

Cornwood Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113409
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	325813
Inspection date	15 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Alex Baxter

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	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	89
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	Desmond Hall
Headteacher	Sandra Higdon
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	School Lane Cornwood Ivybridge PL21 9PZ
Telephone number	01752 837375

Age group	4–11
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01752 837375

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small village primary school takes its pupils mostly from the local area. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are taught in a Reception class, together with pupils in Year 1. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, and includes several pupils with complex learning needs. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school has a number of awards and these include Active Mark, Arts Mark and Healthy School. The school is currently part of a management partnership with another primary school and the headteacher shares her duties equally between the two schools. Independent pre-school and after-school clubs operate on the school's site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Cornwood is a good school. It is a very welcoming community with an inclusive ethos. It has several significant strengths, such as outstanding curricular provision, the exemplary work of the headteacher and high quality governance. Excellent links with parents, the community and outside specialists also contribute fully to the pupils' good academic and personal achievement. Within these areas, the pupils' enjoyment and attitudes to learning are exceptional features. This is an improving school and, in recent years, the establishment of a management partnership with another school has enriched staff and governor skills and created a productive team ethos. This skilled teamwork underpins the school's good leadership and management. Self-evaluation is strong and it has successfully guided the school's good improvement since the last inspection, especially in bringing curricular provision to such a high standard. These factors show a good capacity to improve in the future.

Parents are quick to praise the work of the school, and one typical comment was, 'I feel very fortunate to have my children attend such a well-led school in a village situation.' Such a comment also reflects the school's promotion of community cohesion. This work is much appreciated by parents, enriches pupils' learning and fosters their understanding of the local and wider communities.

Standards are above average by Year 6. This outcome represents good achievement from a broadly as expected attainment on entry to the EYFS. Indeed, many pupils become capable learners, use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively and show good skills in sports and the expressive arts, such as art and drama, by the time they leave. Progress is strongest in Years 3 to 6. Here, teaching and learning are almost always good, and occasionally excellent. This degree of consistency is not so marked in the younger year groups, especially in Reception and Year 1. This is because there are not always enough opportunities for pupils to develop independence and to apply skills by making their own learning choices.

The school provides a highly stimulating curriculum, enhanced by the school's excellent and much improved outdoor facilities. New sports and play areas, for example, provide extensive opportunities for pupils to co-operate and socialise and to promote the pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils' attendance and behaviour are good. The pupils' full participation in the excellent range of clubs and community activities promote a high level of sport and exercise and illustrate pupils' excellent adoption of healthy lifestyles. Staff provide good care, support and guidance and establish very beneficial links with parents and outside agencies. In particular, these partnerships underpin the very strong provision for pupils with complex learning needs.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Given the very small size of each year group, attainment on entry to Reception varies much from year to year, but is broadly as expected. Progress is satisfactory overall, but mixed. Indeed, children make good progress in developing self-confidence and positive attitudes to learning. These qualities give them an important foundation for learning and are nurtured effectively by the school's excellent arrangements for children's welfare. The Reception class provides a happy and safe place to learn. Staff establish excellent links with parents. Regular routines and clear expectations of considerate behaviour ensure children feel cared for and behave well.

Staff assess children's skills regularly and, in particular, children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have their needs identified and tackled very supportively early in their school career.

The curriculum is planned well to cover all areas of learning. A new outdoor area offers children many exciting opportunities. However, activities are not always matched closely enough to the differing learning needs of all children in this mixed year-group class. In addition, there are limited chances for children to choose activities for themselves. At times, this constrains the development of the children's independence. Consequently, leadership and management and teaching and learning as a whole are satisfactory, rather than good. At the start of Year 1, standards are broadly average.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the consistency of good teaching in the younger year groups, especially in Reception and Year 1, in order to lift the pupils' independence as learners and accelerate progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

By the time they leave the school at Year 6, pupils have achieved well and reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Progress is most rapid in Years 3 to 6, where an increasing number of pupils are making excellent progress. These improvements reflect challenging targets, consistently good teaching and well-timed interventions to tackle pupils' numeracy, literacy and personal skills. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with complex learning needs, receive high quality support in all parts of the school and make at least good progress in relation to their capabilities. Good progress is not yet so consistent across Years 1 and 2. This variation particularly affects their independent learning skills and means that a few pupils do not reach the above average standards of which they are capable.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are friendly, polite and confident. They say that they really enjoy school, and this is seen in their good attendance. Pupils show a good understanding of what it means to be a member of a community. This awareness is seen in the pupils' positive attitudes, the way they show responsibility and contribute very enthusiastically to a wide range of school and community activities. These include sports, expressive arts and environmental clubs, which promote the pupils' excellent adoption of healthy lifestyles, healthy eating and keeping fit. Other well-supported activities, such as themed 'Eco' and 'French' weeks and fund-raising for national charities supporting children's welfare, illustrate the pupils' commitment and positive awareness of their local, British and global communities. Behaviour is good and often it is even better in lessons. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. However, members of the school council and a few parents feel that, at times, pupils need more support and guidance at lunchtimes. The pupils' well-developed numeracy, literacy and ICT skills and their willingness to work with others prepare them well for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

With some variation, teaching and learning are good. The use of teaching assistants and ICT are often outstanding features. Other typical strengths include the good relationships between staff and pupils, skilful questioning which draws out and extends pupils' ideas, and the way in which all staff value and celebrate the pupils' efforts. At its best, teaching ensures that pupils are empowered as independent investigative learners, for example by encouraging the pupils to collaborate with each other in evaluating their own writing or investigating science through practical experiments. The pupils really enjoy this way of learning. Where teaching is sometimes satisfactory rather than good or better, work is not always matched closely enough to the breadth of pupils' differing needs and does not develop the pupils' independence as successfully as in other lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

National awards reflect the high quality of the school's curricular provision. Opportunities include outstanding extra-curricular pursuits, sports and other clubs, which contribute extremely effectively to the pupils' healthy lifestyles. Much improved outdoor and ICT facilities also enrich pupils' learning. Themed weeks and topic studies provide beneficial links between subjects and enhance the pupils' numeracy, literacy and ICT skills. Using computers to check and record weather reports abroad as part of a geography topic is one such example. At the same time, these activities extend pupils' positive attitudes to school and their wider cultural awareness. Even though the curriculum in EYFS is not as strong, the rich quality of experience for pupils beyond it is sufficient to make it outstanding. Older pupils, in particular, benefit from excellent opportunities to take responsibility as learners. The curriculum is enhanced further by outstanding links with parents and the local community and with the partner school and specialist outside agencies. These contribute with much success to the pupils' enjoyment and success in learning. This is especially so for pupils with complex learning needs who receive additional well-informed adult support matched to their needs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Teachers and support staff know the pupils very well and ensure that safeguarding requirements are fully secure and pupils are well cared for. Staff encourage pupils to enjoy and participate fully in their learning through good use of praise, setting clear expectations and by managing behaviour effectively. As a result, pupils have very good relationships with staff and say they can talk to them about any anxieties.

The school works extremely effectively with parents and local agencies to ensure that pupils are happy and able to make progress. Lunchtime supervision allows play to flourish and staff are available when needed. However, whilst pupils feel strongly that they are well looked after in lessons, some would like more guidance and support in dealing with issues for themselves at lunchtimes. The support given to pupils with complex learning needs is exemplary; for example, caring and sensitive staff ensure that they are fully included in learning activities and make at least good progress. Staff implement effective systems to monitor pupils' academic

achievements and provide good academic guidance. As a result, pupils know what they have to do to improve and confidently follow the guidance given to sustain good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership in ensuring a successful management partnership with another school. This partnership has enriched senior leadership and management roles and governance. Teaching assistants also have specific management responsibilities. The management of mathematics and EYFS is not yet as strong as other leadership responsibilities. Governors make excellent contributions to the school, especially in establishing the school's high quality indoor and outdoor facilities and in providing specialist expertise to support the outstanding provision for pupils with complex learning needs. Governors and staff work effectively as a team and have significantly improved the curriculum and pupils' learning opportunities in recent years. They have accomplished this by working with the local and wider community to establish the school's excellent facilities and extra-curricular activities. By this means, they have also promoted community cohesion effectively. Self-evaluation is good. This has enabled the school to move effectively to address areas identified for improvement and to build upon the pupils' good achievements since the last inspection. The school is well placed to improve further.

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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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
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	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?	2

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	2
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	1
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

15 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cornwood C of E Primary School, Ivybridge, PL21 9PZ

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We soon sensed how proud you are of your school. We particularly enjoyed talking to you about your work and the other activities you do in school. You certainly like the new equipment in your playground. We agree with you and most of your parents that your school is good.

These are the other main things we found:

- You enjoy school very much and show excellent attitudes in lessons and to the outstanding range of learning activities provided for you.
- You behave well, contribute enthusiastically to the life of the school and are very good at living healthily.
- Teaching is good and all adults in the school help you to learn so that you make good progress by the time you leave.
- The staff take good care of you and keep you safe, and those of you with learning and personal needs receive excellent support.
- Staff and governors work well as a team and create extremely strong links with your parents and the local community.

In order to improve further we have asked the school to:

- Provide more good teaching for younger pupils, especially in Reception and Year 1, to help them to become better at learning for themselves.

You can help by always trying your best and by talking to your teacher about how to improve your work. I am sure you will.

With our very best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Alex Baxter

Lead Inspector