



# Coniston Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 131698  
**Local Authority** South Gloucestershire  
**Inspection number** 293818  
**Inspection dates** 28 February –1 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Jacqueline Ikin

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>	Epney Close
<b>School category</b>	Community		Patchway
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Bristol BS34 5LN
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01454 866920
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	235	<b>Fax number</b>	01454 866921
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Lew Gray
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Bob Callicott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2001		

<b>Age group</b> 3–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 28 February –1 March 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 293818
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Most pupils in this average sized primary school are from White British backgrounds. A small number come from minority ethnic backgrounds, including the traveller community. A very small minority speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is also above average. The number of pupils who start or leave the school between Years 1 and 5 is above average.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a sound school with a number of good features. The school's calm and welcoming atmosphere owes much to the strong and principled presence of the headteacher who is highly respected in the school and local community. Pupils' good personal development and behaviour, their growth in confidence and their positive attitudes towards learning are a result of the very good relationships that teachers have with their pupils and the good opportunities that are provided for pupils to take on responsibilities around the school. The care, guidance and support that the school provides to pupils and their families are good. Parents are overwhelmingly appreciative of the school's work. One commented, 'I have a sense of trust and faith in the school because my daughter sets out eagerly and confidently each day'.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and result in the achievement of all pupils being satisfactory in relation to their starting points. Standards are below average overall, but not exceptionally so, and in reading and science, where pupils make good progress, they are close to average. Although most pupils make satisfactory progress in writing and mathematics, standards lag behind those of other subjects because the targets that are set for pupils to reach are too low in relation to the standards expected nationally, particularly for some of the lower attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6 and the more able pupils in Years 1 and 2. Many pupils enter the school with poor speaking and listening skills. This limits their achievement across the curriculum because they do not always have the wide vocabulary and good knowledge of Standard English that they need to express their ideas clearly. The school's work to improve these skills in literacy lessons is beginning to have a positive effect. However the lack of systematic planning for the development of the skills that pupils need to listen to others and to speak clearly and succinctly means opportunities are missed in other subjects. The curriculum is satisfactory with good use of visits, visitors and activities after school to bring learning to life. Satisfactory provision in the Nursery and Reception classes ensures a well balanced range of opportunities to learn through direct teaching and children's own play ideas.

The overall leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Governors support the school well and take a knowledgeable interest in all that it does. There is a strong sense of teamwork in the school and the actions taken to improve standards of reading and science have been effective. The commitment of the school to the rigorous analysis of assessment data and the dedication of all staff to helping pupils to do the best they can indicates that its capacity to improve further is good.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement further in writing and mathematics by setting more challenging targets for individual pupils to reach.
- Raise standards of speaking and listening by planning for the development of these skills systematically across the curriculum.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

When children join the Nursery many have poor speaking skills and standards are below average overall. They make satisfactory progress although standards are below average by Year 2 and Year 6. Achievement is satisfactory although better in reading and science than in writing and mathematics. Standards and achievement have improved in reading because of an improved focus on the development of comprehension skills and the sounds that letters make. An emphasis on scientific enquiry ensures that nearly all pupils reach the standards expected in science. However, more able pupils in Years 1 and 2 and lower attaining pupils in Year 3 to 6 do not always do as well as they should in writing and mathematics because the targets that are set for them are not high enough. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are not as good as they should be but the school's efforts to improve them in literacy lessons are beginning to improve their vocabulary and use of Standard English. However the lack of systematic planning for these skills in other subjects limits the effectiveness of this work. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well. Traveller pupils also do well when they attend school. Pupils with learning difficulties and those from other minority ethnic backgrounds achieve similarly to their classmates.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy school and when asked could think of nothing that they wanted to improve. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Behaviour is good and in lessons it is often exemplary. A small amount of challenging behaviour from a minority of pupils is effectively dealt with and pupils themselves are often involved in successfully resolving disputes, for example, through the 'Sort-out Squad' in the playground. They have a good understanding of their responsibilities for themselves and others and of how to keep safe and healthy. Pupils make a good contribution to the school's smooth running by volunteering to help in many day-to-day tasks and through their work on the school council. They also make a positive contribution to the wider community, for example, through their involvement in the 'Patchway Festival'. Together with the satisfactory development of basic skills, they are soundly prepared for their future lives. The school does all it can to encourage full attendance and this is improving attendance rates. However, frequent absences among a very small minority of pupils reduce overall attendance to below average.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Some good teaching also occurs, particularly in Year 2 and in Years 5 and 6. Improvements in the teaching of reading through well

focused group work is increasing pupils' skills in working out new words and in finding deeper meaning in texts. The generally good planning for practical science successfully develops pupils' investigative skills. Lively and skilled teaching is proving effective in developing pupils' speaking skills in some literacy lessons. A good example was seen in Year 2 when pupils successfully talked and wrote about the Great Fire of London after acting out the situation. Good teaching in Year 6 improved pupils' pronunciation and grammar in a personal and social education discussion. However this good practice is not consistent throughout the school. A good range of assessment systems is in place and these are used well to plan work which closely meets the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, particularly in reading. However, not enough use is made of the information to set challenging targets and plan work to raise achievement in writing and mathematics.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum which successfully meets the needs of most pupils including those with learning difficulties. However some more able pupils in Years 1 and 2 and lower attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6 sometimes miss out because the targets set for them are not challenging enough, particularly in writing and mathematics. The curriculum in the Nursery and Reception class is soundly balanced to ensure opportunities for learning through both direct teaching and play. Throughout the school there is good provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship. Visits to places of interest, visitors and after school activities are used well to make learning interesting. Recent initiatives to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills in literacy are beginning to have a positive impact. However planning for these skills across the curriculum is not rigorous enough to ensure that pupils' progress is consistent.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a safe and supportive atmosphere where pupils grow in confidence and are eager to learn. The pastoral support and guidance that they receive is very good. Well thought out procedures ensure that the youngest children settle quickly in the Nursery and Reception classes and older pupils are quite confident in approaching adults if they have a problem. The good use of outside agencies, such as the Traveller Support Service, when additional help is needed, has a positive influence on pupils' progress. Rigorous child protection procedures are in place and regular health and safety checks are carried out. The academic guidance that pupils receive is satisfactory and there are some good features. Extensive assessment systems are in place to check how well pupils are doing and they are used well to support pupils who are experiencing learning difficulties. Pupils receive sensitive and helpful support in lessons and work is thoroughly marked with comments to help them to improve. However pupils are not sufficiently aware of what their targets are or of the progress they are making towards them.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The school is soundly led and managed. The headteacher's clear vision for the future of the school and commitment to involving everyone in the decision making process has built a strong staff team that is keen to move the school forward. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher who successfully stepped into the role of acting headteacher during his recent absence. Self-evaluation procedures are satisfactory. Senior managers work well together, and carefully check the school's work through the use of lesson observations and analysis of pupils' work and the results of national tests and assessments. Consequently, the school has a realistic view of its effectiveness. The school's plan for improvement identifies the right areas for attention but the targets that are set are not challenging enough in writing and mathematics. School governance is satisfactory. All governors are strongly committed to the school and its community and work hard on their behalf. The chair of governors visits the school regularly and provides good support.

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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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<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>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<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>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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**

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn and play. We can see why you are so proud of your school and agree that it gives you a sound education.

What we found about your school:

- Your headteacher and all the staff have created a warm and friendly atmosphere which helps you to learn.
- You work hard in lessons and do well in reading and science.
- You behave well and look after the school and each other well.
- The school council works well and you do a lot to help the school run smoothly.
- The school takes good care of you and helps you to understand how to keep yourselves safe and healthy.

What we think needs to be improved:

- The way the school helps you to improve your speaking skills.
- Your targets in writing and mathematics need to be higher to help you make better progress.

You can help to make the school an even better place through your work on the school council, through continuing to work hard and getting to know what your targets are, particularly in writing and mathematics.