

Coquet Park First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108590
Local Authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	324797
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Andrew Scott

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	192
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Dave Pederson
Headteacher	Mr Mark Lovell
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Links Whitley Bay Tyne and Wear NE26 1TQ
Telephone number	0191 2008708
Fax number	0191 2008798

Age group	3–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school, although broadly average in size for a first school. Nearly all pupils are from White British families. A few come from Bengali families. Eight pupils have English as an additional language. The school population is fairly stable and pupils tend to come from socially advantaged backgrounds; few are eligible for free school meals. A below average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Coquet Park is a good school. It has several outstanding features, a testament to how well the school has improved since the previous inspection. Standards are rising steadily, especially in writing, as a result of better teaching and an outstanding curriculum. Equally impressive are the welcoming, family ethos of the school and the high quality of pastoral care. All pupils are equals, all pupils matter and, as a result, all make excellent progress in their personal development. Parents think highly of the school and appreciate all its strengths, including all the rich experiences for their children. A comment by one parent, 'Without exception, our children have been given the opportunity to fulfil their potential,' was typical of many others.

Although pupils tend to start school with above average skills and abilities, the school does not allow them to rest on their laurels. Teachers instil in them an excellent attitude to learning. Lessons are interesting and usually challenging for all pupils, regardless of ability. The curriculum is diverse and stimulating. Strong links between subjects give learning a sense of purpose and meaning. Teaching varies from satisfactory to outstanding but is substantially good.

Consequently, pupils achieve well from their starting points. By the end of Years 2 and 4, standards are routinely above average and have risen in recent years. Standards in writing in Year 2 in 2008 were higher than those in reading. This is commendable and demonstrates the impact of a whole-school focus. By Year 4, standards have also been improving; a comparative weakness in mathematics has been resolved.

Pupils are mature, very responsible, considerate and play a full part in the school's development by, for example, requesting even more extra-curricular activities, especially sport. Behaviour is not perfect but hard to fault. Pupils are extremely sensible about adopting a healthy lifestyle and tuck into fruit snacks and healthy lunches with gusto. They love their school, because they respect their teachers and because they feel very valued. All staff know the individual needs of pupils and provide excellent care and guidance. Kind, encouraging words in the classroom are matched by vigilance and support in the playground.

The school is successful because of good leadership and management at all levels. The leadership of the headteacher is understated but nonetheless effective. His clear vision and involvement of all staff in the school's work produces good teamwork and a common will to improve.

Governors are knowledgeable and very active, but not involved as they might be in development planning. Senior staff know their school well, yet do not fine-tune improvement plans enough to ensure that all priorities are highlighted and that actions are linked to outcomes. Links with parents are good. A small number of parents have concerns about the approachability of staff and feel that their views are not always considered. Although this is not the view of most parents, inspectors understand these concerns. Overall, though, the school is in good shape, in good hands and in a strong position to improve further. It provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children benefit from a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The good leadership and teamwork provide a very lively and interesting learning environment in which children prosper. The outdoor learning area, for example, is well planned, well resourced, stimulating and used imaginatively by staff and children. Teaching is good because teachers, with good support from the teaching assistants, ensure that assessment influences planning.

As a result, the activities match children's learning needs well. However, adults sometimes direct work too much rather than providing opportunities for children to make choices and select activities themselves. This restricts the development of their independent skills to some extent.

Attainment on entry to the Nursery class is usually above that expected for children of this age. However, attainment on entry this year is broadly average, especially in communication, language and literacy. Children make good progress irrespective of their different starting points and abilities. Many attain levels above those expected for their age. Excellent care and welfare arrangements give children very good support. This is reflected in the extremely happy and confident children who are eager to try out new things. Their behaviour is good and they readily improve their social skills in the warm, encouraging environment. There is usually, for example, fair sharing of the wheeled toys outside and harmony in the sand tray.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that development planning relates more clearly to perceived weaknesses, and that plans identify specific action and outcomes.
- Improve communication with parents to ensure that parents' views are valued and that the school responds proactively to all concerns.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. Standards have been consistently above average over the past three years by the end of Year 2 and Year 4, and have been improving steadily. A successful whole-school emphasis on writing resulted in high standards in Year 2 in 2008. Each year, nearly all pupils reach the expected level for their age and about a third exceed it. School data suggest that pupils in the current Year 2 are attaining similar standards. By Year 2, pupils have made good progress in relation to their starting points when they joined the school.

In Year 4, results in the optional standardised tests were above average in 2008 in reading and writing, with some pupils achieving highly. It was a similar picture in mathematics, although not enough of the more able pupils reached the higher level. The school's data suggest that this is set to improve this year. Pupils' skills and abilities in information and communication technology are above average throughout the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because of early identification and well focused support. Those pupils for whom English is an additional language also achieve well because their language is good enough for it not to be a barrier to learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils develop extremely well in their spiritual, social and moral awareness. Their excellent behaviour benefits their learning greatly. Little time is lost in lessons and concentration levels usually remain high. Pupils take pride in their work and the school environment. They love the splendid playground and use the equipment creatively yet carefully. They are very comfortable because of the pervasive family atmosphere, safe in the knowledge that any worries are swiftly addressed. Unsurprisingly, therefore, attendance is consistently above average.

Pupils relish all that the school offers. They particularly enjoy the exciting variety of clubs which include chess, gardening, 'Bookworms', crafts and many sports. An impressive number of pupils

attend these, thus cementing their strong social bonds. Their desire to keep physically active is very well complemented by a sensible diet, so their lifestyle is exceedingly healthy. They are very careful of their own safety and that of others. Pupils' sense of community is good. Their willingness to assume responsibility has a clear impact in the playground. As one Year 4 child put it, 'Everyone has a friend to play with'. Pupils' cultural awareness is good. They are well involved in the local community and the school is working to extend their knowledge of life beyond Whitley Bay. With their excellent social skills, good academic standards and the willingness to take on responsibility, pupils are well prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Most teaching is good; some is excellent and some is satisfactory. It is especially effective in Year 4. Common strengths include the very respectful rapport between staff and pupils which generates the right climate for purposeful work. Teachers share clear objectives with pupils so that they know what they have to learn. They are increasingly enabling pupils to assess their own progress to see how they can improve. Teaching assistants provide sensitive support for less secure pupils, rather than give them direct help. Mostly, lessons have a good level of challenge for all groups of pupils although, where lessons are less effective, this is not skilfully targeted to meet all pupils' needs. In addition, some lessons are not lively enough and lack a sense of urgency to guarantee swift learning.

In outstanding lessons, the sheer energy of the teacher, exciting topics and the right match of work for pupils' abilities, result in eager participation, considerable concentration and rapid learning. In a Year 4 literacy lesson, for example, pupils were able to learn powerful words and expressions to help them write telling character descriptions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum provides outstanding support for pupils' personal development and well-being, as well as nourishing key aspects of their academic work. The new opportunities for writing across the curriculum, for example, have produced some impressive results. Teachers make very good links between subjects that make learning relevant and broaden pupils' knowledge. In a very effective Year 2 lesson outdoors, pupils were encouraged to 'walk the plank' and 'climb the rigging' as motivation for writing piratical poetry.

The range of activities, clubs, visits and visitors is extensive and varied. Year 4 pupils make full use of the local beach facilities to prepare for outdoor pursuits in Kielder Forest. Swimming and rugby are taught at all ages. The excellent provision for personal, social and health education is not just found in special lessons; it is an intrinsic part of everyday life. Mutual consideration, for instance, is a natural consequence of the school's high regard for treating each pupil equally.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Throughout the school there are excellent relationships at all levels. The rapport pupils have with adults and their mutual trust make them feel very secure, cared for and respected. This promotes pupils' confidence and self-esteem in and out of the classroom. Pupils' welfare is a

very high priority, and excellent links with external agencies ensure special needs are met and vulnerable pupils are expertly supported. A high level of care is evident in the excellent procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development. Procedures to safeguard pupils are secure and the school takes all reasonable steps to ensure safety. A routine risk assessment of the premises undertaken by governors and staff during the inspection raised only one or two very minor issues.

Academic guidance is good and aids the progress pupils make. Good tracking systems enable staff to quickly identify pupils who may be underachieving and target support. Pupils are aware of their learning targets and in many, but not yet all lessons, they are clear about what they have to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The firm and astute leadership by the headteacher ensures a constant focus on academic achievement, as well as personal development. His very good philosophy of education is shared by the deputy headteacher and senior staff, so their work is based on teamwork and consensus. Challenging targets set for pupils spur staff to provide rich learning experiences and activities. Senior leaders understand the school's provision well and their self-evaluation is largely accurate, if a little generous. Governors hold the school to account well and their many skills are beneficial, especially in financial and staffing matters. However, they are not wholly engaged in development planning.

The school has progressed well since the last inspection. It has some good priorities for further improvement but its plans do not highlight key areas enough nor explain why some priorities are chosen. Some action plans lack detail and too few are linked to measurable outcomes, especially pupils' achievement. The monitoring of the school, for example through lesson observations, is regular and efficient. Helpful, balanced feedback is provided to staff.

Parents think highly of the school, particularly the caring ethos, the rich curriculum experiences and the quality of teaching. A few concerns about behaviour and homework are not shared by most parents, or by the inspection team. Inspectors do agree, however, that aspects of communication between the school and parents could be better. The school promotes strongly a sense of equality and mutual respect. It has a good approach to community cohesion, although it has yet to formalise its plans for the future. An analysis has revealed that more needs to be done in the wider world community.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	2
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 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

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

5 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Coquet Park First School, North Tyneside, N26 1TQ

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the recent inspection of your school. Mr Kingston and I very much enjoyed our visit and meeting so many of you. We would like to tell you what we found out.

Like you, we think that Coquet Park is a good school. In some ways it is excellent. We especially liked the wonderful care that staff give to you and all the exciting things that you do in and out of lessons. The training on the beach sounded exciting, not to mention your trip to Kielder. You are very safe in school and the high levels of care help you to become mature, kind and very well behaved. Your excellent fundraising shows just how much you care for others; the school is going to help you appreciate the wider world beyond Whitley Bay even more. You develop outstanding attitudes to work. Lessons are hives of activity and you sustain concentration very well.

As a result, you achieve well. We were impressed that your writing has really come on. Standards of work are above average and improving. Even so, there is still some room for improvement and we are sure that you will continue to work hard. Your teachers and all classroom staff mostly ensure that you receive the right kind of work because they are well aware of what you already know and can do. It is good that you too increasingly know how to assess your own work.

Mr Lovell, the staff and governors all work hard to improve the school. For example, the outside areas have become exciting places. They know the kind of things that will help you to become even better. However, it is important that these things are absolutely right. Therefore, we have asked the school to make sure that all its plans are very clear and linked to your work and personal development. We know that your parents think highly of the school but some feel that it is not as approachable as it might be. The school has agreed to do all it can to improve the situation.

All in all, the school is in a good position to become even better and I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Lead inspector