

Coniston Primary School

Epney Close, Patchway, Bristol, BS34 5LN

Inspection dates 4–5 March 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders, including governors, have successfully improved teaching and behaviour since the previous inspection so that both are now good. As a result, pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and their attainment is rising quickly.
- Teachers enjoy good relationships with pupils and know them well. They use their good subject knowledge to plan learning that interests all pupils and is appropriate to their abilities. As a result, pupils enjoy lessons.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils work hard in lessons and are keen to answer questions. They move around the school sensibly and play well together at break times. The school is a happy place.
- The school's procedures to ensure pupils are safe and secure are good. Pupils feel safe.
- Good provision in Reception, particularly in helping children to read, is ensuring their good progress. Children are well prepared for going into Year 1.
- The school staff fully support the school's leaders and are totally committed. As a result, they are continually seeking ways in which they can improve their teaching and pupils' learning.
- Checks on progress are regular and pupils who are falling behind are quickly identified. Additional support for these pupils helps them to catch up quickly.
- Governors know the school very well. They are, therefore, able to provide very effective support and challenge to school leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always check often enough that pupils are following the guidance they give them about how to improve their work. Pupils therefore occasionally repeat mistakes which slows down their learning.
- Although pupils make good progress in writing, sometimes their spelling, grammar and punctuation are not as accurate as they could be. On occasions, handwriting and presentation lack care.
- The speaking skills of a few pupils are not developed well enough and so they find it difficult to articulate their thoughts and ideas. This is because some teachers do not always expect enough of them.
- A small number of parents feel the school does not communicate effectively with them when they raise concerns.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made 14 visits to classrooms to observe pupils’ learning. Senior leaders accompanied inspectors on some of these visits. Inspectors also spent time examining pupils’ work books. They also observed other aspects of the school’s work, including visiting an assembly.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, including the chairperson, as well as with teachers and school leaders. The inspection team also met with a representative from the local authority.
- Pupils took inspectors on a tour of the school. The inspectors met a group of Year 6 pupils, listened to pupils read in Year 1, and spoke to individuals in their classrooms about their work. They spent time in the dining hall and on the school playground where they also spoke to pupils.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the school gate and looked at the school’s own parent survey. They also considered the 27 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors reviewed 11 questionnaire responses from staff.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school’s own information relating to pupils’ achievement, the school’s self-evaluation and plan of action. They considered records relating to behaviour and attendance and checks on teaching as well as documents relating to safeguarding. The inspectors also considered the school’s website.

Inspection team

Martin Marsh, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sarah O’Donnell

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- Just over a third of pupils are supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who looked after). This is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is broadly average.
- One in six pupils is from a minority ethnic group other than White British. One in 10 does not speak English as their first language.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school runs a breakfast club which was visited as part of this inspection. There are also after-school clubs run by the school.
- Pupils attend the Reception class full time.
- There has been a high turnover of staff since the previous inspection, with very few teachers at that time still working at the school. A new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2013 and new leaders for mathematics and English in September 2014. There have also been changes to the membership of the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise achievement further so that even more pupils make rapid progress by:
 - ensuring pupils read and follow the guidance they are given as to how to improve their work so it has an even greater impact on their learning
 - expecting all pupils to articulate their thoughts and explain their ideas more precisely using grammatically correct sentences
 - increasing the accuracy of pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation.
- Communicate even more effectively with parents and carers so that all feel involved in the school's work and are better informed about how they can help their children to learn.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are totally committed to the school and its pupils. They receive excellent support from the governing body. Significant improvements have been made in all aspects of the school's work since the previous inspection. This has been accomplished despite numerous changes in staffing. The current school staff fully support senior leaders' vision of providing the very best for all the children and are continuously striving to achieve this.
- Senior leaders check regularly on the performance of individual teachers and identify areas for improvement, which they always follow up to see if improvements have been made. School leaders are prepared to make difficult decisions if the quality of teaching fail to meet their high expectations. The school's appraisal system works well and teachers value the additional training they receive to help them to reach their targets.
- Middle leaders provide training for staff and follow this up with checks on teaching to assess the impact of their work. One example is the work done to improve the teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) in the Reception class. Together with a seamless transition into Key Stage 1 this approach has helped pupils become very confident readers when they leave Year 2.
- The school sets challenging targets for pupils and makes frequent checks to see that pupils are on track to achieve them. Where any pupil is falling behind, steps are taken to address this. The impact is carefully measured and invariably the actions the school takes are successful. This close attention to detail is contributing well to the overall good progress of the pupils and ensures that assessments are accurate when checking pupils' workbooks.
- Most parents and carers are happy with how the school is led and managed. However, a small number raised questions about how leaders respond to concerns that they raise. The headteacher and the deputy are usually available to parents at the school gate at the start and end of the school day. They welcome discussions with parents who may be unhappy about particular aspects of the school's work. However, there is more the school could do to communicate with some parents in order to involve them more fully in the school developments and give them a better understanding of how they can help their children.
- The curriculum the school provides is broad and balanced and gives pupils a wide range of interesting experiences. Visits by Year 1 and Year 2 pupils to the SS Great Britain and the Clifton Suspension Bridge contribute well to pupils' learning about Victorian Britain. Such experiences are use well to stimulate pupils' outstanding writing and drawings about what they saw, and some excellent model making when they returned to school. School leaders are working on developing the curriculum to promote greater accuracy in pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Leaders have ensured that the additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils is fairly apportioned. Governors are aware that gaps are closing between these pupils and their classmates and other pupils nationally
- Teachers use key texts each term. As well as providing a stimulus for lots of interesting work across the curriculum, the texts also promote British values well. *The Iron Man* develops pupils' understanding of mutual respect and *Ice Trap!*, the story of Sir Ernest Shackleton's expedition across the Antarctic, helps pupils' understand human endeavour and courage well. The strong emphasis the school places on promoting British values contributes to the respect the pupils show to adults and to each other and prepares them well for life in modern Britain. The school is successful in providing for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The additional government funding for school sports has increased the number of children participating in aerobic activities in the school's after-school clubs. Dance and gymnastics clubs and a variety of different sports on offer are well attended. Staff are becoming increasingly skilled in teaching physical education by observing sports coaches as they take lessons.
- Leaders, including governors, ensure that effective systems are in place that meet statutory requirements, including those for the recruitment of staff and the safeguarding of children. They promote equal opportunities well and do not tolerate discrimination of any sort.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the school and its good capacity to improve. Leaders value the support and challenge they have been given during regular visits by local authority advisers. This support has helped the school to improve since the previous inspection. The school has also benefited from the training and development opportunities the local authority provides for teachers and governors.
- The school's breakfast and after-school clubs are well managed. The breakfast club gives those that attend a good start to the day.
- **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is very effective. Governors use their good understanding of the school's performance data to analyse how well the school is doing and compares its performance to other schools nationally. This enables them to support and challenge school leaders and help to determine its strategic direction. They are aware of the school's strengths in achievement and teaching and know what still needs to be improved.
- Governors value the regular updates and presentations they receive from middle leaders and visit the school regularly to see for themselves the impact of the school's plans and actions. The Chair of Governors regularly attends school meetings where the progress of pupils is discussed.
- Governors ensure finances are managed appropriately and that resources are apportioned fairly. They ensure that teachers' pay is linked to their performance through the appraisal system.
- The high value the governing body puts on training for its members means they have an excellent understanding of their role.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy school and have good attitudes to learning. Pupils move around the school sensibly and play well together in the playground, often with different age groups. All but a small number of parents who were spoken to during the inspection or who responded to Parent View thought that behaviour was good and well managed in school.
- Pupils are keen to take on extra responsibilities. Many aspire to be members of the school council and are able to explain the democratic process in getting elected. The organisation of events by the school council, such as talent shows for charity, and making decisions, for example about the purchase of playtime equipment ensures that all pupils feel they can contribute to the school community.
- Generally, pupils take a pride in their school. All Year 6 pupils welcome the opportunity to take on an extra responsibility, for example as a librarian or helping out in the dining hall and at lunchtimes.
- Historically, attendance has been below average but it is now improving. This is an example of the increasingly positive attitudes pupils have about school. The school works successfully with families whose children are regularly absent or late for school. As a result, attendance and punctuality are improving for these pupils.
- The school manages pupils' behaviour well and there is consistency from adults in how inappropriate behaviour is dealt with. The school was able to point to notable examples of where its actions had improved the behaviour of some pupils who find it difficult to behave well consistently. These actions enabled the pupils to learn well.
- Pupils say that, occasionally, the behaviour of some pupils stops them from learning and so behaviour is not yet outstanding. However, pupils also told inspectors that these incidents are becoming increasingly rare.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school takes seriously its responsibility to keep children safe. A number of pupils told inspectors how safe they felt in school. All the parents who responded on Parent View agreed that their child was safe in school. Visitors to school are carefully checked at the school's reception desk and they are well supervised whilst on the site.
- Child protection is taken very seriously and teachers receive regular training to ensure that any potential risks can be identified and appropriate action taken. Leaders make regular checks to ensure that any potential issues relating to health and safety are managed effectively.
- Both the school's records and discussions with pupils indicate that incidents of bullying are very rare. Pupils understand about various forms of bullying, including how mobile phones and social media can be used to cause harm. Pupils feel safe from any prejudice-based abuse and said that, if it were to happen, teachers would deal with it quickly. This shows the school is successful in fostering good relationships and tackling discrimination. A small number of parents feel that bullying is not managed well, but inspectors saw no evidence to substantiate this.
- Pupils were able to explain what to do and what not to do when using the internet. Years 3 and 4 pupils demonstrated a good understanding of what they had learnt about e-safety from watching a cartoon which showed them how to keep safe when using the internet.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers know their pupils' abilities and interests well. This enables them to plan lessons which motivate pupils and which are well pitched for the range of different abilities in the class
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this effectively to question pupils in a way that deepens their thinking and learning.
- Classrooms are interesting places to learn and all have helpful displays which support pupils' learning or celebrate their work. In a Year 4 class, a display entitled 'Let's celebrate our progress' shows pupils how their writing has significantly improved since the start of term.
- Pupils report they are well taught and that teachers make lessons interesting. The vast majority of parents who responded on Parent View and who spoke to inspectors agreed with this view. Many parents welcomed the work the school has done to give pupils regular homework activities.
- From early in the Reception class until they are fluent readers, teachers ensure that pupils are taught phonics well. As they become fluent, they are given increasingly difficult texts which help them develop their comprehension skills well. Pupils are keen to write because they are given a wide variety of different opportunities in a range of subjects and genres.
- Mathematics is taught well. The introduction of the new number calculation policy is ensuring even greater consistency in teaching across the school. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils solved a wide range of multiplication and division problems which were very well matched to their ability. They used an excellent knowledge of how to perform the different calculations quickly and accurately. Pupils were all totally absorbed and challenged and made good progress as a result.
- Teachers form good relationships with pupils. Pupils listen carefully and contribute keenly and enthusiastically when they are asked. Sometimes, teachers do not challenge pupils enough to articulate their thinking and explain ideas as clearly as possible. A few teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation and so work occasionally lacks care.
- Additional adults provide good support in lessons. They typically have good understanding of what the pupils are expected to learn and ask questions which help them to complete their work or make them think. They provide particularly good support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. By adapting resources and providing valuable guidance pupils are enabled to get the most out of lessons and make good progress. Adults also provide good support for pupils who are falling behind or having difficulties by working with small groups on specific programmes to boost their understanding.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is effective and provides helpful feedback to pupils about how well they are doing and how they can improve. Sometimes, pupils are not given time to read the comments or respond to additional questions that teachers set for them. As a result, pupils do not always learn from the comments made and so they repeat mistakes.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The progress that pupils are making currently at the school is good and improving quickly.
- Children in Reception make a very good start in learning to read. They use their good knowledge of phonics to write words. This is built on well in Year 1, where the results of the national phonic screening check have been above average for the last two years. The school continues to build well on this good start, so that by the end of Year 6 pupils are confident readers and enjoy reading.
- In contrast to before the previous inspection, pupils are now achieving above national averages at the end of Key Stage 1. This represents good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 1 and Year 2. As well as being confident readers, pupils are keen writers and are developing a good ability to calculate.
- Pupils are increasingly developing fluency in mathematical calculations. This is enabling them to solve problems which involve several operations. For example, pupils in Year 4 confidently solve problems that involve finding fractions of amounts. Year 1 pupils are starting to solve problems involving division. Pupils are also becoming increasingly competent at recalling multiplication facts quickly.
- The school has correctly identified the need to develop further pupils' ability to spell words accurately and use correct grammar and punctuation. Although pupils make good progress in writing, they do not always think carefully enough about these aspects to ensure work of the highest calibre.
- In recent years, the attainment of pupils in Year 6 has been below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics because of previous underachievement early in pupils' school lives. The current Year 6 pupils were significantly behind their peers nationally in reading, writing and mathematics when they left Year 2. Since then, their progress has accelerated and they are now making up lost ground at a good rate.
- In the 2014 Key Stage 2 statutory assessments, disadvantaged pupils made faster progress than their classmates between Years 3 and 6. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment was less than a term behind of that of their classmates in reading and mathematics and just over two terms in writing. Compared to other

pupils nationally, their attainment was about two terms behind in reading and writing and just over a year behind in mathematics. School data indicate that the gap is closing quickly. In the 2014 Key Stage 1 assessments, disadvantaged pupils' attainment was higher than their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics.

- The most able pupils make consistently good progress. They are regularly set work that is more challenging. Several pupils attained Level 5 in the 2014 Key Stage 2 statutory assessments in reading, writing and mathematics, even though none of them had reached Level 3 in writing and mathematics and only one in reading when they were in Year 2.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs make good progress. This is because the school quickly identifies their needs and puts in place additional support to help them overcome their difficulties. This enables pupils to take a full part in school life and to learn well in lessons.
- The small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as other pupils. Pupils whose first language is not English often make faster progress than their classmates. The school ensures they are given good support to learn English. This shows the school is successful in promoting equality of opportunity for all groups of pupils.

The early years provision

is good

- The progress of children in the Reception class is good. Children enter Reception with a range of skills. Many are well below what is typical for their age, especially in their ability to talk and communicate. The proportion who reaches a good level of development is above average and so the children are very well prepared for Year 1.
- Children's behaviour is good and children develop excellent attitudes to learning. They delighted in explaining their work to inspectors. One child, who said she was 'learning about buckets', was able to explain which substances would fall through a hole in the bucket. 'Ice cream will fall through when it melts,' was one comment made.
- Teaching is good, especially the teaching of phonics. Adults use every opportunity to help children practise their sounds and children readily choose activities where they need to read and write words. Children proudly showed inspectors their efforts to write sentences and used their developing phonics skills to sound out and put back together the words they were writing.
- Good leadership has helped adults to plan interesting activities, both in the classroom and in the outside area. Adults know the children well and so plan learning that is based on the children's interests. Adults question children skilfully to deepen their learning and make them think.
- Before children start school, parents are invited into school with their child. This is the start of a process which involves parents in their child's education throughout Reception. Parents spoken to during the inspection are very positive about the education their child is receiving.
- The provision meets all statutory requirements for ensuring children's health, safety and well-being.

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	131698
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	453513

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	176
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Lloyd
Headteacher	Nigel Isaac
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 March 2013
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