

Coalway Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115550
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	311972
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Daniel Towl HMI

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart McLester
Headteacher	Fay White
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2002
School address	Coalway Road Coleford GL16 7HL
Telephone number	01594 810271
Fax number	01594 812739

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is an average- sized school. It takes pupils from Coleford and surrounding villages. It has an average number of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities. The school is piloting an extended school provision. The headteacher was appointed in September 2005.

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 satisfactory school that is successfully improving its practice. Under the very good leadership of the headteacher, the school is improving pupils' achievement, which is now satisfactory. This follows a period of declining standards and underachievement, especially in English, where girls' performance had been weak. The school has introduced much more rigorous checking of pupils' progress and this has led to focussed teaching, improved curriculum planning and more effective learning. The school has set itself challenging targets for the 2008 national tests. Pupils are making less progress in their writing than reading, but it is improving and they now write for a wide range of purposes across the curriculum. The school's own detailed analysis has identified that certain types of calculation in mathematics require improvement.

Pupils enjoy school and attendance is good. Pupils say that they love school and speak glowingly, describing it as 'wonderful', 'friendly', and 'smashing'. The school provides an interesting and broad curriculum in which good links are made between the different subjects studied. Pupils participate well, not only in lessons but also in other activities. They consider others less fortunate than themselves, for example by raising money for various charities. They take on responsibilities confidently and welcome the opportunities that exist to have their say through the school council. Pupils understand the importance of physical activity and healthy diets.

Teachers and pupils have good relationships which are based on mutual respect. Teachers plan a good range of interesting activities and tasks and pupils therefore work hard. The headteacher has been very active in monitoring the quality of teaching, and expectations of staff are clear. Lessons are mostly well matched to pupils' needs and satisfactory overall, though this is not yet consistent.

Procedures for employing staff and safeguarding pupils meet all requirements. The headteacher and staff develop excellent relationships with other agencies to support and care for all pupils and especially those who are most vulnerable.

What the school should do to improve further

- use the improved procedures for checking thoroughly the progress of girls to ensure that their achievement does not fall below what is expected of them
- raise standards in English and mathematics, by improving pupils' achievements in writing and their knowledge of calculations
- improve the management of lessons so that pupils of all abilities get the most from the planned activities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievements are satisfactory and standards are average. Standards have fallen in recent years and, in the 2006 tests, there was underachievement because pupils had not made enough progress. Girls' achievement was particularly weak. This was the result of ineffective teaching and insufficient monitoring of pupils' progress. The headteacher rapidly introduced new procedures to check both the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils. This has led to a change in teaching and learning and improved achievement for boys and girls. Specific interventions in English, for example an intensive phonic support programme and new reading books, have had a beneficial impact and some lower-attaining pupils have made good progress

in the last year. Sentence construction and spelling in English and calculations and multiplication tables in mathematics have all rightly been identified by the school as areas for improvement in order to raise standards and improve achievement. All pupils have appropriate targets in English and mathematics, including those who have learning difficulties or disabilities and statements of special educational need.

Pupils' key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school because staff treat them with respect and have established clear routines and expectations. In lessons, they are keen to learn and most respond eagerly to the challenges set for them. They cooperate well in pairs and small groups. They enjoy the use of 'talking partners' to exchange views and ideas.

Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for, mentioning as an example the wearing of fluorescent jackets when out walking. Pupils do not perceive bullying as a problem. As one pupil put it, 'We don't really have bullies in this school'. They are confident that they could turn to an adult if they needed help.

Pupils show a good understanding of how to lead a healthy life. They are proud they have healthy snacks at break-time, but not all lunch boxes reflect the healthy eating drive.

The school council members enjoy the chance to raise ideas to make the school better. They have expressed views and been involved in matters concerning the quality of the toilets, ICT provision, playground rotas and healthy eating. Older pupils willingly take on prefect responsibilities and are positive about their role as 'friendships partners' to the younger pupils who join the school in Year 3.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving because teaching is now monitored more rigorously. There is some good teaching and some that is outstanding. The result of the improved teaching is that pupils are making more rapid progress and achievement is satisfactory.

Teachers and pupils have very good relationships and this leads to a productive classroom atmosphere where pupils are willing to undertake their tasks. Most pupils work hard and enjoy their lessons. Teachers plan carefully, taking into consideration the needs of the class. Sometimes, although activities themselves are appropriate, they are not managed in such a way that all pupils get the most benefit, especially the lower-attaining.

There are now common approaches and classroom strategies. In nearly all lessons, there are opportunities for pupils to share ideas and views with each other, either through skilled questioning by the teacher or by pupils working with 'talking partners'. This has had a very positive impact on pupils' speaking and listening which is now a strength of the school, whereas it was highlighted as a weakness in the last inspection. Some teachers are using a quick pace and injecting urgency into lessons in order to motivate and sustain pupils' interest and

productivity. Where learning is most effective, pupils use their own initiative in their response to the tasks set.

Assessment is good. Teachers are gathering useful evidence to compare the pupils' work against national expectations to check that pupils achieve what is expected of them. Teaching assistants provide valuable and effective support to small groups and individuals.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is broad, yet focuses on developing key skills. Teachers have developed a range of stimulating topics and pupils present this work in their own topic books, of which they are justifiably proud.

The curriculum is made more interesting and relevant through the development of themed weeks, for example an arts festival week which provided valuable opportunities for pupils to gain experience of other cultures and to take part in activities such as African drumming. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. There is a well-organised plan of lessons and special project weeks, during which pupils consider issues such as relationships and health. Links between subjects are well developed and pupils like this approach. They successfully develop their ICT skills and write for a wide range of purposes and audiences.

The curriculum is enriched by visiting speakers who talk about local services and careers. An international dimension to the curriculum is provided by a project that develops links between schools in France and Romania. Further breadth is gained through the provision of a good range of after-school clubs and extended visits for Years 5 and 6.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Staff exhibit a high degree of care and concern for pupils' welfare. Most parents are positive about the care given to their children, and pupils feel safe and well supported. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils and for minimising and assessing risks are well established. Pupils who have particular needs and those who are most vulnerable are supported well, sometimes in collaboration with outside agencies. Pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities have good support which enables them to make the same progress as other pupils. The academic support and guidance given to pupils is good. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own and others' work. Teachers' marking is good. Teachers usually write comments which help pupils know what they need to do to improve. Pupils find these comments and their targets helpful.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has made a significant difference to the school. Following her appointment, she wasted no time in analysing what needed to be done, especially in the area of raising standards, and has pursued improvement with vigour. There has been rapid change and improvement in practice leading to better teaching and learning, resulting in pupils' improved progress. There are clear expectations of senior

managers and all staff. Governors, too, are playing their part in developing and improving the school.

Most significantly is the rigour with which pupils' progress is now monitored, leading to the better targeting of resources, both in terms of personnel and learning resources. Resources have been used effectively, not only to improve the physical environment but also in raising the profile of ICT which now pervades pupils' learning and is contributing effectively to raising standards in writing and speaking and listening. Pupils and staff are very positive about the improvements in ICT.

Despite the rapid pace of change, procedures are embedding quickly and thus the school has a good capacity to improve.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
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

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	2
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	2
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?	2

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	3
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	2
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

24 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Coalway Junior School, Coleford, GL16 7HL

Thank you very much for your help while we were inspecting your school. We enjoyed talking with you and watching you at work in your lessons. You all seemed to enjoy the activities during the arts festival week. We are very pleased that many of you told us that you enjoyed school and found your work interesting. You get on well with each other and your behaviour is good.

The variety of subjects you learn about is good. You told us that you were pleased about the improvements in ICT and we could see that it was helping you in the different subjects and topics that you study. You know about healthy eating and taking lots of exercise to keep fit but we thought that some of you could do better with some of the items in your lunch boxes to make them healthier.

Since Mrs White has been headteacher, she and the staff have made some important changes so that they can check how well you are doing and give you extra help if you need it. You are making satisfactory progress. With the changes that have been made and with your teachers' help, we expect you will do even better.

We have asked Mrs White and the staff to do to three things to make the school even better:

- make sure that all pupils, girls and boys do as well as they can
- find ways to help improve your writing so that it is more accurate and also help you understand more about calculations in mathematics
- make sure that everyone in the class is successful with the activities that are planned for you.

You can help, too, by continuing to work hard and do your best.

We hope that you continue to enjoy going to school. Thank you once again for your help.

Yours faithfully,

Daniel Towl HMI