

East Coker Community Primary School

East Coker, Yeovil, BA22 9HY

Inspection dates 6–7 February 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils' achievement is good from their starting points and some pupils make rapid progress during their time in school.
- The quality of teaching is good and pupils respond with enthusiasm and independence to the challenges set them.
- The encouragement and support from teaching assistants contribute greatly to the exceptional achievement of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. Every young child has an older pupil mentor and this helps the school to be a very harmonious place.
- There are an exceptional number of opportunities for pupils to gain sporting and artistic skills both in and out of lessons. This helps pupils develop excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural values.
- Leaders and governors have consolidated on the strengths of the school since the previous inspection and brought about further improvement.
- Leaders monitor teaching frequently and give teachers effective guidance on how to improve. The impact of this can be seen especially in improvements in pupils' writing skills.
- Governors are aspirational for the school and are working not just with school leaders but with the pupils' school council to bring about improvements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to find out things for themselves and explore their own ideas.
- The school does not always make the best use of school data to help teachers to plan to meet the needs of all pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents which the school provided, including the school's information on the progress that pupils are making.
- Inspectors visited 16 lessons taught by 11 teachers and three observations were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- They listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 6 reading, and held discussions with pupils from across the school about their experiences in school.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of Governors and a telephone discussion took place with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 31 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as the parents' responses to the recent governing body questionnaire and comments from parents in the playground.
- They also took account of 30 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Wendy Marriott , Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Malcolm Davison

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a school of average size with a very low proportion of children entitled to extra support through the pupil premium (additional money allocated to schools by the government).
- Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils identified as disabled and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- None of its pupils is taught in alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - providing sufficient opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning and explore their own ideas.
 - using the analysis of the information the school holds about pupils' progress to help teachers plan more effectively to meet pupils' varying needs.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children enter school in the Reception class, almost all of them have the skills expected for their age. They settle quickly and leave Reception with particularly strong mathematical and physical skills.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check was broadly in line with those who did so nationally. This information has led to all teachers checking the phonic spelling and reading abilities of their pupils and progress in phonic lessons seen has accelerated as a result. Pupils become avid readers as they move through the school.
- The latest assessments held of pupils' writing and the work in their books shows that the pace of progress in writing has accelerated recently. The year 2 pupils' explanation of the life cycle of a frog and Year 5/6 pupils writing about their experiments with sugar showed they are able to apply their writing skills well across a range of lessons.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics are above average. In 2012 almost all pupils made the progress expected and a good proportion made progress which was better than this. This was particularly true for those who had a lower starting point, including those pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs.
- A pattern of consistently good progress is evident in assessments made at other points in the school. The average point score gap between pupils supported by pupil premium funding, for example, and the rest of their classmates and all pupils nationally is closing fast, particularly in writing.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good over time and some of it is of high quality. In the best lessons pupils were independent in their learning and rose to challenges to explore their own ideas. Teachers knew precisely what the pupils needed to learn next.
- Pupils in Year 1, for example, counted the faces of solid shapes accurately and independently because the teacher had made the learning fun and had given them soft clay to encourage them to work carefully.
- The pace of learning in most lessons was brisk but sensitive support from teaching assistants meant that all pupils were included and made good progress. Teaching assistants are well trained to deliver specialist programmes of support in reading and they work effectively with groups of pupils to help them to catch up.
- Teachers generally pitch activities at the right level to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. In a mixed year 4 and 5 class, for example, pupils quickly improved the quality of their written sentences because the teacher repeatedly checked their understanding and pitched the teaching to meet the needs of different groups. Pupils understood the purpose of what they were doing and knew they would have an opportunity to use the sentences in a presentation about their topic.
- Where teachers have detailed knowledge of what pupils need to learn next they check out pupils' understanding through challenging questioning and change the direction of the lesson if they need to. This is not yet happening in all lessons because the data about pupils' assessments is not analysed in a way which would help teachers when they are planning lessons.
- Pupils have good independent learning skills. Pupils showed in the year 5 and 6 class that they could work together as scientists investigating, measuring and recording their results. On occasions lessons lack these opportunities for independence and challenge and pupils are more passive and make less progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well and are proud of the good behaviour seen in the school and the playground. They describe the school as a friendly place to be and say that when friends fall out, they quickly make up. They report that all forms of bullying are rare, including racially motivated bullying.
- Play in the playground is lively, with many opportunities for exercise and fun, but pupils say that they feel safe. The space is shared well and pupils understand that taking turns on equipment keeps them safe as well as making things fair for all.
- Parents are generally positive about pupil behaviour and they are right to be so. Vulnerable pupils are well supported and improvements in their behaviour are evident from records kept by the school.
- Children who join the school in Reception are paired with an older pupil who will be their buddy in special lessons where they learn together and in the playground. This contributes well to the safety of the younger pupils and the older pupils say that this teaches them to respect their younger school friends and gives them skills for life.
- Younger pupils showed through their learning and play about the Chinese New Year that they are developing an understanding of other cultures. Pupils are less familiar with life in British communities which are very different from their own.
- Pupils' attendance is average and the school has good systems for texting parents to make sure pupils are safe if they are absent from school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's commitment to equality of opportunity and tackling any discrimination has driven the vision for an inclusive community which fosters good relationships and where the learning and progress of all pupils have a high priority.
- He is well supported by a team of middle leaders who are monitoring the work of the school with him and supporting the drive towards further improvements in teaching. The leader responsible for supporting disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is very knowledgeable and uses partnerships with other agencies well to support all pupils who may need to catch up in their learning.
- Leaders have a focus on improving the quality of teaching through regular checking, allied to rigorous performance management and professional development. This has enabled the school to maintain good teaching and achievement but it has not yet been successful in moving this on to the next level.
- The curriculum is broad, exciting and rich, with something for everyone. The opportunities for competitive sport are very popular with parents and pupils and provide good opportunities for pupils to develop socially and morally. Music and the arts are a strong feature of lessons and clubs. The Play in a Day event performed by Years 5 and 6 helped the audience as well as the performers to be creative and develop cultural understanding.
- The arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. All relevant policies are in place and there is evidence that governors monitor these.
- The local authority has not directly supported this good school recently but has offered the headteacher chances to work alongside other experienced school leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school community well and are aspirational for its improvement. They are supportive and spend time working in school alongside teachers and pupils. Although they value the 'village school' ethos, they are seeking professional development opportunities for themselves so that they do not become complacent. Increasingly, they are challenging the information they get from leaders so that they can help the school to improve. They collect first-hand evidence of the school's work in their support role but recognise the need to gather information on teaching and pupils' achievement more systematically. Governors fulfil their

statutory duties in relation to safeguarding and financial management. They check the spending of the pupil premium and are collecting information about its effectiveness. They use information about the number of teachers on the higher pay scale when considering whether resources are well used. They ensure that pay rewards for teachers and leaders reflect the school's performance.

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	123719
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	403549

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	249
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lucy Gibbons
Headteacher	Richard Powell
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2008
Telephone number	01935 862532
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Email address	office@eastcoker.somerset.sch.uk

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