils on the school action register make good progress in lessons.

Assessment, marking and target setting have improved and ensure that pupils know what to do to improve their learning. However, all pupils are not aware of their targets because the rigour with which assessment is used in all year groups is not consistent. Additionally, when work is marked, insufficient attention is given to presentation skills and handwriting.

The curriculum provides a strong focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils spoken to say that the literacy and numeracy programmes, including the virtual learning resources, are helping them to learn better. The curriculum has been enriched by the introduction of the International Primary Curriculum. Trialling of new topics and themes has provided pupils with a new zest for learning in relation to broadening their experience of working independently or collaboratively. Specialist teaching of the visual and performing arts and languages has added more breadth to the curriculum. Pupils have a richer experience which also includes a range of enrichment activities. The school is aware, however, that the new provision does not necessarily cover all aspects of the National Curriculum in depth, in particular, science and information and communication technology (ICT), and therefore keeps this aspect under review. Additionally, the school recognises that it still has to develop more opportunities for pupils to take part in external activities.

The school knows the circumstances of its pupils well and provides well-considered support which is tailored to the needs of individuals and groups of pupils to help them improve their attendance and work.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has been a driving force in the schools improvement. The school, well supported by the local authority, has secured a

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full and cohesive senior leadership team that is committed to school improvement. Expectations of school improvement have been spelt out to the staff and there is a clear understanding of the strategic direction of the school in relation to teaching and accelerating pupils progress over time. Staff have therefore taken ownership of the changes through professional development. As a result, there is a shared understanding and commitment to improving provision. Assessment information is increasingly used to underpin planning and accountability. Middle managers have a clear understanding of their roles but recognise that their leadership and management skills are not yet fully developed.

The governing body ensures that safeguarding requirements are fully met. It has increased its capacity to challenge the school and scrutinises its work in relation to provision and outcomes. Members are actively involved in the school and with the headteacher; they ensure that parents are well informed about the schools work. The school is diligent about tackling discriminatory practices and ensures that all pupils can access the provision. For example, the needs of pupils with specific learning needs and/or disabilities are very well met.

The few parents spoken to confirm the positive views outlined in the commissioned report on parental and pupils views. Parents are pleased with the schools progress but wish to have more information on their childrens progress. Partnership with external providers is used well to support pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable. While the school has mainly confined community cohesion to developing pupils learning about other faiths and cultures, steps to promote international links are fairly new.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership and clarity of direction ensure that children achieve well from their starting points with a minority exceeding expectations. The children demonstrate a very good understanding of daily routines, and imitate the staff well when using child-initiated play to show off their learning. For example, in Reception, a boy took a group and asked, Do you know your key words? before checking that they could read the words accurately as part of a competition. This mature approach illustrates the outstanding provision in Reception which leads to the overwhelming majority of children making accelerated progress from below and well below average starting points. In Reception, there is imaginative use of a rich range of resources, indoors and outdoors. These are linked very well to the meticulous planning that has a strong focus on developing childrens literacy skills. As a result, all activities provide children with exploratory opportunities to use investigative skills to develop their social skills, their understanding of words, sentences, the world around them and numbers. Excellent relationships in the Nursery and Reception and the use of questioning extend learning. Staff use assessment information and procedures very well to monitor childrens progress.

Induction work is well thought out and careful planning ensures the children make at least good progress when they enter Nursery. However, the transition from the Nursery into Reception is still being developed to ensure that practices are sustained and do not affect childrens progress.

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

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for monitoring inspection conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



17 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Culvers House Primary School, Surrey CR4 4JH

Thank you for taking part in all of the visits made to your school since November 2010. It was a great pleasure talking to you about how all of the changes in your lessons are helping you to make better progress. Your school went on a journey to find out the best way it can help you to make better progress. The journey ended very well because the headteacher and staff have made some great discoveries about improving your learning. As a result, your school is a better place. It is providing you with a satisfactory and improving education.

These are some of the main strengths.

- Your positive approach and good behaviour help you to enjoy learning.
- The test results are improving and you are making better progress.
- The staff provide good quality care and support for you.
- All of the children in the Nursery make a good start to their learning and those in the Reception make outstanding progress.
- The school helps you to make an early start to reading, writing and number work. It is using ICT very well to motivate you and improve your learning.
- The headteacher and staff are determined that you will succeed and the school will do even better.

There are a few things that the school has to do to help you make faster progress. We have asked the school to make sure that teaching is always good or outstanding so you can improve your work in reading, writing and numeracy. We know that a few of you do not attend regularly even though the school is already doing a lot to encourage you to be in school regularly. We have therefore asked the school to begin helping this group of pupils and parents very early. We have also asked the senior teachers to work with the subject leaders to develop their management skills.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney

Her Majesty's Inspector

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