

Copplestone Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113068
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	289499
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2007
Reporting inspector	David Townsend HMI

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 on roll	
School	132
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rebecca Glover
Headteacher	Stuart Busby
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2002
School address	Bewsley Hill Copplestone Crediton EX17 5NX
Telephone number	01363 84265
Fax number	01363 85055

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school in a rural setting. Almost all pupils are White British and a few who are from other ethnic backgrounds have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is slightly above average. A higher than average proportion of pupils joins the school at times other than the start of the Reception Year. Attainment on entry to Reception is broadly in line with that expected for children of this age.

The headteacher took up his post at the start of the summer term 2007. Before this appointment, an acting headteacher led the school for a period of 18 months. The teaching team has also been reorganised since the departure of the deputy headteacher in 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Copplestone Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. There has been recent improvement to pupils' achievement, which is satisfactory. Senior leaders are working effectively to improve the progress made by pupils, although there is work still to do to meet the school's higher aspirations.

Standards are broadly average. Whilst pupils' achievement in last year's national tests was adversely affected by the staffing difficulties experienced last year, it is now satisfactory. This is as a result of the improvements that have been secured to teaching and learning. Whilst teaching is satisfactory overall, inconsistencies remain that mean that some learners, including middle ability and, especially, more able pupils, do not achieve to their full capabilities.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is inadequate because the curriculum for Reception children is not planned or taught well enough to allow them to progress at their own pace across each area of learning. Although children make satisfactory progress in early literacy, mathematics and personal development, they do not do as well as they should in other areas of learning. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are inconsistent, however, because not all teachers are fully aware of how to use assessment data to plan challenging tasks to meet the needs of all pupils.

There is satisfactory capacity to improve because the new headteacher has set a clear direction for school improvement. He has a clear view of current performance and school self-evaluation is accurate. The school now has systems in place for checking the progress of each pupil and effective intervention programmes have been introduced for those pupils at risk of failing to reach expected levels.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Pastoral care is good. Assessment procedures have improved but target-setting and marking across the school do not establish accurately what the next steps in learning are for each pupil. As a result, they do not provide pupils with clear enough guidance on how to improve their work. The pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Parents appreciate the caring and happy atmosphere in the school. Pupils enjoy school, feel safe and behave well. They appreciate the broad and balanced curriculum and especially like the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities on offer, which include many musical and sporting options.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage so that children progress well in all areas of their learning.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good enough to help pupils of all abilities to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Make sure that target-setting and marking accurately identify each pupil's next steps in learning and provide clear guidance to pupils to improve their performance. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are broadly average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children in Reception make satisfactory progress with language, literacy, mathematical and personal development. By the time they start Year 1 many have reached the levels expected for their age in these areas and those who have not are working steadily towards them. However, in other areas of learning, such as creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world, children do not do as well as they should because of the inadequate provision across the wider curriculum. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. By the end of Year 2, standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics as a result of the systematic teaching pupils receive in these subject areas.

Test results over time show pupils reach broadly average standards at the end of Year 6. However, the school's recent upheaval led to Year 6 attaining below average results last year, especially in writing. This year, teaching for the oldest pupils is much improved and writing strategies are well modelled. Year 6 pupils are making good progress and are catching up lost ground.

Although achievement is satisfactory for pupils in Years 1 to 6, inconsistencies in their rate of progress remain because the match of work to pupils' ability is not precise enough in all lessons. This means some middle ability pupils and, especially, the more able often lack sufficient challenge. On the other hand, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are given work that meets their needs and this enables them to make satisfactory progress. Those pupils who join the school late are also carefully supported and make satisfactory progress over time.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good because they gain confidence in themselves within a supportive and caring learning environment. Pupils enjoy school, behave well and feel valued as individuals. The school is working hard to promote and reward attendance, which is average at present.

Pupils make healthy eating choices and take up physical activity with enthusiasm. They feel safe in school because they are confident that any difficulties that arise will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils readily accept responsibility and contribute to the community, for example through their fund raising and membership of the school council. However, there are limited opportunities for classes to debate issues of importance to them before the council meets. Pupils are developing essential workplace skills for the future, such as the ability to learn independently, problem solve and lead others. Their progress in literacy and numeracy remains satisfactory overall, resulting in them being only adequately prepared for their future.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have good opportunities to reflect and to develop their awareness of world cultures; for example, a thought provoking assembly helped them draw parallels between their own lives and those of children on other continents.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some good features but inconsistencies remain. Improvements have been secured through reorganisation, closer monitoring of practice and staff training. Teachers make their expectations of behaviour clear, leading to a calm working atmosphere. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to enhance teaching and learning. Teaching assistants enable all pupils to play a full part in lessons. Pupils appreciate the varied and sometimes stimulating learning activities organised for them.

Pupils make the best progress in lessons in which teachers have high expectations of what they can achieve and clarify for each ability group what successful learning will involve. In these lessons, teachers carefully question and assess the pupils' understanding throughout the lesson, adapting the lesson and tasks to take learning forward. In less effective lessons, there is insufficient challenge for the more able pupils in particular and the pace of learning is slower. Inadequate teaching exists in the Foundation Stage in some areas of learning although there is adequate teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Opportunities are missed to move learning forward at each child's own pace during exploratory play through focused adult involvement based on close assessments.

Teachers' marking recognises pupils' successes but is not consistently analytical and constructively critical. This means that some pupils remain unaware of what exactly they need to do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It provides well for pupils' personal development. However, the extent to which activities match the full range of each learner's capabilities is limited. There is an appropriate focus on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is inadequate. The experiences offered are not planned and managed carefully enough to enable children to progress satisfactorily across all the recommended areas of learning. They do not help children to make links in their learning at a sufficient rate. A good range of extra-curricular activities, visits and musicians underpin the curriculum for pupils of all ages and enrich learning. Pupils particularly appreciate and benefit from the range of after school clubs, which include French, singing and many sports, such as athletics, tennis and cricket in the summer season. Pupils visit local centres of interest and places that are relevant to their learning. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' social and personal skills through the good personal, social and health education programme.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is good, providing pupils with an environment in which they feel safe and well supported. Arrangements for child protection and safeguarding pupils are thorough and well organised, and staff are attentive to the well-being of individuals. The school has for some time tracked the progress of pupils. Recently, this information has been put to good use to plan and deploy additional help to meet pupils' needs. This focused support is beginning to improve progress for those pupils who are not performing as well as they should but the full

impact has yet to be seen. Academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory. Teachers and support staff give pupils the help they need in lessons, but the approach to setting targets for individuals is inconsistent in its use of assessment information. The school works effectively with parents and with outside agencies to provide additional support where pupils need it.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Last year the acting headteacher undertook an accurate audit of the school and put in place sound intervention programmes for pupils whose progress was falling behind. The recently appointed headteacher has a clear vision for the way ahead and a determination to achieve challenging goals for the school. He has, in a short time, made a thorough and insightful analysis of the school's strengths and key priorities for development. He has made necessary changes to the staffing structure to ensure that pupils, especially older learners, are taught satisfactorily. He is well supported by the senior subject coordinators responsible for English and mathematics. They have ably led initiatives to improve teaching, resulting in the better modelling of writing strategies and increased investigative work in mathematics. The issues for improvement from the last inspection have been addressed satisfactorily. The school is now analysing pupils' progress data more closely and putting in place strategies for improvement, although individual targets for pupils' future performance are insufficiently defined. Governors are supportive and are developing their role in challenging the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Coplestone Primary School, Crediton, EX17 5NX

It was good to join you in school for two days earlier this week. I enjoyed talking with you, particularly as you were so welcoming.

You told me you especially like coming to school and that you particularly enjoy the interesting activities on offer to you such as through clubs, visits and visitors. You find your teachers and the other adults to be friendly and helpful. I found out a lot about your school.

- In the last year, your school has improved the education you are given so that it is now satisfactory.
- You make sound progress and standards are now rising in school.
- You are taught soundly.
- You feel safe in school because teachers and other staff will help you if you have problems or worries.
- You study the full range of subjects and especially enjoy the after school clubs on offer.
- Your headteacher and other teachers are making clear improvements to the ways you are helped to learn.

I think there are improvements to be made. I have asked your teachers to plan your lessons so that you can make even better progress. I have also asked that play activities for the youngest children are planned carefully and that when your work is marked, you are all given help as to what you need to improve.

I know you will continue to help your teachers and work hard. Keep up the good work.

Mr D Townsend Her Majesty's Inspector