

Cove Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116140
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	338735
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Anna Sketchley

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	291
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Caroline Pickup
Headteacher	Katherine Young
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils, and spoke informally to parents on the playground. They observed the school's work, looked at pupils' books and the systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress, plans for improvement, notes of visits from the local authority and 125 questionnaires returned by parents. Questionnaires were also returned by pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the ability of leaders to halt the recent downward trend in pupils' achievement in the core subjects
- the effectiveness of strategies to improve the attainment and progress of all pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language
- how well provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities helps them all to achieve as well as they can
- how well strategies to manage behaviour contribute successfully to pupils' learning and their safety in school
- the quality of community cohesion and how well it promotes national and global links.

Information about the school

Cove is a larger than average size junior school and all classes are either mixed age across Years 3 and 4 or mixed age across Years 5 and 6. It is a popular school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, the majority of whom have behavioural needs. Others have speech and language and moderate learning difficulties. Since the last inspection there has been a new headteacher and some significant disruption to staffing. Recent awards gained by the school include Bronze Eco Schools and Healthy Schools Awards, Active Mark and Investor in People.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Pupils make satisfactory progress and by the end of Year 6 attain average standards. There has, however, been an overall downward trend in recent years. In 2009, there was a dip in standards in English. The school realised the necessity for quick action and is recovering rapidly because of the drive and ambition of the headteacher and her leadership team, who are wholly committed to school improvement. Good leadership at all levels is helping to address the dip in standards quickly. The school's robust self-evaluation and rigorous monitoring procedures form a strong basis for further advancement and show that the school has a good capacity for further improvement. Recent rigorous tracking of pupils' progress shows that in all classes pupils are beginning to do much better, especially in mathematics and writing. Although there is still more to do to embed new procedures, the improved accuracy in assessment is starting to help teachers plan the next steps in pupils' learning with more precision, especially in Years 5 and 6.

The headteacher, staff and governors have worked hard together, making changes to the organisation of lessons and building stronger teaching teams. The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is thoroughly monitored but it is currently stronger in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 3 and 4. Recent professional development for teachers and new initiatives are beginning to put this right. Teachers' subject knowledge and teaching skills are being comprehensively developed so that they are becoming more proficient in teaching mixed ability, as well as mixed age, classes, particularly in writing. Years 5 and 6 pupils made exceptional progress in learning when teachers used drama effectively to help them, while studying Macbeth, to understand how to empathise with a character. This method was excellent preparation for writing and supported less able pupils particularly well. However, in some lessons, particularly in Years 3 and 4, tasks do not accurately match pupils' abilities so that sometimes they do not make the progress of which they are capable. Although pupils in all classes know their targets really well, they do not understand their purpose in helping them to improve their work. Marking also does not provide sufficient guidance for pupils. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress. This was an area for development from the last inspection and improvement in provision for these pupils has been good.

A recently introduced creative curriculum is starting to give pupils more opportunities to practise and develop their literacy and numeracy skills through a practical and thematic approach to learning. For example, teachers linked the study of time to work on the planets. A science fiction approach using 'War of the Worlds' as a focus for narrative writing engaged boys well in their writing. One of the school's greatest assets is the exemplary behaviour and attitude of the pupils. They really enjoy school and this is

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evident from their good attendance, keen participation in lessons and all the extra activities the school offers. The school has many local links and there is good evidence of pupils realising the importance of becoming 'Junior Citizens', winning the local prize for their efforts. However, links with the wider ethnic diversity of communities in the United Kingdom and globally are less strong.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve learning and progress in English and mathematics, especially in Years 3 and 4, by:
 - embedding new assessment procedures in reading, writing and mathematics and using them on a regular basis to plan and match work to pupils' different abilities
 - thoroughly embedding the new curriculum so that all pupils have as many opportunities as possible to practise their mathematical and writing skills.
- Improve the academic guidance given to pupils by:
 - improving marking especially in writing, so that pupils are clear about what they need to learn next and what they need to do to improve their work
 - ensuring that pupils understand the guidance that targets offer them.
- Ensure better promotion of community cohesion by giving pupils more opportunities to learn about other cultures both nationally and globally.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

National test results in 2009 for mathematics for Year 6 pupils rose slightly, showing that the school's recent focus on raising attainment in this subject is beginning to impact on learning and progress. A recent initiative to introduce more opportunities to use practical resources is helping. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 quickly grasped reading capacity scales accurately when pouring water into beakers. Evidence from the school's pupil progress data and work observed in lessons during the inspection show that pupils in Years 3 and 4 have started to make good progress in writing this term. Their work is well presented although handwriting and basic spelling errors for some pupils are not addressed. Standards of writing on display, and in books, for Years 5 and 6 are above average. More able pupils in particular have a secure grasp of punctuation and spelling and use interesting vocabulary and complex sentences. The new curriculum affords pupils more opportunities for extended writing of which drama and speaking and listening opportunities are an important part. They are often the pre-cursor to writing, so that when it comes to the task pupils have good ideas and find it easier to write at length. Pupils say 'We like literacy because we do a lot of interesting writing.' Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and make similar progress to all other pupils.

Pupils say they enjoy school and that adults help them when they are 'stuck' with their work. Relationships are very good between pupils and adults and pupils know they are

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trusted to carry out responsibilities around the school. As a result their personal development is good. Older pupils enjoy assisting in the school office at lunchtime and helping the newest and youngest pupils to settle into school life. They get on exceptionally well together and told inspectors that 'there is no bullying here'. Pupils really enjoy all the extra activities the school offers although some are disappointed as they have not been able to join in any clubs because all the places were filled. They have a good understanding about keeping healthy and were keen to say that they felt very safe in school. In a lesson about cyber bullying pupils knew exactly what to do if this happened to them. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good but they do not have a full enough understanding of different cultures beyond their own.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

At the beginning of lessons teachers are very careful to make sure that pupils know what they are to learn. They check pupils' understanding by asking searching questions, often of pupils who do not have their hands up, encouraging all of them to participate fully in the lesson. Although lessons are planned very carefully, some tasks do not

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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always meet the wide range of pupils' ability. This means that some pupils do not always make the best progress possible. In the best lessons, teachers' good subject knowledge and very clear explanations and demonstrations using the interactive whiteboards capture pupils' attention well. In mathematics, short tasks and quick discussions with a partner increase the pace of the lesson so that pupils learn a lot in a short space of time. Less able pupils are well supported by teaching assistants and the use of practical equipment. Well-prepared resources and pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes mean that no time is wasted as they settle very quickly to their work when transferring from one task to another. There are some good examples of marking in books that provide pupils with guidance on how to improve their work but this is not consistent across the school.

The new curriculum is clearly supporting learning through links across subjects. These are developing well, providing pupils with interesting and relevant opportunities to use their English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. This is beginning to improve learning and progress. Year 3 pupils made good progress with their literacy skills in a history lesson when discussing a picture of a mangle in readiness for descriptive writing. A wide range of after-school clubs, such as art, design, dance, gardening and rugby, and visits and visitors, provide good enrichment and effectively support pupils' social development.

Pupils are very well cared for on a daily basis and well known to staff. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well organised and, as a consequence, they are well supported and guided. Teaching assistants are well trained to address some pupils' particular needs. Good liaison with outside specialists for the most vulnerable pupils, including those with behaviour difficulties and at risk of exclusion, ensures that pupils' behaviour improves and, as a result, they are fully included in all the school has to offer.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Despite staffing changes and difficulties, the headteacher and leadership team continue to persevere with driving forward improvement. They are determined to succeed in raising standards and improving progress. Governors have a good idea of the school's strengths and areas for development and offer strong support and challenge in the pursuit of excellence. They have clear views about how the school should improve. The

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school's action plans and priorities are accurate and a good tool for development. The quality of teaching and learning is regularly monitored by lesson observations. Analysis of data and an efficient and detailed system for tracking pupils' progress are in place. All of this is beginning to help raise attainment and improve progress swiftly.

There are effective partnerships with outside agencies, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and good links with other schools. This promotes the well-being of pupils effectively and supports their learning. Promoting equality and tackling discrimination is well managed. Safeguarding procedures comply with statutory requirements, ensuring that pupils are safe and secure in school. Pupils have too few opportunities to develop their understanding of life in more culturally diverse areas of Britain and in other parts of the world.

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
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The school engages effectively with parents and a very large majority are supportive of the school. A very small minority feel that communication could be improved. They would appreciate more opportunities for informal contact with the headteacher and staff, especially at the beginning and end of the day on the playground. A very small minority of parents' questionnaires highlighted that they would like more information about their child's progress, although some said that the school has already responded to this due to a previous school questionnaire to parents. Inspectors interviewed some parents personally and those spoken to were generally happy with the school's arrangements although they did indicate concerns about procedures for Year 3 pupils at

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the end of the day. They would appreciate teachers ensuring that these younger pupils are personally handed over to parents in the playground when school is ended.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cove Junior 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 inspection team received 125 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 291 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	36	72	58	5	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	35	76	61	2	2	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	24	88	70	7	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	25	77	62	13	10	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	35	28	77	62	7	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	26	75	60	14	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	25	76	61	15	12	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)	25	20	80	64	6	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	22	76	61	13	10	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	21	77	62	12	10	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	14	79	63	15	12	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	25	20	85	68	7	6	4	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	27	81	65	7	6	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



20 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cove Junior School, Farnborough, GU14 9SA

On behalf of the team of inspectors, I would like to thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave us and for spending time talking to us, especially at lunchtimes. Cove is a satisfactory school and these are some of the best things we found.

- Your attitude to learning is excellent
- You really enjoy coming to school, attend well and know how to keep healthy and safe.
- Your teachers make learning interesting for you and there are lots of extra activities in which you enjoy taking part.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you get on really well together.
- You are well cared for and feel happy and safe in school.

All the adults working in the school want you to achieve well and do your very best. They lead your school well and know what it needs to do next. We have asked them to do some things to make your learning even better.

- Make sure your teachers assess your work more often so that they know what to teach you next, give you work which is at the right level and give you lots of opportunities to practise your maths and writing skills in other subjects.
- Make sure that you understand how the targets teachers set with you, and the way they mark your work, will help you to improve.
- Give you more opportunities to learn about other cultures both in Britain and across the world.

Yours sincerely

Anna Sketchley

Lead Inspector

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