



Cofton Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103315
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 276888
Inspection dates 17 October 2005 to 18 October 2005
Reporting inspector Bogusia Matusiak-Varley RISP

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Wootton Road
School category	Community		West Heath
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Birmingham, West Midlands B31 4ST
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4753374
Number on roll	353	Fax number	0121 477 9082
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Lee Winfield
Date of previous inspection	19 June 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Richardson

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Cofton Primary School is in West Heath, close to Longbridge in Birmingham. Numbers have fallen since the last inspection due to a decrease in birth rates. The percentage of pupils on free school meals is below the average. The proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is well below average although the number with statements is in line with expectations. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. The newly appointed headteacher has only been in post since January 2005.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

At present, the school provides unsatisfactory value for money. In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005 HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well in all circumstances than it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in standards, the use of assessment information to aid pupils' progress, the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6, the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, the role of coordinators and attendance.

Despite the unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection, the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory because the new headteacher, senior management team and governing body are working effectively as a team, have a clear picture of what needs to be done and have adequately identified the school's weaknesses. Early indications of improvements as a result of this are most clearly seen in the overall satisfactory provision for the Reception class and the satisfactory teaching with good features seen in Years 1 and 2, where pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Standards are average in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 and above average for speaking and listening. Standards in art and design are also above the expectation and pupils achieve well. Pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6 where standards at the end of Year 6 are below average, and higher attaining pupils are not achieving as well as they could. This is mainly because of unsatisfactory teaching and the weak use of information on pupils' progress.

Pupils have good attitudes to learning, behave well and want to learn. However, their attendance is below average. The curriculum is broadly satisfactory and well enriched with visits, visitors and extra clubs. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall but there are weaknesses in the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and this leads to these pupils making insufficient progress. Although leadership and management are now satisfactory, there are significant weaknesses in the role played by coordinators.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and pupils' achievements in Years 3 to 6 in English, mathematics and science by ensuring that information on pupils' progress is used effectively to challenge all pupils and that teachers raise their expectations of what these pupils can achieve.
- Raise attendance levels by reducing the number of holidays taken in term time.
- Improve the role of coordinators to ensure that they check how well pupils are doing in their areas of responsibility.
- Improve the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities by ensuring the strategies used to improve the progress they make are more sharply linked to their individual needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Children enter the Reception class with average standards. They make satisfactory progress and are broadly in line with the expected standards by the end of the year except for personal, social and emotional development, which is above average. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress in speaking and listening and standards are above average. In reading, writing, mathematics and science pupils attain average standards and their achievements are satisfactory. Good developments recently have led to improved progress particularly for the lower attaining pupils.

In Years 3 to 6, teachers do not build sufficiently well on pupils' previous achievements. As a result, achievement is unsatisfactory, especially for higher attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties. In Year 5, teachers have much higher expectations, for example high quality presentation of writing, and pupils in this year group make satisfactory progress. Nevertheless, this does not prevent below average standards by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Much emphasis is placed on art and design and standards are high and pupils make very good progress. In information and communication technology (ICT), pupils attain average standards.

Targets set for pupils are realistic but not ambitious. Year 6 pupils just missed their targets in 2005 in English and mathematics. The school evaluates itself slightly better than inspection findings however the headteacher is fully aware of the low standards in Years 3 to 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils know right from wrong, behave well and have a sound understanding of different faiths. Pupils have good attitudes to learning even when lessons are not sufficiently challenging. They say that they especially enjoy art and design and working in the computer suite. In Years 1 and 2 and in the Foundation Stage, they develop good working habits and show increasing signs of independence. Pupils work together effectively through the use of 'talking partners'.

Attendance is just below average but there is a high level of authorised absence because pupils take holidays in term time. However, the school's actions to raise pupils' awareness of this have raised levels of attendance in recent years.

Pupils develop healthy lifestyles and the school council reports that pupils receive a balanced diet with plenty of choices as a result of recent improvements. Pupils' contributions to the community are satisfactory. Pupils develop the school's grounds, perform to pensioners at Christmas and raised money for the Tsunami Appeal and Red Nose Day. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are not well developed but they have satisfactory ICT skills. Together with their readiness for their next stage of education, this ensures their economic well-being is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory, due to weaknesses in teaching in Years 3 to 6. Teaching is satisfactory with good features in Reception and in Years 1 and 2. This is because staff have taken on board the guidance offered to them by the rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning undertaken by the headteacher.

In Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning are patchy. The most effective teaching is in Year 5 where the teachers place high emphasis on improving pupils' presentation skills and push them on in their learning. Whilst teachers in Years 3, 4 and 6 manage behaviour well and offer good explanations, their effectiveness is hampered by the ineffective use of information on pupils' progress. As a result, tasks are not matched to pupils' needs, especially for the higher attainers. Teachers have a weak knowledge of what pupils should be achieving, which leads to a lack of challenge in the targets set and a lack of focus on marking, in helping pupils to know what to do next. The teaching of pupils with learning difficulties is unsatisfactory throughout the school due to weaknesses in identifying their needs in Individual Education Plans.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum covers the required range of subjects for pupils in Years 1 to 6 and areas of learning for children in the Reception class. The curriculum is well enriched with visits, visitors, residential trips and work undertaken by artists and dancers. However, too few opportunities are provided in teachers' planning to enable pupils to practise what they have learnt in English and mathematics in other subjects. Activities are not rigorously planned in Years 3, 4 and 6 and this leads to underachievement in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. For example, there are weaknesses in planning for developing guided reading. The school is very aware of this and plans are in place to rectify it.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support that pupils receive is satisfactory, due to the headteacher's insistence that every child matters. As a result, pastoral care is effective but is not matched by the provision for pupils' academic needs. Whilst pupils receive satisfactory guidance in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 as to what they need to do to improve their work, this is not the case in Years 3 to 6. Child protection procedures are satisfactory and pupils are confident that they have an adult to turn to if they are worried and know that they will be listened to. Staff ensure that pupils work in a safe, secure and clean environment and the recent art and design work undertaken in Years 3 to 6 in improving the appearance of the school is exemplary.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management of the headteacher, senior management team and governing body are satisfactory. This is because recent initiatives have begun to have a positive impact on school improvement, especially in the Reception and Year 1 and 2 classes. The newly appointed assistant headteacher is having a significant effect on developing good practice in Years 1 and 2. She is now due to develop strategies for raising pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6. The senior management team has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is soundly placed to make further improvements despite unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection. However, the leadership and management of coordinators is unsatisfactory and this leads to low standards because, as yet, coordinators are not aware of the standards pupils attain nor are they developing best practice in their areas.

This is not the case for the Reception Year where leadership and management are satisfactory. Key information on how well pupils achieve, provided by the headteacher, enables the governing body to make a significant contribution by checking the implementation of particular initiatives. The headteacher has gained the confidence of staff, pupils, parents and the governing body and this supports an effective team effort. She has put in place rigorous systems for performance management but it is too soon for these to have had an effect on teaching in Years 3 to 6. Parents and pupils are regularly consulted and their views are readily taken on board; this is especially evident in the improved quality of school dinners.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us feel so welcome in your school. We were particularly impressed with the get well cards the children in the Foundation Stage made for Humpty Dumpty. I am sure that he will feel better when you send them to him.

We think that your new headteacher is making a big difference to your school but as she has a lot to do she has not yet managed to ensure that the pupils in Years 3 to 6 are progressing as well as the pupils in Years 1 and 2 in English, mathematics and science.

We have made some suggestions to help you improve even further. This is mostly to do with teaching in Years 3 to 6 which is not as good as it could be, for example:

- teachers in Years 3 to 6 are not yet fully aware of what you have learnt in Years 1 and 2 and are not moving you on at a fast enough rate
- those of you who have additional learning support are not making fast enough progress
- standards in English, mathematics and science are not high enough and those of you who find learning easy are not being challenged enough
- teachers who are responsible for leading subjects are not yet fully aware of how they can make learning more interesting for you and help you learn at a faster rate
- attendance in your school could be even better; quite a few of you go away on holiday in term time. Whilst this is great fun it does nevertheless affect your learning.

In spite of these areas for improvement we are pleased with your behaviour and attitudes to learning. Your teachers look after you satisfactorily and they want to do the best for you.

I am so pleased to see that you enjoy your residential trips and your displays on river studies in Year 5 are very interesting. Your school environment is really attractive and the wall displays are super. Once again, a big thank you to all.

Yours sincerely

Ms Bogusia Matusiak-Varley Lead inspector