



# Coombe Road Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 114365  
**Local Authority** Brighton and Hove  
**Inspection number** 289886  
**Inspection dates** 6–7 December 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Jacquie Buttriss

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>	Coombe Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Brighton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		BN2 4ED
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 707878
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	280	<b>Fax number</b>	01273 707478
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Vacant Position
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Dennis O'Sullivan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 June 2002		

<b>Age group</b> 4–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 6–7 December 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 289886
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The school serves a relatively disadvantaged area. When children start school, their level of skills is below that usually found. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is well above the national average and there is very high pupil mobility, with many children joining and leaving the school at times other than the usual ones.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Coombe Road Primary School provides a good education for its pupils. Under the headteacher's clear-sighted leadership, very good pastoral guidance is having a big impact on the personal development and well-being of all pupils. They know how to stay safe and healthy and they clearly enjoy their education. This, together with the recent appointment of an attendance officer, has helped raise attendance rates from a low base to close to the average. Behaviour is good throughout the school and any concerns are quickly addressed. This is an inclusive school with an emphasis on equal opportunities, and very strong support is given to vulnerable pupils as well as to newcomers and those with learning difficulties. Indeed, a great strength of the school is the impressive way it takes in and successfully integrates pupils with difficult circumstances, including some who have been excluded from other schools. Standards are broadly average at the end of both key stages. This represents good achievement, especially taking into account the high degree of pupil mobility and the generally good progress pupils make during their stay here. More-able pupils could achieve more if the teaching was more demanding. Several learners said they would like more challenging work 'because we know we could do it'. Teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers employ a range of strategies to make lessons stimulating and to motivate pupils to do their best: 'teachers make lessons fun' was a typical comment. The good curriculum is varied and interesting and is very well enriched by a range of additional opportunities, such as French. The provision for Reception children is outstanding. The care, guidance and support provided by the school is good. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported to help them fulfil their potential. However, academic guidance is less effective and teachers' marking of pupils' work is not always as helpful as it could be. Leadership and management are good at all levels. The detailed analysis of pupils' progress and attainment has enabled the school to identify accurately its strengths and weaknesses and to target what needs improvement. Recent initiatives have improved standards in mathematics, accelerated progress in writing and substantially raised attendance rates. These impressive outcomes demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school: 'I wouldn't have wished for my child to go anywhere else.'

### What the school should do to improve further

- Provide greater challenge for more-able pupils to help them achieve better.
- Make sure all teachers' marking helps pupils to know how to improve their work.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Attainment on entry to the school is below that usually found. Communication skills are particularly low. During the first year at school, considerable emphasis is placed on the development of language skills, with the result that children's standards are above average by the time they start Year 1. In all the other areas of learning, children

reach standards in line with national expectations. This represents good achievement. Throughout the school, standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly in line with national averages. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because they are well supported. However, too few pupils reach the above-average levels because the higher-attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged and their progress is not quite as good as it could be. Those pupils who spend several years at the school make consistently good progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel safe, gain confidence and develop positive attitudes to learning. Indeed, when asked, a group of pupils could not think of anything they did not like about the school. Relationships at all levels are good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' behaviour is good throughout the school and exemplary in the Reception class. The many pupils who join the school at different times, often from difficult backgrounds, are exceptionally well integrated and benefit from the sensitive support and help they are offered. Pupils understand the need for healthy lifestyles and the school has recently won a Healthy Schools award. Pupils are effectively prepared for the future and they show strong community commitment by fundraising for charities. Pupils are proud to have a voice through the school council and have helped to improve the school environment. One child said this helped her 'to be calmer and work better'. Pupils successfully learn to work independently and take responsibility.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good teaching throughout the school helps to ensure that most pupils achieve well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are well organised, with effective management of pupils and activities: 'The teacher makes it interesting,' commented pupils. Explanations and instructions are clear, so that pupils know what is expected of them. A particular strength of the teaching is the good relationships that are developed between adults and pupils. One outstanding French lesson was seen, in which the inspiring teaching excited pupils and motivated them to achieve excellent results. Good support is given to pupils with learning difficulties. Work is adapted to suit their needs, and they receive well-directed help from both teachers and assistants. As a result, these pupils make good progress towards their targets. The school has a good range of assessment procedures, and the progress that pupils make through the school is carefully tracked. However, the information from assessment is not always used carefully enough to provide suitable work for more-able pupils, with the result that there is sometimes insufficient challenge to help them fulfil their potential.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The broad and varied curriculum is greatly enhanced by the high standard of provision in French. 'My daughter speaks more French than I do!' was the comment from one parent. Good links are made between different subjects and this is helping to raise standards. For example, writing standards are improving through using literacy skills in other subjects and the introduction of more drama. There is some inconsistency in science provision and a need to further develop pupils' science skills and give them more opportunities to do their own investigations. The school has plans in place for this to happen next term. In Reception the curriculum is outstanding. A rich and stimulating range of activities and experiences, together with a good balance between independent learning and more directed tasks, contributes to the high quality of children's learning and enjoyment. The curriculum makes a good contribution to developing pupils' safe and healthy lifestyles. There is a clear emphasis through the school on developing pupils' personal and social skills. Strong links with other schools and organisations considerably enhance the school's provision. There is also a wide range of educational outings and extra-curricular activities, which the pupils support with enthusiasm.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The good pastoral care makes a big impact on pupils' personal development and achievement. Pupils are confident that they have an adult to turn to if they are worried. Learning and inclusion mentors are especially well deployed in supporting a variety of pupils' needs. Child protection procedures are good. Staff ensure that pupils work in a safe, secure and clean environment. Safety checks and risk assessments are routinely carried out. Pupils are regularly reminded of the need to take care, for instance, when doing physical education (PE). Teaching assistants provide good support. However, academic guidance is sometimes marred by the inconsistency of teachers' marking, which does not always help pupils to know how to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leaders and managers at all levels set a clear direction for the school, promoting a high quality of care and education. The dynamic headteacher is ably supported by other key staff, all of whom are strongly focused on school improvement. There is good monitoring of provision across the school, leading to the writing of effective action plans. Careful analysis of pupils' progress is a central part of the school's extensive self-evaluation. This results in the production of a well-thought-out plan about how to improve achievement further. The success of recent initiatives demonstrates the school's success in driving forward improvements. For example, the appointment of an attendance officer and the targeting of support have resulted in

a continuing rise in attendance rates. Similarly, a major focus on developing writing skills this term has already led to most pupils making writing progress well above expectations. The dedicated governors are actively involved in the life and work of the school, giving good support and conscientiously fulfilling their responsibilities to help the school move forward. The school listens well to the views of parents and pupils and takes care to respond to their concerns in a positive way. 'Great communication,' as one parent put it.

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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	1
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	3
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	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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### 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	3
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**

- Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we came to inspect your school. You made us feel very welcome and we enjoyed talking to you. Yours is a good school that helps you to make good progress and helps most of you to achieve well. These are the things we especially like about Coombe Road Primary School:
- You are friendly, polite and helpful and your behaviour is good.
- The head, the teachers and all the staff work hard to give you very good care and support and to make sure you enjoy school.
- You and the staff welcome newcomers to your school and help them to settle in really well.
- The teaching throughout the school is good and teachers work hard to make your lessons interesting and fun.
- The children in the Reception Year have an excellent education. These are the things we think your school could do even better:
- Some of you told us that you would like harder work 'because we know we could do it', so we have asked your teachers to give some of you more challenge to stretch you and help you reach higher levels.
- Some of your teachers mark your work with helpful comments and suggestions and we think this could be done in all your books, so that all marking can help you know how to improve your work. We would like to wish you lots of success in your future education.