

Coxheath Primary School

Stockett Lane, Coxheath, Maidstone, ME17 4PS

Inspection dates

28 February–1 March 2013

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

- The quality of teaching requires improvement. It is not consistently good enough to support good achievement, particularly in writing.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' handwriting and of their written work are not always high enough.
- Lesson planning is not always thorough enough to provide adequately for pupils of differing ability levels.
- While there is evidence of improvement, the progress and attainment of pupils supported by pupil premium funding has been lower than that of similar pupils nationally.
- Extended staff absences have been disruptive of pupils' progress.
- There is insufficient evaluation of the impact of the additional teaching provided to support pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.
- The marking of pupils' work does not always indicate a clear direction for improvement.
- The monitoring and improvement of teaching by school leaders is not always rigorous enough. Targets set for teachers to improve are not consistently linked to school priorities.
- There are inaccuracies in the recording of pupils' attendance.

The school has the following strengths

- Children's progress in Reception is now generally good.
- Teachers' expectations are higher, and pupils' progress more rapid, in Years 5 and 6.
- Reading is taught well, so pupils make good progress across the school and develop good skills in tackling unfamiliar texts.
- Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. They behave particularly well when the teaching is brisk and challenging.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's circumstances. The appointment of an effective subject leader has been key to the emerging improvements in writing.
- Governance has improved considerably and is now good in most respects. This has increased the school's capacity for improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons, of which three were seen together with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and five other governors, the school's middle and senior leaders, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 33 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), together with the results of the school's own parental survey.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation, including records of checks on the quality of teaching, the school improvement plan, the governing body minutes, records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding, and the tracking of pupils' progress. They also looked closely at pupils' written work and listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Christine Dickens

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Coxheath Primary is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school. The school is currently in transition from one-form entry (30 pupils per year) to two-form entry (60 pupils per year).
- The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small number of pupils are of Gypsy/Roma heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- No pupils are currently educated through alternative provision away from the school site.
- The school offers a breakfast club which is managed by the governing body and formed part of this inspection.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, or who are looked after children, or children of service families, and for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium), is slightly below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has gained a number of awards recently, including the Quality in Extended Services award, the Artsmark Silver award and the Eco-Schools Bronze award.
- The school is currently experiencing a high level of instability in staffing. At present, four class teachers are covering extended absences of permanent staff.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that pupils make more consistently good progress, by:
 - sharing existing high-quality teaching as a model of good practice for others
 - ensuring that lesson planning takes account of the range of needs in each class
 - making sure that staff have consistent expectations of high-quality written work from pupils
 - establishing consistent practice in the marking of pupils' work, so that pupils have clear guidance as to the next steps in their learning.
- Strengthen achievement across the school, particularly in writing, by ensuring that:
 - pupils have opportunities to extend their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum
 - the recently introduced whole-school approach to handwriting is embedded and developed
 - additional funding to support the learning of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, and those who are disabled and/or have special educational needs, is used more effectively and checked closely to ensure that they learn rapidly and make good progress.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - setting higher expectations of pupils' achievement and the quality of their work
 - ensuring that systems for the management of teaching quality are more incisive and effective
 - rigorously evaluating the impact of additional teaching to support vulnerable pupils
 - acting promptly when dips in pupils' achievement are identified.
- Take action to ensure that identified weaknesses in the recording of attendance are resolved, so that the school's data systems are robust.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is inconsistent, particularly in writing. A lack of continuity in staffing has contributed to some loss of momentum in learning. Overall, attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average, although pupils' attainment and progress in writing in 2012 was significantly weaker than in reading or mathematics. There are underlying weaknesses in handwriting. Initiatives to improve progress in writing are having a positive impact upon pupils' achievement.
- Last year, the achievement of Year 2 pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was below those of other pupils. In Year 6, their attainment, from their average point scores, was below that of similar pupils nationally. Their progress, while closer to what is expected in mathematics, was slow overall, largely because of underperformance in writing. Despite this setback, pupils supported by pupil premium in other year groups in 2012 made progress at least as good as the majority. This is also the case this year. Pupil premium funding provided extra support for eligible pupils, including the 'reading recovery' programme, which successfully promoted better reading skills.
- Children enter Reception with skills slightly below those expected nationally for their age. They now make mostly good progress, as a result of better teaching, so that attainment by the end of Reception is now above the level expected.
- Reception children benefit from a good grounding in the linking of sounds and letters (phonics). Although, there is some inconsistent practice currently, older pupils still make mostly good progress in reading, with gaps in their phonic knowledge quickly tackled.
- Better achievement in Reception is working through Years 1 and 2, despite some negative impact of staff changes. Attainment by the end of Year 2, while still broadly average, is currently higher than last year, particularly in writing.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who need extra help varies considerably. As with the free school meals group (often the same pupils), achievement was relatively weak in both Year 2 and Year 6 in 2012, although better currently. The school has not consistently evaluated the impact of additional provision on pupils' learning. However, better-organised support, improved identification of pupils' needs and more-effective deployment of teaching assistants are ensuring improved progress for all vulnerable groups, including pupils of Gypsy/Roma heritage.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The school is tackling weaker teaching through, for example, the sharing of best practice among the staff. It has achieved some improvements as a result of a more consistent approach to the teaching of literacy. However, the monitoring of teaching is not consistently rigorous enough.
- While there is some high-quality written work in Years 5 and 6, expectations for how pupils should present and record their work are not clearly enough established and there is a readiness by some staff to accept mediocre written work.
- Where pupils have consistent teaching over time, achievement is generally better. In the best lessons, the pace is brisk and pupils are fully engaged. In a successful Year 6 literacy lesson, tasks were closely matched to the needs of different groups. Pupils knew exactly what they had to achieve. They knew exactly how to improve their work and to make progress.
- Despite recent changes in the Early Years Foundation Stage teaching staff, including the temporary absence of the phase leader, most teaching is now good, resulting in children making generally good progress.
- Better training for additional adults is helping pupils who get extra support, including those eligible for pupil premium funding, to learn more rapidly. However, planning lacks detail at times and groups, including pupils of Gypsy/Roma heritage, are not always clearly identified. It is, therefore, difficult to ensure that activities fully meet their needs. In addition, the impact of additional support on pupils' achievement is not measured precisely enough. The school

recognises the need to regularly review the deployment of support staff.

- Some progress has been made in developing systems to check and support pupils' progress. There is some good practice, such as the use of pupil-friendly targets, while older pupils know the level they are working at. Most teachers make good use of telling pupils how they can be successful learners in lessons and some involve pupils in assessing their own work. However, marking rarely indicates what pupils should do to move their learning on. Consequently, the use of information about pupils' progress to match work precisely to their learning needs is inconsistent.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are courteous and most have good attitudes to learning. In many lessons, particularly in Years 5 and 6, behaviour is exemplary. Behaviour deteriorates only when teachers do not know the pupils so well. Pupils, and most parents and carers who expressed a view, feel that behaviour is mostly good. They recognise that some pupils may be treated differently according to their needs. Pupils enthusiastically participate in additional activities out of lessons. There have been no recent exclusions or recorded racist incidents.
- Pupils feel that adults can be depended upon to deal with any issues. Poor behaviour or disturbances in lessons are rare. If incidents do occur, effective procedures ensure that they are managed appropriately. That said, the analysis of behavioural incidents to identify patterns of behaviour is informal.
- The school provides for pupils with a wide range of needs. Staff work effectively with external professionals to support vulnerable pupils.
- The breakfast club is well managed, provides good care for pupils before school starts, and meets current national requirements.
- Pupils appreciate that bullying may take different forms, including name-calling or the use of social networking sites. The school encourages pupils to be responsible, for example as playground mediators, actively defusing tensions between pupils. Records indicate that bullying is rare. Any incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Pupils have a good understanding of risk, supported by the school's focus on personal safety, including road, fire and internet safety. They know how to keep themselves safe in different circumstances.
- Attendance is broadly average, although the school is working to improve the attendance of a few pupils. The school recognises that there have been issues around the accuracy of the recording of pupils' attendance and is dealing with this.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Senior leaders have promoted improvements in the Reception class, leading to rising attainment. They have acted to resolve weaknesses in teaching in Key Stage 2 and in school administration. They have ensured that the school now has the expertise necessary to resolve underlying issues in writing. Thus, with stronger middle leadership and more-effective governance, the school's capacity has been significantly strengthened.
- Procedures for checking and improving the performance of teachers are in place. However, these are not rigorous enough in holding staff to account for pupils' achievement. The monitoring of teaching is not always specific as to what is necessary to improve performance, and performance management targets are not linked to whole-school priorities.
- The checking-up on pupils' progress, particularly for different groups of pupils, is thorough. However, indications of potential underachievement have not always been acted on quickly enough.
- External support from the local authority has, until recently, been limited. There is little evidence of the challenge necessary to sustain all aspects of the school's work at a consistently high level.

- The school provides an appropriate range of subjects and activities. Appropriate time is given to developing pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. A series of themes and topics engages pupils' interest well. There are missed opportunities to develop pupils' writing and numeracy skills across different subjects, but the teaching of science has mostly been sustained well. A range of out-of-school activities and visits extend pupils' experience.
- Provision for pupils' social and moral development is good. Spiritual development is supported adequately through collective worship. Pupils have some planned opportunities to engage with other cultures. The school is responsive to the needs of the Gypsy/Roma pupils. Parents and carers have a mostly positive response to the school's efforts on behalf of their children.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved significantly. Members of the governing body understand their role well. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths, weaknesses and effectiveness, and the detail of pupils' performance. They analyse areas of weaknesses and evaluate first-hand the effectiveness of decisions made. They rigorously challenge the impact of teaching on the school's performance, comparing outcomes to national data. They recognise the need to ensure equality of opportunity, to tackle discrimination, foster good relationships and to ensure that pay and promotion are firmly linked to teachers' effectiveness. They manage the budget well and contribute to decisions about the use of pupil premium funding to close gaps in pupils' achievement. They are aware that this did not give sufficient value for money last year, and have ensured that the funding is now used more effectively and its impact tracked closely. Governors also ensure, along with senior leaders, that safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements. Governors recognise their responsibility to ensure that attendance data are accurate.

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	118588
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	405790

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	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Hood
Headteacher	Caroline Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2011
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