



# Cople Lower School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 109442  
**Local Authority** BEDFORDSHIRE  
**Inspection number** 288374  
**Inspection dates** 22–23 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Sheelagh Barnes

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Willington Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Cople, Cople
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9		Bedfordshire MK44 3TH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01234 838827
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	56	<b>Fax number</b>	01234 838827
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs J Howard
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs J Donaldson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 May 2001		

<b>Age group</b> 4–9	<b>Inspection dates</b> 22–23 November 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 288374
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Cople is a smaller than average primary school, near Bedford. Fewer pupils than nationally speak English as an additional language and fewer are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is slightly above average. Attainment on entry to the school varies year-on-year, due to the very small size of the cohorts, but is currently average overall. The school has recently been accredited with Healthy School status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has a very accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, based upon a rigorous system of monitoring and assessment. Teachers use assessment information effectively when planning lessons to meet the needs of individuals and groups. Its use by coordinators to analyse trends across the school is good in reading, writing and mathematics. It is also good in physical education and music, where the subject leaders teach all classes and have a very good knowledge of how well each group is progressing. As yet, while at least satisfactory with some good features, it is less well developed in some other subjects, due, in the main, to the very small size of the school and the consequent high work-load on each member of staff. The school recognises this and is working to develop the roles of coordinators of these other subjects further.

The progress made by pupils throughout the school, including in the Foundation Stage is good, due to the good quality of the provision. Standards pupils attain in reading, writing and mathematics are above those expected for their ages by the end of Year 4 and their achievement is good. This is as a direct result of the good quality of teaching and learning the school provides. Teachers work hard and have good relationships with pupils and other staff. They have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and, as a result, pupils know how to behave at all times. Behaviour is good and pupils pay attention and concentrate well in lessons. The main learning objective for each lesson is explained to the class, but the extent to which all pupils know their own individual targets and use them on a daily basis is variable. Parents are pleased with the school. Information to parents is good and school takes good regard of parents' opinions. However, they are not all regularly informed of their children's current targets in as much detail as possible. The school has identified this as an area for improvement in its formal self-evaluation.

The curriculum is good. It covers all of the required subjects in suitable depth and is supplemented by an excellent range of interesting and exciting opportunities, including drama, clubs and additional sport and music. When asked what the best thing is about school, pupils say, 'It is fun!' There is an appropriate amount of investigational and experimental work undertaken by the pupils in science. However, there is room for further development in this aspect to provide pupils particularly in Years 3 and 4, with the opportunity to further refine skills in planning and recording investigations and to take a greater part in their own future learning. The care, guidance and welfare the school provides are good overall. The provision for pupils to learn about a healthy lifestyle and make healthy choices is excellent. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection and the school has a good capacity to continue to improve, due to the determination of all involved and especially the headteacher. The school provides good value for money.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that older pupils and their parents know what they need to do next to improve still further.
- Develop pupils' experimental and investigational skills further in science, particularly in Years 3 and 4, by offering more opportunities for them to participate in and organise practical work.
- Develop the role of the subject leader in subjects other than reading, writing, mathematics, physical education and music, to include more regular evaluation of teaching and learning and standards of different groups across the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Attainment on entry varies year-on-year due to the small size of some year groups, but overall it is average. Children settle well into the Reception class and make good gains in their learning, due to the good quality of the provision. This good progress continues in Years 1 and 2 and by the end of their time in Key Stage 1, standards are above average and pupils' achievement is good. Achievement in Years 3 to 4 is good and pupils make good gains in their learning. Standards are generally above those expected for pupils' ages by the end of Year 4. Pupils from all groups, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities are achieving well and attaining the challenging targets the school sets them.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They behave well in lessons and around the school, work hard and maintain high levels of concentration. Pupils relate well to each other and disputes and bad feelings are rare. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are integrated fully so that they take part in all aspects of school life. Pupils enjoy being in school and attendance is above the national average. They have good opportunities to contribute to life in the community. Pupils also have good opportunities to say how the school is run, through the suggestions box and the school council. This, and their good academic progress, stands them in good stead for the future. They have a good understanding of the need to stay safe and an excellent understanding of the value of adopting a healthy lifestyle.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are hard-working and have good relationships with pupils and with other adults. Teaching in the Reception class is good and leads to children in this class making a good start to their school life. Throughout the school, teaching continues to build upon this good start. Marking is an area that the school has recently reviewed and is good overall. Teachers use their knowledge of the whole class effectively when planning lessons. Class targets are set for lessons but not all pupils know their specific individual targets, based upon how well they have succeeded in previous work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. It provides a clear structure for the teaching of each subject. Planning of individual lessons ensures that pupils of all abilities do work that is at the right level for them. This basic curriculum is supplemented effectively by an extremely wide range of interesting and exciting extra activities. This is especially noteworthy in relation to the very small size of the school. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 dressed up for a Victorian afternoon as part of a history topic, the whole school took part in a recent study of Chinese culture and pupils have many opportunities to represent their school in local and national musical performances. Pupils benefit from the excellent range of sporting and other activities. These experiences all effectively prepare pupils well for later life. However, while pupils have overall satisfactory opportunities to investigate things for themselves, in science opportunities are sometimes missed to practise these skills, particularly in Years 3 and 4.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' happiness and safety are promoted effectively, as are systems to safeguard pupils. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. The systems the school has developed to monitor of pupils' academic progress are rigorous. Teachers set challenging targets for pupils in lessons and share the information with them. The school was awarded Healthy School accreditation in July 2006. Health is promoted excellently and as a result pupils learn to make good choices, such as in their diet. Good care is also taken to ensure that pupils know whom to turn to if they need help with a problem and this makes them confident and happy.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a very clear view of the school based on rigorous and accurate monitoring. This information is shared openly with staff and governors and used effectively to highlight areas for improvement in the development plan. The governing body are strong supporters of the school and feel confident to question and challenge the leadership. All legal requirements are met and financial management is good. Leadership and management of subjects are generally good, particularly in the core areas of reading, writing and mathematics. It is also good in physical education and music, where the coordinators teach the subject across the whole school and so have a very clear picture of standards. However, due to the very small size of the school, the leadership of some subjects, while at least satisfactory, with many good features, is not yet at this level. The school has highlighted this as an area for development.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

24 November 2006

Dear Children

Cople Lower School, Willington Road, Cople, Bedfordshire, MK44 3TH

Thank you for welcoming me to your school when I visited recently and for being so polite and friendly. I really enjoyed meeting you all and talking to you. The things that particularly impressed me were:

- You like coming to school, you behave well and work hard.
- Your teachers teach you well so that you make good progress and standards are good.
- You are taught a lot of interesting and exciting things and have excellent opportunities to go on trips and visits or to learn about interesting things, such as your recent study of the food and culture of China.
- You learn about staying safe and are taught exceptionally well about staying healthy and making healthy choices.
- Your headteacher works very hard and knows a lot about just how well each one of you is getting on.

The things I have asked your school to do next are:

- To make even more clear to you and your parents the things you need to tackle next in your work to improve still further.
- To help you to learn to find out things for yourselves more often in science, particularly in Years 3 and 4.
- For teachers in charge of subjects other than English, mathematics, music and physical education to visit your classes more regularly and look at your work to find out more about how well each one of you is doing.

I really enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn. I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Barnes Lead inspector