

Coxheath Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	118588
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	313004
Inspection dates	4–5 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Gavin Jones

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	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Birkbeck
Headteacher	Caroline Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2004
School address	Stockett Lane Coxheath Maidstone ME17 4PS
Telephone number	01622 745553
Fax number	01622 746986

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	4–5 June 2008
Inspection number	313004

Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to factual inaccuracy

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The majority of pupils come from the village and surrounding area of Coxheath. They come from a variety of social backgrounds. The school has a higher than average percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, the number of pupils with statements of special educational needs is low. The school has experienced significant staff changes including those at senior level.

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. It provides a satisfactory education for its pupils with some good features, notably in care and pupils' personal development. All pupils make good progress in developing self-confidence and independence. Behaviour is good and pupils' good attitudes have a positive effect on the progress they make. Pupils from different backgrounds and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities all make similar satisfactory progress. The school works well with outside agencies to support this. 'This is a most friendly and welcoming school' says one parent. Children receive good teaching in the Reception class, where planning, different styles of teaching and many practical activities are evident. The standards pupils reach are broadly average at both key stages. Some results have improved slightly since last year, especially in reading, where the school's focus has been successful. Teaching is satisfactory; there is a variety of good features, but still some inconsistencies which restrict pupils' achievement. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The monitoring of teaching is not sharp enough at pointing out where weaknesses lie, prescribing support in order to gain improvements and then checking that improvements have been made. Teachers question pupils well and have very good relationships with them but do not always set challenging tasks for all abilities. Teaching is not always planned with an exact understanding of where pupils are in their learning. Work is not always carefully marked in order to help pupils make progress. This is especially the case in pupils' work in writing.

The school has experienced recent periods of uncertainty together with staff changes. At times this has hampered its ability to check the effectiveness of planned developments. Governors themselves have a greater part to play in this process. Monitoring of the school in action by the governors is still reliant, to a degree, on information from the headteacher. However, they are becoming increasingly aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is very well managed and is effective. Children enter school with abilities that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. However, elements of communication, language and literacy are weaker than expected, as are elements of mathematical development and some knowledge and understanding of the world. Children's pre-school experiences are very varied and some information that the school receives does not always help the school to have a clear starting point for their development. Children thoroughly enjoy their experiences in Reception. Good teaching and the bright, exciting and interesting environment are why children develop and make generally good progress. Some weaknesses in language development persist beyond Reception in spite of good teaching. Children have good opportunities to pursue their own interests. The balance between this and activities directed by adults is appropriate. Work is well planned with a strong emphasis on real-life situations. For example, prior to a visit, the class heard the story of Mr Gumpy's Visit, with a child taking the role of the main character. He answered questions on what children will need to do on their visit. Sensitive support is given to children with a wide range of learning difficulties so that they can make the same progress as their classmates. The secure outdoor area is satisfactory although in wet weather it does not make full provision for children's physical development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing through better planning and by giving pupils more guidance about how to improve their spelling, punctuation and use of grammar.
- Make sure that all teaching is good and is closely matched to pupils' different needs so they all can achieve well.
- Ensure assessment information is used more effectively to challenge pupils so that they reach their full potential.

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

Standards are average. In 2007, by Year 2, standards in national tests were average. At Year 6, standards were below average. Although many children made good progress in Reception, their weaker literacy skills accounted for weaker progress across the rest of the school. Initiatives to improve reading have had good results, with improvements noted in all classes. The school's assessment information shows that pupils are now making better progress in mathematics and reading than before, but not quite such good progress in writing. However, in spite of this, standards in English are broadly average. Some weaknesses in the school's assessment systems and some lack of high enough expectations by a few teachers are having a limiting effect on standards. This is noted in work planned for different groups not being as challenging as it might. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other vulnerable groups are making the same progress as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils speak warmly of their 'lovely' school. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance and enthusiastic participation in extra-curricular activities such as drama, gym and gardening clubs. Pupils feel safe in school and show a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. They have positive and enthusiastic attitudes to work. Pupils' moral and social development is good. Pupils take on responsibilities such as peer mediation and they are very proud of their school council. 'Many of their ideas have been implemented', notes one parent. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy opportunities to raise monies for charities such as Clean Water for Africa. Whilst they learn about their own and other cultures, they are insufficiently aware of life in contemporary Britain as a multicultural society. Average standards in literacy and numeracy together with satisfactory opportunities to acquire skills in information and communication technology (ICT) provide satisfactory preparation for pupils' future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers use questioning well to engage pupils and extend learning. Good relationships are a strong feature of all lessons, which take place in stimulating learning areas. Teachers use ICT confidently in order to gain pupils' interest and motivate them. Consequently, pupils have positive attitudes to work and behave well. Support staff work closely with teachers providing valuable help for pupils, especially those who do not learn as quickly as others do. In good lessons, work is well matched to pupils' individual needs and as a result, they make better progress. However, many lessons are not planned consistently to do this and sometimes expectations are not high enough. As a result, pupils do not always make the progress they should. Marking often provides encouragement but does not always give pupils clear guidance on how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad, balanced and contains all statutory elements. The school has introduced French in a selection of classes, and proposes to introduce it to other classes next year. The broad programme for pupils' personal development includes studying healthy lifestyles, personal safety and relationships. This provides a firm foundation for pupils to develop self-confidence. The curriculum has been boosted by rewards such as Activemark, Healthy schools Award and Artsmark. It presents themed weeks to all pupils, such as Circus Week and French Week. These provide many exciting starting points for learning. ICT provision is satisfactory and is in the process of being further developed. The curriculum is enriched well by extra activities. 'The school provides many activities outside school hours', says one parent. Breakfast club provides a good starting point for a number of pupils. Lunchtime and after school clubs, such as gardening, cheerleading, French and a host of others, provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to improve skills and gain enjoyment. A good range of visits and visitors also support learning well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This is a very caring school where staff work hard to ensure a safe environment. The focus on social and moral development results in confident and happy pupils who trust each other and adults in the school. All child protection and safeguarding arrangements are firmly in place. All vulnerable groups of pupils are well supported and their individual progress is checked to ensure they make satisfactory progress. The school works well with a range of agencies to ensure pupils' well-being. Teaching assistants give good, consistent support to pupils in class. The school is in the process of improving its assessment systems; however, the information is not yet widely available to teachers in their classes. As a result, it is not used consistently by all teachers to inform their lesson planning. Consequently, teaching does not always challenge pupils to achieve as well as they should. Marking of pupils' work does not give enough guidance to help pupils to understand how they might improve their work, with many pupils not knowing their targets or how to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school has travelled through some significant changes in the recent past, with the headteacher managing to sustain a calm learning environment which supports pupils' personal development well. The vast majority of parents know that their children are happy and safe and that the leadership of the school ensures this. The headteacher has established several leadership teams in the school. Whilst some initiatives have proved successful, for example reading improvement, not all of the work of all teams has been evaluated in order to fine-tune their activities. Systems for recording and tracking pupils' progress have not always been shared effectively with all teachers. There are now measures in place to improve this. The school recognises that teaching must continue to improve. However, the monitoring of teaching does not have a sharp enough edge to highlight areas for development, provide clear support and evaluate improvements. Although several targets for standards were not met last year, current data suggest that the school may be better placed to meet them this year. The chair of governors has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governance overall is satisfactory, becoming better placed to monitor progress towards the school's areas for development. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	3
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	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

6 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Coxheath Primary School, Coxheath, ME17 4PS

Thank you for making us welcome and helping us when we visited your school. We were pleased to see how happy you were and how proud you were of your school.

We were very impressed by your good behaviour, your attitudes towards your work and by how much you understood about the need to keep healthy and safe. You told us that there was very little bullying in the school and that there was always an adult who would listen to you if you were upset. Your school is a very caring place and your parents very much appreciate this fact. This is especially true for the children who need extra help. We think that you all get off to a good start in the Reception class, which is very well organised. Recent work across the school in reading has certainly helped many of you to improve. Your headteacher and staff provide lots of interesting activities such as school visits, performances and club activities for you, so that learning is fun.

We think that although teaching is satisfactory, if you are all going to reach your full potential, it needs to be even better than that. We have asked, in particular, for teachers to give you more help when marking your work so that you always know how to improve your work. This is particularly so in writing, which needs improving in the same way that reading did. We also believe that although the school has much good information about the progress you make and the standards you reach, teachers do not use it enough to set you really challenging targets so that work really stretches you.

You can all help by continuing to work hard and doing your very best. Make sure that you take note of what your teachers say in their marking and about how you might make even better progress.

Thank you again for making our two days with you so interesting.

Yours sincerely

Gavin Jones Lead Inspector

6 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Coxheath Primary School, Coxheath, ME17 4PS

Thank you for making us welcome and helping us when we visited your school. We were pleased to see how happy you were and how proud you were of your school.

We were very impressed by your good behaviour, your attitudes towards your work and by how much you understood about the need to keep healthy and safe. You told us that there was very little bullying in the school and that there was always an adult who would listen to you if you were upset. Your school is a very caring place and your parents very much appreciate this fact. This is especially true for the children who need extra help. We think that you all get off to a good start in the Reception class, which is very well organised. Recent work across the school in reading has certainly helped many of you to improve. Your headteacher and staff provide lots of interesting activities such as school visits, performances and club activities for you, so that learning is fun.

We think that although teaching is satisfactory, if you are all going to reach your full potential, it needs to be even better than that. We have asked, in particular, for teachers to give you more help when marking your work so that you always know how to improve your work. This is particularly so in writing, which needs improving in the same way that reading did. We also believe that although the school has much good information about the progress you make and the standards you reach, teachers do not use it enough to set you really challenging targets so that work really stretches you.

You can all help by continuing to work hard and doing your very best. Make sure that you take note of what your teachers say in their marking and about how you might make even better progress.

Thank you again for making our two days with you so interesting.

Yours sincerely

Gavin Jones
Lead Inspector