

Coney Hill Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115603
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	311996
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2008
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Terry Bullingham
Headteacher	Rachel Wadley
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2003
School address	Coney Hill Road Gloucester GL4 4NA
Telephone number	01452 522734
Fax number	01452 522785

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Coney Hill Community Primary School serves a deprived area of Gloucester. It has twice as many pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as the national average. The majority of these have moderate learning difficulties. Most pupils are White British and almost all speak English as their first language. The school has an attached nursery that was inspected separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Coney Hill Community Primary School provides a good education. A number of elements are outstanding, particularly the way the school supports and encourages parents and carers in the local community and provides local facilities. The considerable efforts the school makes are paying off and it has raised standards and improved attendance since the previous inspection. Parents and carers have no significant concerns. The views of many parents were summed up by one who wrote, 'I am very proud my daughter attends this school. The teachers are very approachable, kind and, I feel, do an excellent job.'

Teaching and learning are good. There are numerous strengths, such as teachers' enthusiasm and constructive relationships in classrooms. Teaching is less good in Key Stage 1. The pace of lessons in this part of the school is not always as rapid as it could be. Also pupils are not given enough opportunities to become independent and confident writers. As a result, development of writing skills lags behind other subjects. This means that, while achievement is good overall, it is variable. It is good in the Foundation Stage but satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. However, pupils leap forward in Key Stage 2 where teaching is excellent, and their achievement is outstanding. Standards at the end of Year 6 are average.

The outstanding care the school provides stems from a clear understanding of pupils' needs and those of their families. The school goes out of its way to engage with pupils and parents who may otherwise be disaffected and many parents and carers are deeply appreciative. Pupils know there are sympathetic adults to whom they can turn. As a result of the excellent pastoral care, pupils' personal development is outstanding. They make an excellent contribution to the community. For example, they enthusiastically contribute to the school council, which provides an effective forum for pupils' views and thereby has a positive impact on school improvement. Pupils take on extra responsibilities such as peer mediation, library duties and running a café, and in this way learn to become confident and mature by the end of Year 6. The curriculum is outstanding. It is carefully crafted to stimulate pupils' interest and broaden their experiences and is a major factor in making lessons enjoyable.

Leadership and management are good. The astute and knowledgeable headteacher and deputy form a dynamic duo. All staff share a collective vision for the school. In the main, the school accurately evaluates its own performance although the monitoring of teaching is sometimes over generous. Governance is effective and supportive. The school is very ambitious and plans well for improvement. As an inclusive school, the achievement of all pupils is a high priority, ensuring exceptional equality of opportunity.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage. There is a happy, purposeful atmosphere and children settle in well. Good teaching and stimulating, enjoyable activities both in and out of doors ensure good achievement, particularly in children's personal and social development. Clear routines help children learn to share toys and play together. By the time they leave the Reception class, children's skills, particularly in language, are below the levels of typical 5-year-olds. The attractive environment in which children play and learn is interesting and safe but opportunities for children to plan and choose their own activities are limited.

What the school should do to improve further

- Promote better achievement especially in writing in Key Stage 1 by improving the consistency and effectiveness of teaching.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter school with much lower skill levels than expected for their age. They reach average standards by the end of Year 6, which is better than at the time of the previous inspection. The achievement of all pupils, including those with moderate learning difficulties, is good, but there are some variations because it is less rapid in Key Stage 1.

From a very low starting point, children in the Foundation Stage quickly improve their skills, particularly in personal development. Their achievement is good, but language development lags behind. At the end of Reception overall standards are below those expected.

Difficulties in developing pupils' writing skills form a brake on achievement in Key Stage 1. Less effective teaching means that achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and standards are below average at the end of Year 2.

The enthusiasm and drive of the teachers in Key Stage 2 lessons lead to excellent teaching, which promotes outstanding achievement in Years 3 to 6. The school's careful analysis of pupils' strengths and weaknesses ensures very good support, and all pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities therefore achieve similarly to their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are well behaved, polite and friendly and enjoy school. They have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and they move around school sensibly. The reward system is appreciated and motivates good attitudes and relationships. Attendance has improved and is similar to the national average.

There are very good opportunities for pupils to take part in physical activities, including daily 'Wake and Shake' exercises and this promotes pupils' excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lives. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and typified by the very good work on the slave trade. Good achievement in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology alongside pupils' growing sense of responsibility, ensures they have outstanding skills to prepare them for adult life. In addition, they develop strong awareness of financial matters through fund raising activities and a bank scheme. They have an excellent understanding of citizenship taking part in 'junior Neighbourhood Watch' and citizenship clubs.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers' enthusiasm is infectious and this motivates pupils, making lessons relevant and stimulating. A full scale missing persons hunt for 'lost' ginger bread men in Reception typifies the way in which teachers make a big effort to provide creative activities that excite and interest pupils. Staff cultivate good relationships so that pupils work well together in pairs and groups. If pupils lose concentration, teachers and classroom assistants manage them well and maintain

a positive atmosphere in all lessons. Excellent teaching for older pupils ensures that very well planned activities provide plenty of challenge. As a result older pupils make outstanding progress.

Learning is sometimes less effective in Key Stage 1, when teachers' introductions may be too long and tasks not challenging enough. This slows the pace of learning. Opportunities to work independently, particularly in writing, are limited and this has a knock-on effect on achievement.

Well briefed teaching assistants work closely with teachers to ensure pupils take part in all activities. The wide range of assessment information is used constructively to provide support for those whose progress stalls or who have moderate learning difficulties. Marking is good, helping individuals to understand how to improve their work. Teachers' supportive comments develop pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school has a profound knowledge of the needs of pupils and the local community. It uses this understanding to provide an inclusive, creative curriculum that meets pupils' learning needs and provides them with stimulating experiences. The impact of all these developments is starting to be felt and places the school in a strong position in the future. Lessons are frequently very engaging. For example, the 'kidnapping' of Year 1's teddies and their escape to the seaside, delightfully illustrated by photographs, provided many opportunities for excited pupils to speak and write at length. Very careful planning ensures that what is studied is both broad and balanced.

The good range of clubs and societies provides opportunities in sport and the arts. Pupils appreciate these and attend in large numbers. Visits and visitors, like the group who perform gospel music as part of Year 3 pupils' work on slavery, do much to enrich pupils' experiences and promote their development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Outstanding strengths in this aspect are underpinned by the value the school places on community cohesion. A comment from one parent that summed up the feelings of many was, 'It's a community school; we are like an extended family.' Recent improvements in tracking and target setting have not yet fully impacted on Years 1 and 2.

The work of the 'Family Action Team' and learning mentors is excellent and supports families with children in difficulty. Pupils are taught, for example, to cope with bereavement or other family crises so their work is not unduly affected. Bullying and racist incidents are rare. Should they occur, pupils and parents know they will be quickly and fairly addressed. There are rigorous procedures to safeguard pupils. The reward system for attendance is proving effective.

Excellent tracking monitors progress closely and quickly identifies individuals needing emotional or learning support. Older pupils know simple targets which teachers emphasise, and this promotes good learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy provide thoughtful and energetic leadership, promoting effective teamwork amongst all staff. The school's shared values enable it to operate as an efficient and cohesive unit, even when key staff are absent. Good systems ensure the school's self-evaluation is robust, but monitoring of teaching can lack the precision needed to ensure that it is consistent.

The school development plan is drawn up through close consultation between all staff and governors. It sets ambitious goals for the school and is a very good template for continuing improvement. It correctly emphasises pupils' personal and academic development, ensuring the school is a happy place for pupils to learn and grow. Very good support for all pupils and strong focus on community cohesion ensure equality of opportunity for all. The school's track record since the previous inspection is one of effective improvement and the school now has higher standards and involves parents in its work a great deal more. Capacity for improvement in the future is good.

Governors are committed to the school and are developing their skills in monitoring its provision. They are becoming more proactive and work together well to hold the school to account.

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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	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	2
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	1

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?	1
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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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	2
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

20 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Coney Hill Community Primary School, Gloucester, GL4 4NA

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors when we visited your school recently. It was good to meet and talk with you. You told us how much you enjoy school life and that you think Coney Hill is a good school. The inspectors agree that it is a good school and some things are excellent. The very best things are:

- The way the school looks after you is outstanding; the school works very well with parents and carers to help you make progress.
- You are developing extremely well into young adults with a very good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe; well done!
- The topics and subjects you study are very well chosen and extremely interesting.

Teaching is good so you learn well. This helps you achieve well and, by the end of Year 6, you reach similar standards to other boys and girls across the country. The headteacher and her deputy run the school well. All teachers and other staff work very hard to give you the best possible education. However, there is one important area where we have asked the school to improve.

- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not achieve as quickly as they do in the rest of the school. The biggest difficulty is in writing and we have asked the school to concentrate on improving teaching in these years to sort out this problem. You can help by reading as much as possible in and out of school and practising your writing whenever you can.

Once again, many thanks for all you help.

With all good wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Carnaghan Lead inspector

20 March 2008

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Lead inspector