

Coxheath Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118588
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358394
Inspection dates	11–12 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

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	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kim Owen
Headteacher	Caroline Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited sixteen lessons taught by eight teachers and also observed assemblies. They held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body and representative governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at planning documents, school evaluations, assessment information and pupils' work. In addition, inspectors received and analysed questionnaires from 56 parents and carers as well as those from a sample of staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether the action taken to accelerate the progress of pupils identified as vulnerable, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, has been effective.
- The effectiveness of leaders and the governing body in evaluating and pursuing areas identified for improvement.
- How well children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are prepared for the next stage of their learning, particularly in their early literacy skills.

Information about the school

Most pupils in this average-sized primary school are from White British backgrounds, but other ethnic heritages are represented in small numbers. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is high, although the proportion who have a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. Pupils' identified needs mostly relate to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or autistic spectrum disorder. A higher than average proportion of pupils join or leave the school during their primary education than is found nationally. The majority of senior leaders have taken up their roles since the last inspection, with two joining the team this year.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a reception class. Most pupils in Key Stage 2 are taught in mixed-age classes to accommodate the varying numbers in each year group. The intake number has been increased and next year there will be two reception classes. The school provides a daily breakfast club. Additional after-school and holiday care, run by a private provider, is available on site and this is subject to a separate Ofsted inspection. The school has many awards for its work, including Artsmark, Activemark and Safe School awards.

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****2**

Main findings

Coxheath Primary is a satisfactory school which has made a number of significant improvements since its last inspection. Leadership and management have been strengthened which have, in turn, improved the curriculum and the care, guidance and support for pupils. As a result, pupils feel safe, and they enjoy their time in school because learning is made interesting for them. Attendance has increased and is high. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the wide range of clubs and the many roles they undertake to help one another, for example as peer mediators or buddies for new pupils. Their good personal development is recognised in a number of national and local awards.

Children get off to a good start in the Reception Year so that they are prepared well for Year 1 work. Performance in the Year 2 and Year 6 national tests is broadly average, but has shown a steadily improving trend since the last inspection, reflecting a more determined approach to raising pupils' attainment. This has been more pronounced in mathematics in Year 6, which is above average, than in English because pupils' writing skills are not as strong as their reading and comprehension skills. Achievement is consistent across groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school's checks on attainment show that pupils' progress has accelerated this year because of improvements made in teaching and management, but initiatives have not had enough time to improve the overall outcomes that the school is ambitious to achieve.

The school's monitoring indicates that teaching has improved well this year as a result of a focused programme of professional development. Teaching has several good features, such as the high expectations most teachers have of pupils' work rate. However, these good features are not fully consistent across the school, and some remaining unevenness means that it just falls short of being good overall. For example, although teachers mark pupils' work regularly and some marking helps pupils improve, not all teachers routinely give pupils time to follow up on the advice given. Pupils benefit from regular opportunities to review their learning over a period of work, but they are not always sure about gauging their own progress or what they have to do to improve or reach the next level. There are examples of the curriculum being used well for pupils to develop or practise their writing skills within the context of other subjects, for example when pupils had writing tasks based on the topic on the Second World War.

Since the last inspection, a number of new systems have been developed for staff to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school's practice, including better assessment and monitoring of pupils' attainment. The support programmes introduced over the last two years for particular pupils are effectively boosting their progress to match that their peers. The revised teaching policy is influencing teaching for the better as it gives teachers a clear understanding of the school's expectations. The good support

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means there are examples of effective practice, but recent improvements have not had enough time to be disseminated widely across the school. Staff and the governing body have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the notable improvements to the curriculum and care, guidance and support. Although some initiatives are comparatively recent and have not yet had time to take full effect, improvements in key areas of provision resulting in a rise in pupils' attainment show the school's good capacity to sustain ongoing development.

Up to 40% of the 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 pupils' progress in all subjects, but particularly in writing, by improving the consistency of teaching, ensuring that:
 - teachers always have high expectations of the quality and quantity of pupils' independent work
 - pupils are given more opportunities to practise their writing skills in other subjects
 - teachers have more opportunities to observe best practice.
- Give pupils more help in gauging their own progress in learning by:
 - ensuring pupils are clear about their own personal targets
 - setting targets and 'success criteria' for pupils' work in lessons which are more closely matched to the expected outcomes for each ability group
 - consistently giving pupils opportunities to follow up on the advice given in teachers' marking.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' good personal development and sound basic skills adequately prepare them for secondary education. All groups, including those from different ethnic heritages and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve satisfactorily from their starting points. Pupils' attainment on entry to Reception is currently broadly in line with that expected for their age, although children's language skills are generally low. Pupils' good attitudes to learning are shown in the way pupils concentrate in lessons and in their usually good presentation of their work. Many show their interest in their response to homework and holiday tasks, with opportunities for pupils to research and extend learning for themselves. The pupils' questionnaire shows that almost all pupils enjoy school, and those spoken to talked enthusiastically about all the things they do. They indicated that they 'love everything about their lessons' and this contributes well to their learning. Pupils behave considerately together in groups, developing their ideas by talking them through. For example, in a lesson, pupils had to think about the dangers of dirty water before writing individually. This was given additional relevance by relating it to the school's Ugandan link. Pupils understand what they are learning and they are increasingly challenged by their tasks. This was seen where Year 6 pupils applied their knowledge of finding areas of triangles and rectangles to calculate the surface areas of irregular three-

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dimensional shapes. On occasion, their involvement in extended practical activities does not leave sufficient time for pupils to consolidate their learning through independent work.

Although pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, their understanding of cultures within the United Kingdom is less well developed. The school council, valued by pupils, organised a conference in the school, which gave councillors a good opportunity to share their views and develop their understanding of citizenship and democracy with pupils from other schools. Pupils have a good understanding of what comprises a healthy lifestyle, and a high proportion of pupils promote their physical development by participating in sport. Pupils are very active at playtimes, using the extensive grounds and wide range of games available to them. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe in school and beyond because the improved curriculum places a strong emphasis on this aspect of their development. Pupils know who to go to for help and have confidence that any incidents of thoughtless behaviour will be dealt with quickly.

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	2
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

Teaching that is at least satisfactory and often good results in pupils making more consistent and faster progress through the school than they did at the time of the last inspection. Teachers are enthusiastic and engage pupils well, managing lessons firmly so that pupils settle quickly to work and maintain a good pace. They explain concepts and

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tasks clearly and set work at different levels to meet the needs of the different ages, abilities and needs within the class successfully. However, the 'success criteria' for these tasks are often too broad for pupils to reflect closely on the precise learning taking place in the lesson or to highlight pupils' personal targets. While pupils' reports provide a good reflection of what individuals have achieved, pupils do not routinely have enough time or the clear guidance about their next steps to accelerate their progress more.

The breadth of the improved curriculum is reflected in the school gaining an Artsmark award. It develops pupils' creative skills to a greater degree and ensures that subjects are covered in depth while using links across subjects to make learning interesting and relevant. For example, a lesson where pupils developed skills of persuasion through debate was based on their work in science about animals and a recent visit to a zoo. A key focus for development is to extend this approach to give pupils more opportunities to practise their writing skills in other subjects and topic themes. The recent consultation with pupils about what they want to learn is effectively giving them greater ownership so they increasingly have better outcomes in their academic attainment. Links with secondary schools provide good enrichment, particularly for pupils identified as gifted or talented, for example through an enterprise day and a workshop for able writers.

Improved care, guidance and support since the last inspection ensure that identifying and removing potential barriers to learning as early as possible lie at the heart of the school's work. Staff work closely with families to make sure that pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, including those who have physical disabilities or behavioural difficulties, are given the support they need. Transition into the school is well established and effective in ensuring that pupils increasingly make better progress from their starting points. Equal attention is given to ensuring a smooth transition into secondary school. The breakfast club provides support for working parents and carers and gives those attending a good start to the day. An improved range of strategies help pupils to catch up when they have been identified as not making the expected progress.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leaders, including those appointed recently, have effectively raised the expectations of other staff so that they are clear that 'satisfactory is not good enough'. They are determined to iron out inconsistencies which hinder the school's overall effectiveness from being better. Some initiatives are comparatively new so have not yet brought about improvements in every area. For example, not all teachers have had enough opportunities to reflect on their own practice by observing the effective teaching

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of others. However, the success of training is evident in the good progress now seen in more, but not all, lessons. Monitoring and tracking systems have improved since the last inspection, and are used effectively to make accurate assessments of the school's work and to plan for its development. The governing body holds the school to account well, and governors ensure that their strategic decision making is based on accurate first-hand information. The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements are fully in place and adhered to. Procedures for checking staff are robust and meticulously recorded.

Engagement with parents and carers is good. Regular contact is maintained through weekly opportunities to attend assemblies, text messaging and newsletters. Coffee mornings and parenting courses run on site in conjunction with other schools are well attended. The school's ethos is one where every child is valued and cared for. To this end the school endeavours to provide every pupil with the opportunity to do their best, ensuring that equality of opportunity is actively promoted and discrimination tackled robustly. For example, the school monitors involvement in extra-curricular provision to ensure a high proportion of pupils are involved. The school is a very cohesive society where all groups of pupils do equally well. Staff and governors have undertaken a comprehensive analysis of the community the school serves to aid its promotion of community cohesion, and the school is a venue for community groups in the area. Pupils' awareness is broadened through pen pal links with a school in France and the school is currently extending opportunities to link with pupils in different ethnic and socio-economic circumstances.

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children thoroughly enjoy their time in Reception and make a very positive start to school. They settle quickly into their daily routines because they are safe and well cared for. They

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work and play together in a spacious and well-organised area. The courtyard is used very well as an outdoor classroom, and the display around the edge gives children an interesting record of the year's events. Plans are in place to make this area more creative and imaginative, and to extend another outside area to meet the needs of the increased intake next year. Parents and carers are encouraged to become involved in their child's learning, for example by coming into school and contributing to their child's 'learning journey' folder. Children begin with skills and understanding that vary from year to year, dependent on the cohort, but which are broadly in line with those expected of their age.

A change of approach has been introduced this year to promote children's early literacy skills, with the result that children have a good understanding of letters and sounds (phonics) and are confident to try to write words and sentences for themselves. However, writing skills are not as well developed as other aspects of children's learning which show good progress from their starting points. Learning is planned to stimulate interest, seen in the enthusiasm with which children searched for 'messages from the pirate', reading these for themselves and writing solutions to lead to 'the treasure'. Children have a good understanding of how they learn through play and enjoy making choices for themselves. They sustain good levels of concentration, and learning is strengthened well through sensitive and probing conversations with adults. Children who may need additional support are catered for very well so that they are fully involved in all activities alongside their peers. Good leadership is seen in the accuracy of self-evaluation and the close liaison with Year 1 to make sure that transition is smooth and that learning is built on quickly from children's finishing points at the end of the Reception Year.

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

Most parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are positive about all aspects of the school. The return rate was lower than for most primary schools. Parents and carers express particular satisfaction that children enjoy school, are safe and helped to have a healthy lifestyle. A small minority is concerned that work is not challenging enough and that pupils do not make enough progress. Inspectors found that, while satisfactory overall, some work could be more challenging and that, while currently satisfactory, pupils are increasingly making better progress in lessons due to the improvements in the curriculum and aspects of teaching. A small minority of returns indicated that parents and carers do not believe that the school takes account of their suggestions. The inspection found that parents have opportunities for regular contact, including a daily opportunity to speak to the teacher, and that the school responds positively to parental views, for example, introducing a home/school contact book and text service, more clubs for younger pupils,

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and reviewing the homework policy. The governing body has carried out surveys, but governors recognise that these could be more frequent to ensure that their understanding of parental views is always up to date.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Coxheath 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 56 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 226 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	50	24	43	3	5	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	31	55	22	39	2	4	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	16	29	28	50	11	20	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	29	28	50	10	18	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	18	32	32	57	4	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	34	26	46	9	16	2	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	34	36	64	1	2	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)	21	38	30	54	4	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	36	28	50	6	11	2	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	27	31	55	3	5	4	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	23	26	46	10	18	3	5
The school is led and managed effectively	16	29	28	50	7	13	3	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	39	28	50	5	9	1	2

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 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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



13 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Coxheath Primary School, Maidstone, ME17 4PS

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently and for explaining what you were doing when we came to see you in lessons. We enjoyed talking to the school council members, who were very good at explaining how you feel about your school. Coxheath Primary is a satisfactory school. It has many strengths and is improving all the time.

These are some of the things that the school does well.

- Children get off to a good start in the Reception Year and have interesting things to do.
- The school looks after you well so that you are safe and secure.
- Your attendance is high compared to other primary schools.
- You have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and you have good opportunities to be active in the playground and sports clubs.
- Your good attitudes and interesting things you do in lessons help you to learn.
- The school is well run and adults plan well for the future.

You said that you could sometimes work a bit harder and we think that you could do better, particularly in writing. We have asked teachers to:

- make your work more challenging and expect you to do more for yourselves in the time you are given
- give you more opportunities to practise your writing in other subjects
- make sure that you are clear about your own targets to make your work better
- make sure that the success criteria are clear for each group task and not for the class as a whole
- give you time to follow up on the advice they give you when they mark your work
- find out how you learn best, possibly by observing lessons in different classes.

We are sure that you will help by continuing to do your best. We wish you every success in your new class next year.

Yours sincerely

Helen Hutchings

Lead inspector

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