

Coopersale and Theydon Garnon Church of England Voluntary
Controlled Primary School
Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115095
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	311829
Inspection dates	8–9 May 2008
Reporting inspector	John Paull

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	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Bryony Morrison
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Miller
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2003
School address	Brickfield Road Coopersale Epping Essex CM16 7QX
Telephone number	01992574890
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Coopersale and Theydon Garnon Church of England Primary School is smaller than average. The large majority of its pupils are of White British heritage, although a small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is around average, as is that for those with a statement of special educational needs. The proportion known to be eligible for a free school meal is below average, although a broad range of social circumstances is represented and includes a few looked after pupils. Pupils' attainment on entry also varies widely both from year to year and within year groups although, overall, it is broadly average.

The school holds the Sport Council's Active Mark and is working towards a Healthy Schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Coopersale and Theydon Garnon Primary School provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. Some aspects are already good, including the school's partnerships with parents and outside agencies. One typical comment from a parent was '...Everyone here has the children's interests at heart. The headteacher is just as willing to help the parents if they're in difficulty - that's what I've found.'

It is an improving school, owing to the headteacher's good leadership. For example, together with the staff, she has redesigned the curriculum to meet pupils' wide ranging needs better. It contains all that it should and much is added in terms of strong personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) and well planned religious education (RE). Many after school activities of good quality enhance learning further. Allied to strengths in pastoral care, this is resulting in pupils' good personal development and wellbeing, which includes elements of excellence related to their contributions to managing the daily life of the school and their exceptional enthusiasm for what it offers them. Their behaviour and their attitudes towards keeping healthy and safe are also good and pupils' sound basic skills form a satisfactory foundation for future life and learning. The good curriculum, however, is not having impact to the same extent academically. The main reason is that not all leaders and managers have been sufficiently rigorous in using information about pupils' progress. While leadership, management and governance are satisfactory overall, this inconsistency leads to differences in the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils' progress therefore varies at different stages through the school and in different subjects. It is good in the Foundation Stage class and amongst older pupils but, while it does not drop to below satisfactory, it is not as rapid elsewhere. Similarly, national test results at the end of Year 6 tend to be higher in English and mathematics than in science. Recent analysis has shown up weaknesses in pupils' skills in practical investigations and in carrying out experiments. In English, pupils' performance in writing is not as good as in reading or speaking and listening. Convincing initiatives to rectify these matters either are in place or are planned, but not enough time has elapsed to measure their full effectiveness. Nevertheless, improvement is underway and inadequate aspects in the last inspection are now satisfactory, suggesting that the capacity for continuing improvement is sound and likely to accelerate as changes take effect.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The school's monitoring indicates that inadequate teaching has decreased in recent years and, as the much improved curriculum influences planning more fully, is set to improve further. Care, guidance and support remain satisfactory, rather than good. This is because very clear strengths in pastoral care are not fully matched academically by the use of information about pupils' progress. A telling exception is in the Foundation Stage. Here, action taken in elements of mathematical development has turned a weaker area into one of real strength. Provision for special educational needs is another aspect where careful, knowledgeable management is resulting in good progress for pupils who experience difficulties in their learning.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Standards and provision in the Foundation class are good. Resources are managed effectively and young children benefit from good teaching based on a well planned curriculum. This includes all required areas of learning for the age group. Good systems for assessing and tracking progress

are evident. These indicate that from broadly average starting points when they enter school, children make good progress. Achievement is therefore good and the large majority are on course to achieve expected goals at the end of the year. Several are likely to go further than this, demonstrating good knowledge of number and emerging writing skills for their age. Provision for those who find it harder to progress is also good including helpful and effective advice from the school's special needs coordinator, which leads to early corrective intervention to improve learning. Resources inside the classroom and in the outside space fully support learning in all aspects, so what children do outside reflects and extends their indoor activities very well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency with which good teaching and learning occur, especially in enquiry and experimental skills, thereby raising standards in science.
- Maintain the focus on pupils' writing skills, so overall achievement in English is improved.
- Make sure that all teachers and subject leaders use information about pupils' progress to plan their work to the best possible advantage.

A small proportion of 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

Pupils achieve satisfactorily, although standards vary from year to year and between subjects. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language match the performance of other pupils. Two years ago, standards by the time pupils left in Year 6 were above average but dropped back over the next two years. In 2007, national test results were average. In recent years, performance in science has lagged behind that in English and mathematics. Teachers have depended too much on a commercial scheme for teaching science. This has meant pupils' experiences in setting up scientific experiments and enquiries have been too limited, resulting in weaknesses in these aspects of the subject. Changes in the curriculum have ensured more emphasis on investigations and experimental work. This was clearly apparent during the inspection, although impact on performance is yet to be sustained. Standards by the end of Year 2 are currently average. National assessment results in 2007 were broadly average but better in reading, in which they were above average, and in mathematics, than in writing. Steps are underway to improve pupils' writing skills. Arrangements for pupils who struggle with learning are good. Knowledgeable teaching assistants support teachers effectively, ensuring that these pupils understand what to do to progress towards their individualised targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

A Year 2 pupil commented on the remarkable effectiveness of the school's Year 6 prefects and playground leaders - 'They help you a lot if you are sad or can't find someone to play with.' This type of contribution to running the school smoothly is typical of its pupils. They also support local and overseas charities and have good relationships with the Parish Church and vicar, who is also Chair of Governors. They are polite and eager to offer such service. Pupils move sensibly and safely in and around the building and can explain a variety of other ways of keeping themselves safe. They also know much about eating healthily. Pupils' spiritual, moral,

social and cultural development is good. Strengths in RE and PSHCE are developing their sense of right and wrong, and knowledge of various faiths and cultures effectively. As a result, they are tolerant and show both respect for and interest in cultures and beliefs different from their own. Sound basic skills prepare pupils satisfactorily for the future world of work. In the Foundation Stage class, personal, social and emotional development is particularly strong with all adults acting as very effective role models. Pupils are overwhelmingly positive in their willingness to say that they enjoy school. Nevertheless, owing mainly to being taken on holiday during term time, their attendance, while satisfactory, does not match up to their outstanding enjoyment of school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory, but variable. Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are developed satisfactorily, which contributes to sound development of their future economic wellbeing. However, teaching is good in older age groups and more often in English and mathematics than in science, although this is improving. Pupils who find their work hard receive good teaching. Their needs are identified accurately, and teachers and teaching assistants provide the support to ensure that such pupils make good progress. At its best, teaching is lively and well planned and individually directed questioning develops learning and ensures progress very effectively. In all classes, planning is adapted well to meet individual needs, which is an improvement since the last inspection. This helps to engage pupils, so they enjoy their tasks. However, assessment is not used equally effectively in all classes to challenge pupils at the correct level. This is especially the case in science, where past use of a commercial scheme has resulted in work that is not always pitched at the correct level of difficulty for each pupil.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has undergone much development and now provides teachers with a good basis for their lesson planning. It is more directly focused on, for example, different styles of writing and scientific enquiry. That said, some of this development is recent, so not yet impacting fully on standards. Further developments to hone the order in which skills should be acquired are also underway. All required subjects are included, with particular strengths in RE and PSHCE. Further enrichments, stemming from themed afternoons in all age groups and after school clubs, have resulted in introductions to French, Spanish, country dancing, gardening, and a variety of sports and outdoor and adventurous pursuits. Pupils value these activities greatly and this adds much to their enthusiasm for school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school's academic guidance, which is satisfactory, does not match its pastoral care, which is often very good. Pupils are delighted that their school council looks after their interests well. 'When we have an idea, I think the teachers discuss it as well and, if it's a possible one, the headteacher does it,' is typical of their opinion and they are correct. This creates a strong sense of wellbeing and contributes to good relationships. Furthermore, arrangements for safeguarding, child protection and health and safety meet all current statutory requirements. However, not

all staff are equally good at deciding the precise level of pupils' work, especially in science, and then using such information to pitch lessons accordingly. Support for pupils who struggle in any way is, however, strong and unstinting, and expert advice from outside agencies is sought quickly and accepted whenever possible.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides good, clear direction and evaluates performance accurately and realistically. Governors receive the information that they need to support the school's leaders and managers and to offer help and expertise. This has produced steady improvement since the last inspection whereby inadequate elements identified then are now satisfactory. Nevertheless, some differences in performance across subjects remain. This is largely because leadership across different aspects of provision has not been sufficiently consistent, resulting in variations in rates of pupils' progress. Convincing procedures are now in place to rectify this situation.

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
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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
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Coopersale and Theydon Garnon Church of England (VC) Primary School, Coopersale, CM16 7QX

Thank you for being so polite and helpful when I inspected your school. I was pleased that so many of you told me that you enjoy school very much. I thought that all the things you do in and around your school to help it run smoothly, including the work of prefects, playleaders and school councillors, are outstanding. Your behaviour and attitudes towards each other and to people of backgrounds different from your own are good. I believe that your school provides you with a satisfactory education and that the standard of your work is around average.

Here are some important things that are good about your school:

- Many of you read well for your age.
- What is taught is well planned and improving.
- Your teachers take good care of you.
- Provision for children in your Foundation Class is good.
- Your headteacher has good ideas for improving your school further.

Here are the three main things that I have asked your school's governors, headteacher and teachers to do next, because I think these things will improve your school quickly:

- Provide you with better opportunities to gain enquiry skills and to work on your own experiments in science.
- Help you even more with your writing skills.
- Make sure that all of the staff use information about your progress to plan your work to the best possible advantage.

You can help by continuing to be as well behaved and enthusiastic about school as you are already. I wish you all well for the future and hope that you will always be proud of your school.

Yours sincerely, John W. Paull, (Lead inspector)