

Cockington Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113229
Local Authority	Torbay
Inspection number	311164
Inspection date	11 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Alex Baxter

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	383
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debra Wilson
Headteacher	Sandy Guertin-Bryan
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2004
School address	Old Mill Road Torquay TQ2 6AP
Telephone number	01803 214100
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- The extent to which the school meets pupils' varying individual needs.
- How effectively leaders and managers bring about improvement, especially in writing and mathematics and by more able pupils and boys
- The degree to which teachers and their assistants encourage pupils to learn independently, including by using information and communication technology (ICT.)

Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons and pupils at lunch and play. Teachers' assessment records and pupils' work were scrutinised. Discussions were held with pupils, staff, governors and parents. Parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire were analysed. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

In this large primary school, children's attainment on entry generally matches the level expected of children for their age, but can vary significantly. There is a high rate of pupil movement into and out of the school other than at the normal times. The proportion of pupils who find learning difficult and/or have disabilities is above average. The school holds the following awards: Healthy School Status, Sports Active Mark and Basic Skills Award 2007. The school has experienced a continuing renovation scheme in recent years and currently a large extension to the main building is under construction.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Cockington is a good school that continues to improve. It already has several exemplary features. The outstanding leadership of a very experienced headteacher and senior colleagues and high quality care, support and guidance given by all the staff, promote the pupils' excellent personal development and wellbeing. Other strengths include excellent governance, consistently good staff support and very effective links with parents and outside agencies. The school's excellent educational direction is clearly evident in the improvements made since the last inspection, for example, in establishing good provision for children in the Foundation Stage. The school has done particularly well to sustain a good quality of education for the pupils and to raise standards during an extended period of disruption due to the upgrading of the school's accommodation and facilities. These accomplishments, in difficult circumstances, demonstrate an excellent capacity to improve into the future. Most parents are quick to recognise these qualities and appreciate the work of the school and one parent wrote, 'My children are well cared for and I am very happy with the school and the learning environment they provide'.

All pupils, across a wide range of abilities, including an above average proportion admitted later than the normal time of entry, achieve well academically. Consequently, standards are typically above average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. However, standards are only slightly above average in the current year because there is more than the usual number of pupils who find learning difficult. Even so, by the end of Year 6, in response to a strong whole school focus, including specifically for boys and more able pupils, writing skills have been improved and an increased number of pupils have attained higher than expected standards. The many trophies on display show that sporting skills are also particularly well developed. Although organised well in some parts of the school, pupils' problem solving skills in mathematics and investigative skills in science are relative weaknesses. This is because building works and occasionally missed opportunities in lessons have constrained these aspects of learning.

Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage because activities are carefully matched to their individual needs. Pupils make good progress through Years 1 and 2, especially when learning is based on practical activity. Pupils continue to progress well through Years 3 to 6, where progress accelerates, at times, when pupils benefit from increased opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and, increasingly for the more able, is very good. The school works closely with parents and outside agencies and as a result, these pupils often make very good progress, especially towards their individual literacy targets.

In response to excellent care, pupil's behaviour, attitudes to learning and relationships are outstanding. Pupils' ideas are valued and acted upon and the work of the school council and the school nutrition group are worthy of note, with pupils being passionate when undertaking several responsibilities and supporting other pupils at playtimes as 'Play Buddies' and 'Peer Mentors'. Pupils really enjoy school, adopt very healthy, safe lifestyles, and contribute fully to the community. As pupils really like school, they enjoy attending. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, especially their empathy towards each other and awareness of citizenship, are outstanding. Pupils say, 'We put all our effort into what we do and we listen and learn from each other'. These personal skills, in combination with their good academic skills, prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

Teaching and learning are good across the school. Teachers plan their work effectively and build well on the pupils' previous experience. The staff give the pupils close individual attention and, increasingly as they grow older, involve them productively in evaluating their efforts. Teachers assess and track the pupils' progress well and have established 'pivotal groups' where, for example, pupils' language and social needs are tackled with very effective precision. Together with good support from teaching assistants, this approach has been successful in improving pupils' behaviour and literacy skills. At times though, pupils are not given enough opportunities to find things out for themselves, for example, by solving real life problems in mathematics and following their own investigations in science. The teachers give good academic guidance, especially when marking written work. Pupils welcome this and say, 'We know our targets, where we go wrong and what we have to do to improve'.

The school provides a good curriculum for the pupils. It is enriched by an excellent range of clubs and visits and a strong emphasis on personal, social and health education. Literacy is developed very effectively, beginning with children correctly pronouncing letters and words and leading to the expressive use of vocabulary when writing in a range of subjects. The pupils also benefit from a comprehensive range of sporting activities, including at playtimes. The school has upgraded information and communication technology equipment in recent years and these are being used with increasing success to enhance pupils' learning. Currently, owing to building works, the curriculum is implemented by precisely timetabled use of the school's facilities. Whilst most importantly this ensures the pupils' well-being, their free movement in the school to use facilities and resources and follow their own lines of enquiry is constrained at times. The facilities currently being built are designed to address this issue, particularly in the Foundation Stage.

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher gives an excellent lead, encourages effective teamwork and is very well supported by senior leaders. Governors fulfil their responsibilities highly effectively, especially with the headteacher, in gaining much needed improvements to the school's accommodation. There are good procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school. Target setting is used effectively to bring the desired outcomes in improving pupils' attainment and has played a key role, for example, in lifting pupils' writing skills.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall, but very good in developing the children's speaking and listening, reading and early writing skills. The teachers and their teaching assistants ensure children experience a good curriculum, which includes an optimum balance of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children themselves. Work is matched very well to the children's needs. At times though, because of the limitations imposed by the outdated accommodation and facilities, the children's ability to choose to play and learn outdoors is constrained during inclement weather. Children of all abilities make good progress with most either reaching average or above average levels on entry to Year 1. Even though a substantial minority of children often enter with lower levels of understanding and using words, most make very good progress in this particular area of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils more opportunities to solve problems in their number work to increase their confidence and skill in mathematics.

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to undertake their own practical investigations and thereby improve pupils' achievement in science.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	1

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	1
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

11 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cockington Primary School, Torquay, TQ2 6AP

Thank you for welcoming me when I visited your school yesterday, and a particular thanks to those of you, including members of the school council, school nutrition group and the Year 6 pupils, who helped by sharing your views with me. I was very impressed by the warmth of your welcome, your politeness and excellent attitudes to school. I have no hesitation in agreeing with you and with many of your parents, who feel that yours is a good school.

These are the other main things I found:

- You make good progress because you are taught well, experience an interesting range of activities and know what you have to do to improve. As a result, standards are mostly better than those found in other schools
- You behave extremely well, feel safe and enjoy learning because you receive excellent care and support each other in a very kindly way.
- You adopt extremely healthy lifestyles and contribute to your school and community in an exemplary fashion. These are all the more impressive at a time when, because of building works, parts of the school and normal route-ways are closed.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors run the school well. They work very closely with your parents and other people to help you with your personal needs.

To help the school to improve I have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to give you more opportunities to solve problems in mathematics and to develop your own investigations in science. You can help too by continuing to do your best.

With thanks again and good wishes for the future

Alex Baxter Lead Inspector



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Lead Inspector