

West Coker Cof E VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123821
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	292803
Inspection date	16 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Diane Wilkinson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	91
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara Martin
Headteacher	Catharine Jessiman
Date of previous school inspection	27 May 2002
School address	High Street West Coker Yeovil BA22 9AS
Telephone number	01935 862568
Fax number	01935 864145

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	16 May 2007
Inspection number	292803

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

West Coker is a small village primary school to which some pupils travel from outside the area. All four classes have more than one year group. There are a small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups. . Attainment on entry is around that usually found. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average although it varies between year groups.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

West Coker is a satisfactory and improving school with strengths in some aspects of its work. Since the last inspection the school has been through a difficult period with significant changes in staffing which slowed pupils' progress and school development. A number of parents expressed concern about the progress their children had been making. Since the arrival of the new headteacher, her determined leadership, effective direction and hard work have moved the school forward at a rapid pace. Pupils and their parents recognise this. Pupils are unanimous in thinking that 'Our headteacher is great', and one parent typically wrote that 'The headteacher has made a huge difference to the school'. Shared commitment and effective teamwork amongst staff are also contributing to raising standards, although the full effect of the school's strategies has yet to be seen. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Comprehensive monitoring systems put in place over the last two years result in the school having an accurate picture of how well it is doing and where improvement is needed. Weaknesses are being successfully addressed and this gives confidence that the school is well placed to improve further. Governors provide support and challenge, but procedures for their monitoring of the school's work are relatively informal and do not provide a comprehensive enough view of its performance.

The good curriculum is helping to improve pupils' attitudes and raise standards. It is rich, relevant and interesting and motivates pupils well. New programmes of work identify links between subjects. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practice and improve their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. This limits progress, especially for the higher attainers. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in Reception and Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 teaching has improved and is satisfactory, although the pace of learning is not as rigorous as in other year groups and staff are less confident in using computers to help pupils learn.

Achievement, including for those pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities, is satisfactory overall. It is good in Reception and Years 1 and 2, where standards are above average. Provision and standards in the Foundation Stage are good. In Years 3 to 6 progress is satisfactory. However, significant gaps in learning and slower progress made in previous years mean that standards in Year 6 remain below average. This is because there has been insufficient time for some higher-attaining pupils to make up lost ground and they are not yet reaching the standards they should. The improving rate of progress in other year groups indicates that standards are well placed to continue rising.

Pupils' personal development is good. The contribution pupils make to the school and village community is outstanding. Through the work of the school council they play an important part in helping to improve the school. Pupils have a very good awareness of how to improve the environment through, for example, taking responsibility for the school's recycling scheme. Relationships throughout the school are good and pupils feel safe and happy. They like their teachers and enjoy lessons. Their attendance is above average. Most pupils behave well, although some older pupils find it difficult to concentrate and work well with others in lessons.

Care, support and guidance are satisfactory. The school pays good attention to pupils' welfare and pastoral support is good. Academic support and guidance are satisfactory, although staff do not make enough use of pupils' individual targets to help them improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:- -all pupils concentrate and work hard throughout lessons; -staff use computers effectively to support learning; -pupils have more opportunities to use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in other subjects.
- Make more use of pupils' improvement targets to encourage their progress.
- Devise effective systems for governors' monitoring that allow them to gain a comprehensive view of the school's work and the progress of developments. 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 on entry to Reception are around those expected except in some key language skills. Children make good progress and most reach the expected standards by Year 1, with a minority reaching beyond this. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2, where standards are above average in reading, mathematics and science. Standards in writing are average as very few pupils reach the higher levels.

Largely because of the very high turnover of staff in Years 3 to 6, there have been important gaps left in pupils' skills and knowledge. Many pupils did not make sufficient progress in English and mathematics. Standards declined and were below average in the Year 6 tests last year, when the school did not reach its targets. However, present teaching is leading pupils in Years 3 to 6 to make satisfactory progress. Standards are rising as many more pupils are reaching the expected level and the school is likely to achieve its targets. However, standards remain below average because gaps in some higher-attaining pupils' learning are preventing them reaching the standards of which they are capable. Progress in science is good and standards are above average. The improved progress being made in Years 3 to 5 means standards are well placed to improve further.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and children in Reception make good progress in this aspect. Moral and social development is good and pupils are friendly, polite and helpful. The school has done especially well in addressing the causes of poor behaviour and most pupils get on well with each other and behave well. However, a small number of older pupils do not always behave as well as they should in lessons. They lack concentration and find it difficult to work productively with others, which slows the rate of learning. Nevertheless, pupils like their teachers, enjoy learning and want to come to school. Attendance is above average. Cultural development is good and, through their links with a school overseas, pupils are developing a good understanding of other cultures. Spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils recognise the importance of regular exercise and a healthy diet and know ways in which to keep safe. The low incidence of poor behaviour means they feel safe and secure in school. Pupils' contribution to the school and wider community is outstanding. They willingly undertake responsibility, particularly through improving the school environment and acting as excellent guides to school visitors. Pupils' preparation for their future life is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Based on the effective curriculum, pupils are provided with practical and interesting activities which gain their interest and enthusiasm for learning. Staff make sure that pupils are very clear about what they are learning and regularly check to ensure pupils know how well they are doing. However, less use is made of pupils' individual improvement targets to encourage them to do better. In Reception and Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are good. In these year groups, effective use of resources, including computers, and a rigorous pace keep pupils focused and working well in groups or on individual tasks.

Teachers in Years 3 to 6 are having to tackle a legacy of major gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge and poor behaviour management. The school has done much to improve the quality of teaching and learning, which are now satisfactory, although some weaker elements still remain. On occasions the pace of learning slows when adults have to deal with the small number of pupils who still find concentration and working with others difficult. In addition, largely owing to technical problems with computers, staff do not make enough use of them to support learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Much has been done to improve the curriculum in the last two years. Reception activities are well planned and interesting, with very good links made between different areas of learning. In other year groups, very good attention has been given to providing activities which are relevant to pupils and encourage their active involvement. Resources are carefully chosen to stimulate interest. For example, an old box 'found in an attic' was used to encourage creative writing. The effective programme for pupils' personal, social and health education enhances their development. Extra programmes to support pupils who find learning difficult are helping to improve progress and a very good range of after-school clubs, visits and visitors enhances learning and pupils' good attitudes to school. Planning promotes links between subjects. However, this aspect is fairly new and pupils, particularly the higher attainers, would benefit from more opportunities to use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Good attention is paid to pupils' care and welfare. Parents appreciate this and typically one wrote, 'As a parent I feel that the door is always open to listen to and act on my concerns'. Effective safety checks, child protection procedures and staff vetting arrangements ensure pupils are safe, protected and not at risk from adults. Pastoral care is good. In particular, the school's reward system and 'golden time' has done much to improve behaviour. These strengths help pupils to feel secure and happy in school. Effective programmes to support vulnerable pupils and those with specific learning needs ensure they make the same progress as others. Academic support and guidance are satisfactory. Pupils' work is well marked and in lessons they are given advice on how well they are doing. However, pupils' improvement targets have been recently introduced and are not yet used sufficiently to help encourage their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides very clear direction. She has been instrumental in setting up effective systems for monitoring the school's work and tracking pupils' progress. These provide an accurate picture of how well the school is doing and where improvement is needed. Under her leadership, successful teamwork amongst staff ensures that all are increasingly playing an effective role in helping to move the school forward. Although the full benefit of their work has yet to be seen, the capacity for further improvement is good. Careful management of the financial resources has allowed the school to manage the fluctuating class sizes well and to maintain the minimum of disruption to pupils' learning. The school consults well with pupils and parents and has a satisfactory range of partnerships with other schools and agencies to enhance pupils' education and welfare. Governance is satisfactory. Whilst governors are supportive and are increasingly challenging the school in its work, they are too reliant on information provided by the school and from informal visits for their monitoring of the school's work.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
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	3
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	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	2
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

17 May 2007

Dear Pupils

West Coker C of E Primary School, West Coker, Somerset BA22 9AS

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for being so friendly and helpful. We particularly want to thank the pupils who gave up their time to talk to us. We were very impressed by the Year 6 pupils who showed us around and they are a credit to the school. We think that your school is giving you a satisfactory standard of education. It is improving all the time and some things are good already.

This is what we thought was good about the school:

- You have a very good headteacher. She is the main reason why things are improving and all staff are working very hard to make things even better.
- The activities teachers plan for you are good. You enjoy them and also the lots of interesting visits, visitors and after-school clubs that help you to learn.
- Your personal development is good and you are especially good at helping your school to improve things by making lots of good suggestions and taking on responsibilities such as running the school shop.
- Children in Reception and Years 1 and 2 are making good progress because they are well taught, and standards are above average in these year groups.
- Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is helping pupils to catch up with things they have missed in the past and to make better progress in English and mathematics. Progress in science is good and standards are above average in this subject.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- Make sure you all concentrate and work hard in lessons. You can help by trying very hard to always do your best.
- Give you more opportunities to use computers to help your learning and to use your literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in different subjects.
- Make sure governors have better systems for checking on the school's work.

Thank you again for all your help and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

D Wilkinson Lead Inspector