



Caversham Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109778
LEA Reading LEA
Inspection number 278269
Inspection dates 22 November 2005 to 23 November 2005
Reporting inspector Vanessa Ward AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hemdean Road
School category	Community		Caversham
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Reading RG4 7RA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0118 9015454
Number on roll	385	Fax number	0118 9015456
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs F Smith
Date of previous inspection	21 March 2000	Headteacher	Mrs C Tomkins

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average. The pupils are predominantly from white British backgrounds. A very small number of pupils speak English as an additional language and all do so fluently. The pupils come mainly from homes where they, and the work of the school, are well supported. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is very low. Two of the five members of the leadership and management team are relatively new to the school. The school has gained a range of awards in recent years, including Investors in People and gold awards for Healthy Schools, Arts Mark and Active Mark for sports.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils make outstanding progress. By Year 6, they attain high standards in the national tests in English, mathematics and science. In the Foundation Stage, the children receive a good start to their education and they achieve well. The curriculum is outstanding and offers the pupils many rich and stimulating experiences. Links with external agencies are used very effectively to enhance pupils' learning and their personal development. The school cares for and guides its pupils well and they develop a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe. They behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. Parents express strong support for the school. Teaching and learning are good, with some outstanding and some satisfactory features. However, pupils have insufficient understanding of how well they are doing and of what they should do to improve. The inspection findings confirm the school's judgements regarding its performance, and in particular that leadership and management are good. The headteacher and senior management team know where the school can improve further, for instance with regard to the pupils' personal development. Good progress has been made with all of the areas of concern raised at the previous inspection, though the marking of pupils' work still requires further improvement. The success of recent initiatives, combined with the commitment of staff and governors to support necessary change, indicate that the school is well placed to improve. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

* Teachers should consistently make clear to pupils what they have achieved and how they can improve, both when marking their work and when setting and monitoring progress towards individual targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement and standards are outstanding. Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills that are better than those typically found in four-year-olds, particularly in aspects of social, language and mathematical development. The children make good progress and, by the end of the reception year, a large majority exceed the expected goals in all areas of learning. With notably strong support from parents, the school builds on this good achievement year on year. By the end of Year 6, the pupils achieve standards which are very high in the national tests in English, mathematics and science. Although results are high, the school is not complacent. The school sets challenging targets and the staff are diligent in tracking pupils' progress, and in monitoring strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision. For example, when results in writing at Year 2 were lower than expected in 2004, the staff analysed the causes and took action. As a consequence, results rose significantly in 2005. Although large numbers of pupils achieve high standards, the school is working to improve the challenge it provides for its higher attaining pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties

make very good progress because of the additional support they receive, and because they have access to a rich curriculum which helps them to achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The overall development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Most pupils show respect for each other and for the views of others. In lessons and at break times, their behaviour is good, and they show consideration and care for each other. They have a good sense of right and wrong, and the playground 'buddy' system is appreciated because 'It helps children who want looking after,' as one child put it. The school council is also valued because, as one child said, 'It lets you do useful things for everybody.' Cultural development is well supported by a good range of visits and visitors, including visitors from different faith groups. Pupils are aware of the value of a healthy lifestyle and know what steps to take to keep themselves safe. They readily accept responsibilities within school and have been active in raising funds for charities and for children less fortunate than themselves, through links with a school in Kenya. The progress they make in developing basic skills in literacy and numeracy is outstanding. The great majority of pupils show good attitudes to learning. Attendance is above the national average and punctuality is good. Most pupils participate well in discussions during lessons and are pleased to offer ideas and opinions. They work well collaboratively. In the Foundation Stage, children make good progress in their personal development and this provides them with confidence and high self-esteem.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning range from satisfactory to outstanding and are good overall. In an outstanding lesson in Year 3, pupils learned how to round numbers to 10 and 100. The lesson activities were finely tuned to pupils' learning needs and pupils confidently tackled the challenging tasks with evident enjoyment and success. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported very well within lessons and in small groups when they are withdrawn. Teachers use pupil data to track progress carefully so that teaching accurately meets pupils' needs. The school is now more focused in its planning and teaching and this ensures that more able pupils are challenged to achieve as well as they can. Teachers make clear what is to be learned and how success will be achieved, and this helps pupils to understand the purpose of their work. Realistic targets and well-planned activities ensure that work is matched to individual needs. However, teachers do not involve pupils fully in helping them to understand how well they are doing. In the marking of work, pupils are not consistently shown how they can improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. There is a wide range of well-planned activities to engage pupils' interest and support their progress. The school effectively promotes pupils' understanding of how to stay safe and healthy through the curriculum. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is very effective. There are outstanding features in music, information and communication technology (ICT), art and sport. Pupils benefit greatly from participation in concerts, productions and sports fixtures. They learn to speak French from an early age. The curriculum is greatly enlivened by educational visits and by visitors to school. Special events, including an arts week, music workshops, an outdoor adventurous activities week in Year 6 and drama activities in history, add richness to pupils' learning. The enhanced provision of a new computer suite and interactive whiteboards is having a very positive impact on learning in many lessons. The range of lunchtime and after-school activities is outstanding, and these are so popular they are often over-subscribed. These activities offer pupils the opportunity to broaden their experience of music, sport, cultural and leisure pursuits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Child protection and health and safety arrangements are secure, and all adults working in the school are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. The school provides a calm and orderly working environment where children feel safe, secure and valued. Pupils feel confident in approaching adults for help and advice. The academic and personal development of all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties are tracked thoroughly, and this enables the teachers to know their pupils well. Increasing the involvement of pupils in understanding their own progress is an area for development. Outside agencies and parents provide strong support and make a very effective contribution to pupils' achievements, helping them to attain high standards. Parents expressed their confidence in the school in the pre-inspection questionnaires. As one parent wrote, 'I have two children with very different needs. The school has helped both of them enormously'. There are good links with pre-school groups that help children to settle in well, and links with secondary schools successfully ease the transfer for Year 6 pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, ably supported by the senior management team, has a clear vision for school improvement. She shares this with staff and governors, who are suitably involved in planning and monitoring activities. As a result, the school's capacity to improve is good. All teachers observe lessons and give feedback, but sometimes the quality of this reduces its potential for improvement. The procedures for checking on subsequent improvement lack rigour. The analysis of data, and subsequent planning and action, is given high priority and contributes to the outstanding achievement.

However, the tracking of pupils' progress has been less accurate and, in 2004 and 2005, some of the test results, whilst still good, were lower than anticipated. The school is monitoring the effectiveness of its tracking processes and improving its provision for pupils in these areas. For example, it is taking action to raise the achievement of its higher attainers in mathematics. However, the involvement of pupils in assessing their own progress is unsatisfactory and requires development. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed and this contributes to the children's good achievement. The roles of the subject leaders have improved since the previous inspection. They support staff well in implementing new initiatives, as in ICT, for example. Subject leaders analyse pupils' work, but have insufficient impact on ensuring that the quality of written feedback to pupils is adequate. Governors fulfil their statutory duties and carry out their responsibilities conscientiously and effectively. They are closely involved in all aspects of school development, such as in monitoring the developments taking place in mathematics. The school works hard to increase the involvement of parents, and they are very supportive of their children's education.

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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

Pupils

As you know, we visited your school recently for two days. I am writing to you, on behalf of the inspectors, to tell you what we found out about your school. We talked to some of you, and we would like to thank you for making us feel welcome and for talking to us about your school. It was very useful to listen to what you had to say about what you enjoy doing.

The things we think are good about your school are: * the very good progress you make through the school and the excellent results you achieve in the national tests in Year 2 and Year 6; * your school provides you with lots of very interesting things to do, including after-school clubs, concerts and sports fixtures; * the grown ups in school look after you and help and support you as you grow; you told us that you feel safe and happy in school and that you know the grown ups will always help you if you are upset or worried; * this is a happy school and your parents and carers speak well of it.

We think your school could be even better if your teachers: * help you to understand better how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve. We hope you carry on enjoying your school and help your teachers as much as you can.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Vanessa Ward

Lead Inspector