

INSPECTION REPORT

COPTHORNE CE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Copthorne, West Sussex

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 126013

Headteacher: Mr A Hawtin

Reporting inspector: Mr Christopher Gray
21037

Dates of inspection: 28 February-1 March 2000

Inspection number: 183423

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	7 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church Road Cophorne West Sussex
Postcode:	RH10 3RD
Telephone number:	01342 712372
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Sheila Dutnell
Date of previous inspection:	30 April - 3 May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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The Registrar
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Copthorne CE Junior School is situated in the village of Copthorne, which lies between the towns of Crawley and East Grinstead, in West Sussex. The school is for children aged seven to eleven, and has 247 full-time pupils (142 boys and 105 girls). Children's attainment on entry is above the national average.

The school is popular and many pupils live outside the catchment area. Pupils come from a wide variety of backgrounds but, overall, their socio-economic background is above national averages. Approximately three per cent of pupils are entitled to receive a free school meal, which is well below the national average for junior schools. Very few pupils come from families of ethnic minorities. There are no pupils whose first language is not English. There are 38 pupils on the special needs register; at approximately 15 per cent of the school's roll, this is broadly in line with the national average. Two pupils have statements of special educational need, and, in percentage terms (0.8 per cent), this is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Copthorne CE Junior is a very effective school which is popular with parents. Pupils work hard and have very good attitudes to their work. The standards they achieve when they leave the school are well above national averages in English, mathematics and science. The overall quality of teaching is very good. The school is very well led by the headteacher and senior staff and the governors are closely involved through effective committees. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above the national average.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are very good.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good.
- The quality of leadership from the headteacher, deputy head and senior management team is very good and governors are involved effectively.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development and for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

What could be improved

- The good level of monitoring evident in English, mathematics, science and information technology needs to be extended to all subjects.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1996. The key issues included improving the long term planning of the curriculum. The school has made good progress in this, though a few subjects still require thorough schemes of work, as the school is awaiting those which are to be published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Pupils' numeracy skills have improved, as shown by recent National Curriculum test results and the findings of the inspection. Teachers' planning now takes greater account of pupils' prior attainment, as required by the last report. The governors have worked hard to develop their role in strategic management and have plans for further development. Registers are now kept in accordance with statutory requirements. Overall, the progress made since the last inspection has been good and the school is well placed to make further improvements.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	A	A	A
mathematics	A	A	A	C
science	C	B	A	B

Key

well above average A
 above average B
 average C
 below average D
 well below average E

The table indicates that pupils' attainment in comparison with all schools nationally is well above average in all three subjects. Compared with those of similar schools, results are well above average in English, above average in science and similar to the average in mathematics. All these comparisons show that the school is achieving good standards and a comparison with national trends shows that the school's overall results are improving at a similar rate. Pupils' results in 1999 met the school's targets, which are realistic and the result of a thorough analysis of pupils' performance. The inspection's findings corroborate these results - attainment in the current Year 6 is well above average in English, mathematics and science.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils are keen to learn and almost all enjoy coming to school. They show initiative and enjoy assuming responsibilities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of the pupils in and around the school is very good. They are generally well mannered and show good self-discipline.
Personal development and relationships	Very good; pupils learn to be independent and they respond well to adults and to one another. There is a secure, family atmosphere in the school where adults and children treat each other with respect.
Attendance	Good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching in the school overall is very good. It is very good or better in 59 per cent of lessons and good in all the rest. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. All teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and most pupils respond well to produce a good classroom ethos. Pupils are encouraged to use time well and they learn to work independently without undue supervision. Good use is made in most lessons of grouping of pupils in order to present them with work which is planned to meet their learning needs. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is also very good. Literacy and numeracy are taught well and information technology is incorporated successfully into many lessons. The marking of pupils' work is not of a consistently good quality in all classes.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Broad and balanced; wide range of extra-curricular activities. Schemes of work in a few foundation subjects are not in their final form.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good; good support given by specialist staff, class teachers and assistants. The targets in some individual education plans are too general for pupils to have a clear appreciation of their own progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good; pupils are frequently encouraged through various areas of the curriculum to explore their feelings openly. Assemblies make a major contribution to the school's explicit teaching of moral values and there are very good opportunities for pupils' social development, such as the school council. A rich cultural approach to the curriculum enables pupils to develop a good appreciation of their own and other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good overall care of its pupils and provides them with very good welfare.

The school has three classrooms in elderly, mobile buildings which have very steep, unmarked steps with no return landing at the top to prevent falls.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very effective leadership by the headteacher, deputy head and senior management team. A clear educational vision enables them to identify accurately the school's strengths and weaknesses.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have effective committees and are increasingly involved in the planning and monitoring of school development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school carefully analyses pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science throughout their time in the school and this information is used well in helping them to make good progress. Although this approach is not used in other subjects apart from information technology, it is a clear priority in the school development plan to extend it.
The strategic use of resources	Staffing, resources and accommodation are used efficiently. Overall, the school applies best value principles wisely to the acquisition and use of its resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and make good progress • Behaviour in the school is good; the school is helping children to become mature and responsible; there is a good range of extra-curricular activities • Children are set the right amount of homework • The school is well led and managed; teaching is good and children are expected to work hard and achieve their best • The school works closely with parents and they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like more opportunities to find out about their children's progress

A small number of parents took the opportunity to raise other issues. Most of these were in praise of the school and the approachability of the staff. Two parents felt that there are not enough opportunities for parents to be informed about their children's progress, an issue also mentioned by several parents at the pre-inspection meeting. On the other hand, one parent wrote to say she is very satisfied with the level of information provided. Inspectors looked carefully at this and found that the quality and amount of information which the school gives on pupils' progress and on all other matters are good. Nonetheless, the school has already begun to review this matter.

Inspectors found that parents have justifiably very good opinions about the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above the national average

1. The pupils' results at Level 4 and above in National Curriculum tests in 1999 were well above average in English, mathematics and science. At the higher level (Level 5), results were well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Using the average point score (where pupils' attainments at all levels are taken into account), overall results were well above average in all three subjects. Compared with similar schools, the overall results were above average in English, average in mathematics and above average in science.
2. Current standards in Year 6 give a similar picture of well above average attainment in all three subjects. Teachers' planning shows careful attention to what different groups of pupils will learn and activities are matched well to pupils' prior attainment. For example, in mathematics, Year 6 pupils were experimenting over a series of lessons with different methods of multiplication; average and lower attaining pupils were working on a grid method, with sums of graded difficulty, whilst a group of higher attaining pupils were investigating an older, Italian method of long multiplication. One pair was asked to explain to the whole class how it worked, which they did with confidence and clarity. In science work, pupils prepare topic books of their own researching in which they use the skills of information technology and literacy well.
3. In English, pupils write in a wide variety of styles and for different audiences. For example, they prepare newspapers for the local community using word processing skills; in other subjects, they write clear accounts of their work, as in science, or about what people in the ancient world believed in history. In a Year 6 poetry lesson, pupils showed their understanding of meter by comparing the rhythms of a sad love poem with the quicker lilt of a lively poem studied in a previous lesson. This led to a good discussion on the emotions lying beneath the words.

Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are very good

4. Pupils' behaviour in the classrooms, round the school and in the playground is very good; this is something that was commented on very positively by parents at the pre-inspection meeting and in the response to the questionnaires.
5. In the playground, pupils respect the division between quiet and noisy areas. During the inspection, most of the boys were occupied in discussing the cards for which there was currently a national craze; they stood quietly and sensibly in groups, animated but self-disciplined. The girls were also very sensible, many of them astonished that the boys could waste so much of their time on bits of card.
6. In lessons, pupils are nearly always ready to start their lessons; they prepare their books with the minimum of fuss and sit expectantly so that little time is wasted and teachers are able to make a good impact straight away. Teachers use this opportunity well so that what is to be learnt and how it fits in with what went previously are clear at the outset. Pupils are interested to know what the focus of the lesson will be and are used to considering at the end of the lesson how successful they have been in terms of the initial objectives. Behaviour is regulated by a shared set of rules which are well known to all and carefully followed. The presentation of pupils' final work is of a good standard, though the stages in between do not always show attention to handwriting.
7. Pupils develop a sense of responsibility and act in a mature way by the time they reach Year 6. The school council is an important feature of the school and many pupils have the chance to be a member. Pupils from Year 3 onwards learn to work without the need for constant supervision, which allows the teachers to focus effectively on small groups.

The overall quality of teaching is very good

8. Teachers set high standards for their pupils, in terms of both the work they are set and the behaviour expected. Almost all pupils respond well, to produce a good classroom ethos where learning is seen as the object of the day and enjoyable. Careful use of a clear knowledge of each pupil's prior attainment is made in planning for what he or she is to learn next.
9. For example, in a Year 3 science lesson, pupils were measuring the temperature of the water in different containers, some of which had been chilled or heated. The teacher was clear as to what she wanted all pupils to learn - the need for an instrument to measure temperature rather than just guessing from the feel of the container. She had also decided what others might learn in addition: some would understand how negative numbers work and others would begin to understand that all the containers were reverting to room temperature.
10. Good use is made of the grouping of pupils in many lessons, not just in English and mathematics. In a Year 5 history lesson, pupils were grouped by their attainment in mathematics because they were to work on timelines, spanning the division between B.C. and A.D. The most able were using reference books to make notes about important events in ancient Greece and had to set their own start and end dates. Average attainers were given tighter parameters whilst lower attaining pupils had to sequence a given set of known events. This careful planning enabled most pupils to make good progress in the lesson and to demonstrate their good subject knowledge.
11. Good use is made of classroom assistants, who are fully briefed and know the pupils well. They use their time well and give effective support to groups of pupils, as directed by the class teacher.
12. The quality of teachers' marking varies, as was evident from a scrutiny of pupils' past work. There are many examples of thorough marking, including helpful remarks for further improvement. Some teachers write questions in pupils' books, expecting written replies, though these are not always followed up when pupils do not respond. Sometimes, marking is sparse and relies too much on pupils' own marking.

The quality of leadership from the headteacher, deputy head and senior management team is very good and governors are involved effectively

13. The headteacher has a clear educational vision which is shared by the deputy head, senior management and governors. The process of development planning involves all staff, and co-ordinators are effective in identifying and budgeting for priorities in their areas. Governors have worked hard in recent years to increase their involvement in strategic planning, in monitoring standards and in judging the success of initiatives; they have their own strategy for developing this further.
14. The school's senior management and governors are in a good position to recognise accurately the school's strengths and weaknesses. The effect of this is that they have already included in the school development plan those few issues identified by the inspection as requiring some improvement.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good

15. There is a very thorough policy which is administered well. Staff keep careful track of each pupil and, by careful use of targets and reviews, are able to move pupils down as well as up the stages. This careful monitoring means that, while the proportion of pupils on the special needs register is broadly similar to the national average, the proportion with statements is below the national average. Individual education plans are written by class teachers and are appropriately used by all staff concerned. However, some of them contain targets which are not sufficiently specific for the pupils to have a clear sense of achievement.

The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development and for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

16. This area was a strength of the school at the time of the last inspection, though it was reported that "pupils have too little opportunity to learn about and prepare for life in a multi-cultural society." The whole area of personal development is now a strength; a rich cultural approach to the curriculum now enables pupils to develop a good appreciation of their own and other cultures.
17. Assemblies make a major contribution to the school's explicit teaching of spiritual and moral values. In a very effective assembly on the power of words and their consequences, two pupils were asked to try and get toothpaste back into its tube, as an effective allegory of how there are things which cannot be reversed.
18. The clearly worded teaching and learning policy gives many opportunities for social interaction in lessons. Pupils regularly experience productive group work in literacy and numeracy. Very good examples of co-operative and collaborative learning were observed in poetry and drama lessons. Year 6 pupils sensitively explored the feelings of loss through a love poem and were able to empathise well with the person in the poem. The next day, they gained an even deeper understanding of the emotions of the poem through a well-planned drama lesson; pupils worked together in a mature manner. Many after-school clubs provide additional opportunities for social interaction through music, crafts and sport. The school council has a valuable role to play in developing pupils' maturity and sense of responsibility.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The good level of monitoring evident in English, mathematics, science and information technology needs to be extended to all subjects

19. Senior staff and governors have been regularly involved in monitoring teachers' planning, the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment in English, mathematics, science and information technology. The co-ordinators review their colleagues' planning termly, and a rigorous timetable of observation of teaching is in operation. This involves discussing planning in greater detail and classroom observation and, on some occasions, allows teachers to watch the co-ordinator teaching her own subject. This has done much to raise the levels of teachers' expertise in information technology. Co-ordinators also review pupils' work on a regular basis.
20. This practice has not yet been extended to other subjects, but has been timetabled in next year's school development plan.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

21. To improve further the standards of work and the quality of education provided, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:
 - * Extend arrangements for monitoring to cover the planning, teaching and learning in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and information technology.
(See paragraphs 19-20)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	17
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
18	41	41	0	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 - Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	247
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	38

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	29	27	56

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	27	28
	Girls	27	23	27
	Total	53	50	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	95 (87)	89 (79)	98 (90)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	26	27
	Girls	24	23	25
	Total	47	49	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (85)	88 (79)	93 (89)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	242
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.2
Average class size	30.9

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Financial information

Financial year	1998-99
	£
Total income	378,518
Total expenditure	379,466
Expenditure per pupil	1,549
Balance brought forward from previous year	13,264
Balance carried forward to next year	12,316

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	248
Number of questionnaires returned	94

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	41	54	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	32	60	6	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	62	3	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	62	13	1	2
The teaching is good.	38	52	4	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	15	59	21	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	39	0	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	45	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	29	64	5	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	50	49	1	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	54	3	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	50	5	1	0

Other issues raised by parents

A small number of parents took the opportunity to raise other issues. Most of these were in praise of the school and the approachability of the staff. Two parents felt that there are not enough opportunities for parents to be informed about their children's progress, an issue also mentioned by several parents at the pre-inspection meeting. On the other hand, one parent wrote to say she is very satisfied with the level of information provided. Inspectors looked carefully at this and found that the quality and amount of information which the school gives on pupils' progress and on all other matters are good. Nonetheless, the school has already begun to review this matter.