

Cople Lower School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109442
Local Authority	Bedford
Inspection number	337289
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Nina Bee

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judith Howard
Headteacher	Mrs J Donaldson
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Seven lessons were observed and four teachers were seen. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors, staff and parents. The inspector observed the work of the school and looked at policies, evidence from internal and external monitoring, academic performance data, teachers' planning and safeguarding documentation. Twenty eight parental questionnaires were analysed.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. She looked in detail at the following:

- how well pupils' progress is tracked and how effectively assessment and targets are used to move pupils onto the next step of learning
- whether the outstanding judgements for pupils' outcomes and care, guidance and support can be substantiated
- how effectively subject leaders are involved in their monitoring and evaluating role especially assessing pupils' progress.

Information about the school

Cople Lower School is a small village school. About half of the pupils come from neighbouring villages and the outskirts of Bedford. The large majority of pupils come from White British families. The number of pupils who are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average. Before and after school childcare provision is managed by the school.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Cople Lower is an outstanding school. Outstanding features are particularly related to care of pupils, how pupils flourish and develop excellent personal and social skills, and the way it engages with parents. Parents are pleased with the work of the school and pupils are proud of their achievements as well as their school. The school turns out well rounded individuals whose behaviour is excellent. The many opportunities pupils have to learn about different celebrations and world religions enable them to demonstrate excellent cultural awareness. Pupils speak very knowledgeably about the need to eat healthily and keep themselves safe. They talk with excellent awareness about foods that are good for them and how their bodies cannot cope with too much fat. Older pupils use words like 'carbohydrates' and 'vitamins' as they talk about the importance of a balanced diet. All pupils say they feel very safe in school. Younger pupils say they have to wear bright jackets when they go outside school. Older pupils know all about potential dangers such as busy roads, internet safety and the dangers of talking to strangers. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the community as they do jobs around the school and link with the village, for example, campaigning to reduce the speed limit. Achievement is good in relation to pupils' starting points. Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent, and all pupils show very positive attitudes to learning. Teaching is good. Assessment is generally used well to plan activities to match pupils' needs and abilities. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are not always provided with sufficient academic guidance to enable them to develop correct letter and number formation or develop well punctuated sentences when they write in literacy and other subjects.

The headteacher leads the school very well and has a clear idea of its strengths and what needs improving. She is passionate that pupils reach their potential in everything they do. This results in strong support from parents and pupils who are respectful and appreciative of the education they receive. Standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In science, they are slightly lower. By the end of Year 4, pupils reach levels that are generally above those expected for their ages in reading, writing and mathematics but slightly lower in science. This is because more able pupils are not always challenged enough in science.

Teamwork is strong. All staff contribute to monitoring and evaluation. The subject leaders manage their areas of responsibility well and are all focused on pupils' achievement in each subject. They play an important part in checking how well pupils are doing. Staff and governors are committed to giving pupils a good deal. Good achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, has been maintained since the previous inspection. Standards at the end of Year 2 improved in 2009, and current

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results look similar to last year. The school has developed excellent partnerships with others to promote pupils' learning and well-being. This has resulted in an improvement in the curriculum provision which is now outstanding as are pupils' outcomes related to their personal development. These successes, along with the school's accurate self-evaluation, indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in science, in all year groups, by ensuring that higher attaining pupils are always sufficiently challenged.
- Improve the academic guidance that is given to lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities by:
 - ensuring that they receive specific guidance that enables them to develop correct letter formation to enable them then to join their letters and form a cursive script
 - ensuring that they use capital letters and full stops when they write sentences, in literacy lessons, and in other subjects
 - checking that they form numbers correctly.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Outcomes, particularly those related to personal development, are outstanding. Pupils say that they go to a healthy school. They say lunches are healthy and pupils always bring fruit and vegetables to eat in their packed lunches. They are right. Lunches are healthy and pupils talk sensibly about why they should be so. Older pupils talk maturely about different organs inside their bodies and what happens if they do not eat properly. Pupils have learnt a considerable amount about road and water safety. They talk very maturely about safety and the consequences of not keeping themselves safe. Older pupils particularly like the worry boxes in each classroom and say 'they work' if they have a problem. The work of the school council is impressive. A considerable amount of funds are raised for others less fortunate than themselves. Well chosen visitors, such as the Environment Trailer, enable pupils to understand the importance of caring for their local environment. As a result, pupils really do care and are fully involved in the life of the village.

In Year 2, and by the end of Year 4, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics, but not as high in science. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well because teaching is interesting and motivates them.. Planning is thorough and usually caters for individual needs through well focused support. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and attendance is above average. Occasionally, learning in lessons is less successful when lower attaining pupils are not shown how to write letters and numbers with the correct formation or sentences with accurate punctuation. When everyone is given the same worksheet, higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged. This is particularly the case in science.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Well organised and resourced lessons, where pupils are given good opportunities to work together, develop their independent skills. Teachers make learning interesting and enjoyable. Speaking skills were well promoted and pupils were proud of the good learning as they learnt basic vocabulary, in a French lesson, in Years 3 and 4. Teachers use a consistent system to mark pupils' work. Targets are identified as well as areas for improvement. Pupils speak with good awareness of how the system works.

The curriculum enables pupils to achieve well academically and develop excellent outcomes related to their personal development. There are excellent opportunities to take part in visits out, listen to interesting visitors who come into school and join the wide range of extra-curricular clubs that are offered. These extend learning in many areas. There is a high focus, daily, on reading when volunteers come in to hear each child read. As a result, the love of reading and listening to stories is very well developed. Whilst taking part in these activities, pupils are regularly involved in events in the village and, consequently, become valued members of the community.

Outstanding care ensures that pupils feel comfortable and know that adults are there for

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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them if they have a problem. The strong focus on pupils' personal development means that they receive excellent guidance to develop personally and socially. There are good links with external agencies, particularly to support pupils with specific difficulties. Induction procedures are excellent to help pupils settle in when they join Cople and to move easily to their next school at the end of Year 4. The extra childcare provision, before and after school, is good and provides a safe environment for pupils to work and play out of school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, staff and governors have a clear idea of how the school is doing and are ambitious that the school does not stand still. Everyone works well together and all are fully committed to make improvements where necessary. The management of teaching and learning is good and, consequently, the school has an accurate picture of the quality of teaching. Staff work hard to successfully ensure that all boys and girls have equal access to a challenging curriculum that addresses their individual needs. Governors are well informed and involved in the work of the school. As a result, they support the school and challenge it when necessary. Engagement with parents is impressive and parents have many opportunities to see how well their children are doing and learn about the curriculum that is offered. Partnerships with others are excellent and contribute very well to the outstanding curriculum that pupils receive. The strategy for community cohesion is developing well. A good plan of action has been developed. Its impact has mostly been in the schools' links with the local community. There are some links with the wider world but this is identified as an area to develop even further. The school takes the health and safety of its pupils seriously and, at the time of the inspection, fulfilled all safeguarding requirements. All documentation is clear and reviewed regularly. Staff and governors work hard to make sure that pupils work and play in a safe environment.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

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The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good induction procedures ensure that children settle quickly into school. Year groups are usually small and attainment on entry varies year-on-year. The current Reception children entered with below average levels. School data shows that, as a result of good teaching, achievement is good. Activities are carefully planned and suitably resourced. Explanations are usually clear but adults do not always check that all children have understood what they have to do. The outside area is used imaginatively for learning in all areas. High profile is given to the teaching of reading and learning letters and sounds. As a result, children pick up books with confidence and enjoy developing basic writing skills. Personal and social skills are very well promoted in all the children do. Consequently, children get on extremely well with each other and behaviour is excellent. There are excellent arrangements for the health and safety of the children. For example, children spoke maturely about the need to use sun cream and wear sun hats as they went outside on a hot day. Very clear records are kept on how well children are progressing. These identify any child who may need some extra support. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Sessions run smoothly because they are well organised and adults have a good idea of how these young children learn.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

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Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents are extremely happy with the experience that their children receive. Many wrote positive comments about the good progress their children make and how supportive the staff are. For example, one parent stated that, ' Staff are approachable and very good at motivating the children' another said 'My child loves school so much she wants to come at the weekends'. Strong links between the parents and the school help makes parents feel involved with their children's education and personal development. One or two parents feel that the school does not help them support their children's learning or take account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspection evidence does not support these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cople Lower School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 28 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 45 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	82	5	18	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	89	3	11	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	82	4	14	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	64	9	32	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	75	6	21	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	71	6	21	2	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	68	9	32	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	22	79	5	18	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	68	8	29	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	61	7	25	1	4	1	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	61	7	25	2	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	22	79	4	14	1	4	1	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	82	4	14	1	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



24 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cople Lower School, Bedford, MK44 3TH

Thank you for making my visit so enjoyable. I was impressed with how much you have learnt about eating healthily, keeping yourself safe and how you raise funds to help others who are not as fortunate as you are. I think your behaviour is excellent. Your parents think you go to a good school. I disagree. Cople Lower is an outstanding school! These are the main things I found out about your school.

You are all very kind and respectful towards each other and the adults who help you.

Teaching is good and results in you learning well.

Teachers plan lots of exciting visits out and invite many interesting visitors into school to make learning even more fun.

The way you are looked after and cared for is outstanding.

By the time you leave in Year 4, most of you reach standards that are above those normally reached by pupils of your ages.

The school is well led and managed.

The before and after club provides good opportunities for you to take part in exciting and well planned activities.

I have asked the school to do a few things to improve the education you receive.

Make sure that in science, all of you reach the same above average levels you reach in literacy and numeracy.

Check that, those who find writing numbers and letters and writing sentences a bit hard, get more help from teachers, including when they mark your work.

Yours sincerely

Nina Bee

Lead inspector

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