

# Covingham Park Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135206
<b>Local Authority</b>	Swindon
<b>Inspection number</b>	329054
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Burghart

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	354
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Chris Howells
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jon Swaffield
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	The Harriers Covingham Swindon SN3 5BD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01793 525465
<b>Fax number</b>	01793 332167

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 March 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an above average sized school. It was formed from an amalgamation of the Covingham Park infant and junior schools in 2007. This is the first inspection of the new school. Children start school in Reception as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Virtually all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average.

A private provider runs a pre-school play group on the school site.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils make good progress and are successfully helped to grow up as sensible, caring young people. The school's aim, to be as successful in promoting personal as well as academic progress, is well met. One parent summed up the views of many, reporting, 'The school has brought my child on educationally and more importantly socially. He has grown in confidence and is finding himself.' Pupils clearly enjoy their education. The school is popular with pupils, parents and staff and there is a strong collective commitment to further development. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher, senior leadership team and governors, who have successfully created one school from two component parts. There are clear strengths in personal and pastoral care. Effective academic target setting, based on rigorous systems of assessment and record keeping, has been introduced.

Standards are above average and pupils make good progress. Some weaknesses last year in the performance of boys and the achievement of more able pupils are being addressed and school data show that they are unlikely to be repeated this year. Making sure that this is the case remains central to the school's own monitoring and analysis. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are successfully provided for and achieve well as a result. Children are given an excellent start to school life in Reception, making very strong progress because provision is outstanding. This underpins not only academic progress but also the school's caring ethos. Everyone is valued and pupils and staff get on extremely well together. Relationships are excellent and behaviour, although not perfect, is outstanding. Pupils' personal development is good, with outstanding features in moral and social aspects. Pupils are keen to make a contribution to the school as a community and eager to consider those less fortunate than themselves through fundraising. Spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory rather than good because there are too few curriculum opportunities for pupils to learn about different lifestyles, customs and faiths. This also has a negative impact on the school's contribution to community cohesion on a wider plane than simply the local community. Notwithstanding these weaknesses, and some inconsistencies between classes in terms of the school's stated commitment to a cross curricular approach, the school presents a satisfactory curriculum with good enrichment through extra-curricular activities.

Teaching is good, with a variety of outstanding features, for example in Reception and Years 2, 4 and 6. Learning objectives are made clear to pupils and used to measure progress. Work is presented in a lively way and pupils are challenged effectively through a system of personal targets based on what pupils 'must, should and could' achieve. High quality questioning and well-managed learning are indicative of the successful provision.

Self-evaluation is good. The headteacher leads staff and governors as an effective team. The school is well aware of its strengths and relative weaknesses. There are convincing, well-prioritised plans for development that demonstrate the school has a good capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

Children get off to a flying start in Reception because they are extremely well cared for and teaching and support are of high quality. An innovative approach to the curriculum incorporates many opportunities for children to learn through exhilarating play activities based on their own

particular interests. This is having a strong impact on the quality of learning and on children's progress. Most children start school with the skills and experiences expected for four-year-olds, but boys in particular are at a lower level in terms of communication, language and literacy skills. Children's achievement is outstanding. By the time children leave Reception, standards for the majority are above average in all areas of learning except writing, where they are average. Children are very happy and enthusiastic. In the morning they cannot wait to get into class, eagerly registering themselves and choosing their first activity. Independence is successfully encouraged and children are confident learners. The excellent ethos of tolerance and consideration underpins outstanding behaviour and the capacity to work and play with others. The Reception provides an exciting environment with a constant 'free flow' for children between activities indoors and outside. Staff carefully monitor what children do and guide them very effectively to ensure a very good balance of opportunities in all areas of learning. Relationships are excellent. Adults are willing to listen and children are not afraid to try things out. Outstanding leadership and management ensure children are very well prepared for the future as well as having fun!

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that pupils, especially boys and those who are potentially higher attainers, do not underachieve.
- Improve the curriculum by - providing more opportunities to extend pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness and enhance the school's contribution to community cohesion - ensuring that the school's initiative to develop a cross-curricular approach is consistently applied.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are above average overall at the end of Years 2 and 6. They have been consistently so in Year 2 since the school opened. Last year, standards in Year 6 dropped to average because a group of potentially higher attaining pupils did not reach above average levels. Work seen in lessons and data from the school's own tracking show that, although there is more to do, this decline is being successfully addressed.

Pupils now achieve well throughout the school. Rates of progress are good and increasing as a result of the excellent start established in Reception and the positive impact of extra support given to boys, particularly in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the most of effective support to make good progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' enjoyment of school and attitudes to learning are outstanding. Whether in debate over footballers' wages in Year 6 or Year 2 drama designed to enhance an understanding of speech marks, pupils take a keen interest. Every parent who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire reported that their children enjoy school. That attendance is satisfactory rather than good is because of holidays taken in term time, not a lack of enthusiasm. Behaviour, notwithstanding the pupils who can and sometimes do cause problems, is excellent. Pupils show that they are confident and feel safe in school. They are well aware of how to stay safe and keep healthy. They demonstrate, through the eco council, class and playground monitor roles, that they are willing to take responsibility and contribute to the school as a community. Pupils readily get involved in charity and local events and show a good appreciation of environmental issues.

They are well prepared for future study and life in general with good basic English, mathematics and information and communication technology skills. There is an excellent willingness to work together as well as independently. Relationships and pupils' moral and social development are outstanding. They are at the heart of the school's caring ethos. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils respond well to opportunities to show awe and wonder and appreciate differences in customs and beliefs. However, curriculum provision is underdeveloped from this point of view and this restricts personal development overall.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good teaching throughout the school is one of the main reasons why pupils enjoy what they have to do, learn well, and make good progress. 'I couldn't be more happy with the way my child is taught!' was a typical parental comment. Despite disruptions caused by maternity leave and illness, continuity has been maintained because planning is good and objectives are clear. Raising staff expectations, especially in Years 3 to 6, and ensuring that pupils, particularly the more able, are fully challenged are aspects of 'work in hand' which are paying dividends. Teachers and teaching assistants make a good team and jointly give effective support to all pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Relationships are excellent and staff show that they are prepared to listen to pupils. Outstanding features of lessons include questioning which probes for pupils' understanding, the use of talking partners to share views and draw pupils into the assessment process, and where teachers' particular expertise is used to the full. For example, in an outstanding Year 4 science lesson the teacher's knowledge and understanding and enthusiasm for the subject drove pupils to make excellent progress. Pupils were encouraged to explain their methods to each other and evaluate their success. Relatively weaker aspects of teaching, and consequently learning, are in activities such as religious education lessons. Here opportunities are missed to promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development further. There are some minor inconsistencies in how work is marked, with pupils not always shown how to make improvements.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory in that it covers all required subjects (and for older pupils, French) and makes a good contribution in most respects to pupils' personal, social and health education. The school has identified making the curriculum more relevant as one of its prime aims. It is committed to developing a cross-curricular approach. However, this is in its early stages and is not consistently applied in all classes. A review is in hand, with the intention of building on pupils' interests, especially boys'. There is an excellent model for this in Reception where the success shown in children's confidence and independence bodes extremely well for research and problem solving higher up the school. However, across the school there is insufficient planning to extend pupils' spiritual and cultural development, which has negative effects on some aspects of personal development. This means that the school's contribution to community cohesion in terms of understanding of different faiths and lifestyles elsewhere in the United Kingdom is basic rather than good.

A good range and number of clubs, activities, visits and visitors enhance what is taught as part of normal lessons. They are popular and well attended.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

The school's pastoral and physical care of pupils is a strength. Rigorous systems and safeguards make sure pupils and staff are safe and that healthy lifestyles are promoted. Staff know pupils well and good links with parents and outside agencies form the basis of partnerships which have positive effects on learning and personal development.

Academic support and guidance are good. A real success story is the way a common system of assessment, tracking and record keeping is being used to generate targets for individual pupils and for the school as a whole. As a result, for most of the time pupils are now well challenged and clearly relish the prospect. A particularly good feature is that pupils are being guided to develop ways of constructively criticising their own work. Expectations have been raised and the school has considerable data which it is analysing to show strengths and areas for development.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher ensures that the school's vision and educational direction reflect the views and contributions of staff, governors, parents and pupils. His strong leadership has united two schools as one with a common purpose and determination to build on the strengths of both. The school is well managed and evaluation is used effectively to bring about change. An excellent example of the school's good capacity to improve is the target setting system which has been successfully introduced to challenge pupils and staff and raise standards. A relative weakness is in how community cohesion is managed. Whilst local consideration is a positive feature, too little opportunity to compare and contrast national and international differences limits pupils' understanding.

Senior leaders and subject coordinators play a good part in prioritising what needs doing next and to ensure all pupils get equality of opportunity. However, a minority of key staff have not fully analysed reasons for relative strengths and weaknesses in the phase they do not teach in. A review of responsibilities is planned to coincide with the imminent new building and changes to the curriculum. This is a good example of effective self-evaluation.

Governance is good. Governors actively monitor the impact of decisions taken and money spent and hold the school to account using outcomes in standards and pupils' progress as benchmarks.

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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
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?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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?	3
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**

27 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Covingham Primary School, Swindon SN3 5BD

A big thank you for your friendly, warm welcome when we visited your school. We were especially pleased with the help the eco council and the groups of Years 2 and 6 pupils gave us. You were keen to tell us about Covingham Park. We were really impressed with how much you enjoy school.

You can be proud that yours is a good school.

Here are some of the highlights.

- Standards are better than in most primary schools. You are making good progress.
- You are growing up as sensible, caring young people.
- You get off to an excellent start because Reception is what adults call 'outstanding'.
- Although not always perfect, your behaviour is excellent.
- You are well taught by teachers and their assistants, who take very good care of you.
- The target setting 'must, should and could' system shows you how well you are doing and what to do next.
- The headteacher, staff and governors run the school well. It has not been easy to make one school from the infants and juniors but they have done it!

In order to make the school even better, this is what we have asked teachers and governors to do.

- Make absolutely sure that all of you, especially the boys and those who are in top groups, always do as well as you should.
- Give you more opportunities in topic work to find out about the different ways people live in communities in other parts of our country as well as abroad.

You can help by keeping up the hard work.

Good luck for the future. Enjoy the new building.

Yours faithfully

Mike Burghart Lead inspector