

Coley Primary School

Wolseley Street, Reading, Berkshire RG7 5RE

Inspection dates

9–10 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching is not consistently good in Years 1 to 4. In these year groups, teachers sometimes spend too long talking and there is not enough time for pupils to work on their own.
- Not all teachers plan tasks that are pitched at the right level for pupils of different abilities and the pace of some lessons is too slow.
- Pupils are not always clear about what is expected of them.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) in Key Stages 1 and 2 is not always effective enough to ensure pupils make good progress in their early reading and writing skills. The quality of pupils' writing is not always as good as it should be because of a lack of vocabulary and weak sentence construction.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their mathematical skills through activities related to their everyday lives.
- Until recently, school leaders had not been successful in ensuring that all pupils do as well as they can.

The school has the following strengths

- Good provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables them to make good progress.
- Consistently good teaching in Years 5 and 6 accelerates pupils' progress in writing and mathematics.
- The school is a harmonious community where adults and pupils from a wide range of backgrounds get on together very well.
- Pupils behave well and are keen to learn. They feel safe and free from bullying.
- The temporary leaders are driving improvements effectively. Together with subject leaders and governors, they are having a positive impact on improving teaching and accelerating pupils' progress.
- Governors ensure that leaders and managers are now strongly focused on school improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons and eight teachers, of which six were joint observations with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Sessions led by teaching assistants working with individuals or small groups of pupils were also observed.
- Inspectors discussed pupils' reading habits with them and listened to them read. They had a meeting with a group of pupils from Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Meetings and discussions were held with governors, a representative from the local authority and school staff.
- Inspectors took account of the eight responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plans, priorities for development, achievement data and documents relating to the safeguarding of children.

Inspection team

Rob Crompton, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Vanessa Tomlinson

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Coley is an average-sized primary school where three quarters of the pupils are from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. Two thirds of all pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Just under 10% of pupils are supported at school action which is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is about 8% which is also broadly average.
- Over a fifth of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. This is above average.
- The school meets the current floor standards, the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress expected by the government.
- A new Chair of the Governing Body was elected in September 2011. Following the resignation of the headteacher in April 2012, the school was led temporarily by the deputy headteacher. In September 2012 an interim headteacher was appointed. She leads two schools and spends half a week in each. At the time of the inspection, the governors were seeking to appoint a permanent headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching in Years 1 to 4, by ensuring that all teaching is good by:
 - providing ample opportunities for pupils to work independently
 - ensuring teachers set work that has an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils
 - clarifying what is expected of different ability groups.
- Accelerate progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 to 4 by:
 - bringing accuracy, challenge and fun to pupils' learning in phonics lessons
 - using discussions, role play and drama to develop pupils' vocabulary and sentence construction
 - promoting pupils' enjoyment of mathematics by increasing opportunities for them to use and develop their numeracy skills in everyday contexts.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - embedding the current strategies for rigorously monitoring the quality of teaching
 - closely monitoring pupils' progress in Years 1 to 4 in order to ensure they keep on track
 - providing more opportunities for teachers to share their expertise and learn from one another.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 have been below average for several years. Pupils were not building well enough on their starting points. Pupils' learning now moves on apace in Years 5 and 6. Despite a legacy of underachievement in previous years, overall progress made by last year's Year 6 pupils through Key Stage 2 was in line with national expectations.
- When children start school in Reception, their knowledge, understanding and skills are generally low. They make very good progress, particularly in their social and language development. Over the last three years, their attainment as they leave Reception has been above average, but their rate of progress slows through Key Stage 1 and requires improvement.
- Standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 are below average. Pupils sometimes find it hard to read unfamiliar words because they lack the ability to blend groups of letters and immediately identify vowel sounds. When writing, pupils often lack confidence because the range of words they use is limited and they sometimes find it hard to accurately build sentences. Pupils have a reasonable knowledge of basic number facts but often struggle to see how they can use them when solving mathematical problems because they do not have enough opportunities to practise this.
- All pupils in Year 6 in 2012 had made the expected progress through Key Stage 2 in English and almost all had done so in mathematics. Standards of attainment rose dramatically across the board to broadly average levels.
- Current pupils in Years 5 and 6 are working, for the most part, at the expected levels. They communicate confidently and their reading and writing skills are developing well.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils. This is due to effective assessment, swift intervention and accurate tracking of their progress. For the same reasons, there is a similar picture for pupils supported through pupil premium. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language make good progress in acquiring a new language because they have very effective support.
- The recent improvements in achievement indicate that the school promotes equality of opportunity well, fosters good relationships and tackles discrimination effectively.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- In Years 1 to 4, the quality of teaching varies too widely. This results in pupils making uneven progress. Pupils of different abilities tend to do the same work and this slows their progress. Opportunities are missed for pupils to work on their own because they spend much of the lesson listening to the teacher rather than learning and practising new skills.
- In some lessons, teachers promote pupils' vocabulary and sentence construction effectively through role play and drama. In others, there is too much emphasis on completing written tasks and pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their thoughts about what they are going to write.
- Teachers routinely explain to pupils what they are going to learn but not always what they need to do to succeed. This means pupils find it hard to check how well they are doing. In the best lessons, pupils confidently check their own progress against specific criteria.
- The effectiveness of phonics teaching is variable. Where teachers or teaching assistants ensure a lively pace and generate enthusiasm, pupils respond well and make good progress. In other lessons, learning is slower, sometimes because the groups are too big to allow all pupils to contribute their ideas.

- Teaching is most effective in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 5 and 6. Nursery and Reception children benefit from a good balance of activities both indoors and outside. During one session where the outdoors was used well, Nursery children were enjoying a 'bug hunt' with an adult while others wearing hard hats collected 'bricks' from the 'builders' yard' using wheelbarrows.
- In Years 5 and 6, pupils learn well because teachers use assessments of their prior learning to shape what they teach. This means that pupils build on what they know and understand, and become confident learners. Teachers stimulate their interest through challenging and enjoyable activities such as writing persuasive scripts for advertisement voice-overs.
- Across the school, teachers manage behaviour well and promote pupils' personal development effectively. For example, when studying the Victorians, Year 6 pupils showed empathy for the children featured in Dickens' novels. Year 5 pupils expressed similar sentiments when learning about evacuees during the Second World War. In both lessons, pupils worked together pooling ideas; their curiosity was excited by new learning that made them think.
- Provision for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is good. Well-targeted one-to-one or small group interventions are helping to accelerate their progress. All teachers are very aware that many pupils are learning English as an additional language. They support these pupils well, in class or through arranging timely interventions by the skilled support staff.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are polite and friendly. They are considerate of the needs of others and respond well to strong moral and social guidance through assemblies and the general school ethos. Boys and girls from a wide range of different cultural heritages and with many different home languages play and work together harmoniously. Pupils are keen to arrive on time and attendance is above average.
- Teachers have high expectations for good behaviour and parents and carers are appreciative of this. There have been no exclusions recently and poor behaviour is rare. Pupils firmly believe teachers have their best interests at heart and they respond well to that. Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for at school. Staff ensure that they are aware of the potential risks of using mobile phones and the internet. Activities, such as 'hunt for hazards' in Year 3, raise their awareness of possible dangers, for example when using electrical appliances.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and feel that very little goes on. The school keeps detailed records of the rare examples of disruptive behaviour and takes timely and effective action. The behavioural and racial incidents records confirm pupils' sensible and socially responsible behaviour.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the interim leadership team has only just been put together and has not had time to quicken pupils' progress in Years 1 to 4. Nevertheless, school leaders have made a good start in closely checking the quality of teaching, carefully analysing assessment information and identifying where the highly effective practice can be shared.
- The local authority provides effective support for the school. There is strong evidence of an accelerated pace of change in recent months. The school is clearly improving as many more pupils reached nationally expected levels in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 in 2012.

- The interim headteacher has built well on the work of the deputy headteacher and subject leaders in driving improvements. She has established a clear direction for future improvement based on a realistic investigation of achievement and provision. The school improvement plan is sharply focused on raising achievement through improving teaching. Recommendations for improvement are relevant and there is good evidence to show improvement in teachers' practice.
 - Members of the leadership team provide excellent role models in terms of their own practice. They have begun to train colleagues and demonstrate good quality teaching, but a systematic approach to sharing expertise is not yet fully established in each subject or key stage.
 - Meetings to discuss pupils' progress are used well to ensure that staff are held accountable for the progress their pupils make. Assessments of pupils' progress are accurate but not all staff use them well enough to help them to plan and teach good lessons.
 - Accurate self-evaluation underpins the school's actions and future plans. These are focused firmly on the areas requiring improvement. The school is carefully tackling a history of underachievement but there is still some way to go.
 - Pupils follow an interesting curriculum that engages them and effectively promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Frequent educational visits and visitors to school support pupils' academic progress and personal development. In order to take advantage of the rich variety of life on the school's doorstep and to further broaden pupils' experiences, each class has one outing every fortnight.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - has been pivotal in securing school improvement
 - has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas of weakness
 - makes certain that pupil premium money is used effectively
 - ensures that safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	109779
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	401079

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Raj Bala
Headteacher	Diana Heath and Clare Seddon
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 October 2009
Telephone number	0118 9375461
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