

Cowley St Laurence CE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117709
Local Authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	339057
Inspection dates	17–18 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Mike Capper

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	358
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Steven Hardwicke
Headteacher	Christopher Cole
Date of previous school inspection	18 May 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 20 lessons with 15 teachers being seen. Meetings were held with governors, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at teachers' planning, the school's assessment information and safeguarding policies and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors analysed 36 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- the impact of the new leadership team in building a capacity for improvement
- the consistency of teaching and how well it provides the right level of challenge for all pupils
- the impact of the school's partnership with others and how well pupils contribute to the community
- the effectiveness of support for pupils in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language or for those who have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Information about the school

This large urban school takes most pupils from the local community. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most, but not all, of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. Most pupils are of White British heritage, but some are from other ethnic backgrounds, including Indian and Pakistani. A few of these pupils start school in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a Nursery and two Reception classes. The newly built Children's Centre opened on the school site in April 2010 was not inspected. The school has been working in collaboration with a nearby church school for seven months. The headteacher of that school was appointed as Executive Headteacher of both schools in March and he now shares his time equally between the two schools. Prior to that, he gave the Cowley St Laurence extensive support and guidance as a 'Local Leader of Education'. Several staff have been appointed or have left the school over that time.

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

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It is moving forward quickly under the strong guidance of the new leadership team. They have taken decisive action to tackle weaknesses and to deal with the backlog of underachievement that is reflected in the low attainment at the end of Year 6. There has been a strong focus on eradicating inadequate teaching and this has been highly effective. Consequently teaching is improving very rapidly and it is now much more effective in meeting differing needs. As a result, pupils' learning and progress is improving securely and quickly. It is now satisfactory and this means that pupils' attainment is also improving. Pupils report that they now thoroughly enjoy school and that behaviour in lessons is much improved.

Leaders have established good systems for school evaluation and this means that there is an in-depth understanding of strengths and weaknesses. The partnership with another school, as well as support from the local authority, is proving of great value; staff and skills are being shared between the schools and this is a major factor in improved provision. Although developments are relatively recent, they are already embedded and the school has demonstrated successfully that there is a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. Leaders, rightly, know that the next step in building this capacity is to develop middle management so that responsibilities for driving improvement and monitoring provision are shared amongst more staff.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children get off to a steady start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They continue to make satisfactory progress in the rest of the school where teaching is now satisfactory and the proportion of good or outstanding practice is rising quickly. Inconsistency in providing the right level of challenge for all pupils is the main factor preventing more teaching from being good across the school. Pupils do best in mathematics and least well in writing. This is because there is insufficient structure to the teaching of spelling, handwriting and grammar.

Pupils are good ambassadors for the school. They are polite and courteous and get on well together. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work but are given too few opportunities to take responsibility or to show initiative both in and out of lessons. Adults look after the pupils' pastoral needs well. Good safeguarding systems mean that pupils feel very safe and are a good example of how keen staff are to do the best for the children.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move teaching and learning from satisfactory to good by ensuring that work is consistently pitched at the right level for all pupils and that the pace of learning is

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always brisk enough.

- Improve attainment in writing so that it reaches national averages by ensuring that there a consistent approach to the teaching of spelling, handwriting and grammar.
- Develop the role of middle managers so that they have the capacity to play a full part in monitoring provision and guiding school development.
- Give pupils more opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative both in lessons and around school.

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

Although attainment is low in Year 6, it is better in other parts of the school and the current Year 5 is already on track to improve on recent test results. This is because pupils are now making much better progress in lessons, resulting in generally good enjoyment of school. In most lessons, progress is now satisfactory and on occasions it is better than this. In an outstanding literacy lesson, pupils showed great interest and made very quick progress in improving their speaking skills because there were many opportunities for learning through role play and drama, making work purposeful and fun. In a good numeracy lesson, pupils were fully engaged and keenly explored ideas for themselves, making good progress in learning how to use a protractor. Where progress is satisfactory rather than good, it is because work does not provide the right level of challenge for all pupils; for example, in a numeracy lesson for older pupils, there was insufficient challenge because all worked on the same activity, making bar charts and analysing data.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or for those who are in the early stages of learning English is much improved recently under new leaders and is now fully focused on meeting differing needs. These pupils now make satisfactory progress in lessons, although there are still occasions when work is too hard and their learning then slows. Better teaching means that pupils are becoming increasingly enthusiastic learners and rates of attendance have improved to satisfactory levels because of this, as well as being due to the school's good recent efforts to discourage absence. Pupils behave sensibly and work hard most of the time although they do not always present their work neatly enough. They make a satisfactory contribution to the community. School councillors are enthusiastic and pupils keenly take responsibility when given the opportunity to do so. However, these opportunities, both in and out of lessons, are infrequent and the school knows that the 'pupil voice' is underdeveloped. Pupils enjoy learning about life in different countries and have a good understanding of cultures other than their own. Pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of staying healthy. They enjoy taking part in sports clubs and often, but not always, eat healthily at lunchtime.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
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	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Adults make the school a welcoming place to learn and ensure that pupils feel very safe and secure. Pupils who need additional help are suitably supported and this ensures that they improve their skills steadily. Pupils are given sound academic support but the practice of setting targets is not yet consistently strong across the school.

Teaching is improving and this means that pupils are now learning more quickly than in the past. Teachers make lessons enjoyable and manage pupils' behaviour well. Teachers get on well with pupils, but the pace of learning is sometimes too slow, especially when too much time is given to unnecessary discussion between pupils. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support learning. Where teaching and learning are good, assessment information is used well to plan the next steps in learning. However, this is not yet consistent in all lessons. Teachers mark work conscientiously and often add helpful written comments so that pupils understand how to improve.

The curriculum promotes basic skills soundly in most areas, but the teaching of spelling, grammar and handwriting lacks structure and this is slowing the pace at which pupils' writing skills improve. Themed projects, such as a 'multi-cultural week', enrich the curriculum and contribute well to learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3

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The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The school is emerging from a period of significant transition with a renewed sense of purpose under the new leadership team. Teamwork is generally strong and the ambition and drive for improvement of senior leaders are becoming more firmly embedded and understood across the school now that staffing is becoming more settled. Senior leaders have a good understanding of priorities. They are tackling weaknesses with great determination, including the need to develop the skills of middle leaders so that they can be more involved in monitoring provision and planning for improvement. The greatest impact of senior leaders can be seen in results of their strategies to manage and improve teaching and learning. As a result of this, inadequate teaching has been eliminated. Leaders have done this by setting teachers very sharp targets to help them improve and by providing them with good quality support and training to reach these targets.

Governors are enthusiastic and, under the guidance of the local authority, are receiving support so that they can provide more challenge than they have done in the past. Partnerships with others, including with the new Children's Centre, are contributing significantly to school improvement.

Leaders take satisfactory steps to promote equality and to tackle discrimination. The use of data to check that all pupils do equally well is developing quickly under the guidance of new staff. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. Pupils learn to respect each others' beliefs and they are beginning to develop a better understanding of their place in the wider world. Leaders are now rightly seeking to strengthen the school's work in this area by establishing links with communities in other parts of the United Kingdom and beyond.

The school has good safeguarding procedures. Pupils' safety is given the highest priority, with particularly good practice seen in the way that daily risk assessments are carried out in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

When they start school in the nursery, few children are working at the expected levels for their age. Attainment remains below average at the start of Year 1, but all children, including those who are learning to speak English as an additional language and have little spoken English when they start school, make satisfactory progress in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Children make the best progress in personal, social and emotional development. They learn to behave well and they develop good attitudes toward learning, for example persevering well when learning numbers to twenty, even though they were finding the work hard. The curriculum is well organised so that children can choose for themselves where they are going to work, although when they do so, adults do not always do enough to move the learning on quickly. This is because some work lacks challenge and adults' questioning does not focus strongly enough on what children need to learn next. Adults take good care of the children and the welcoming atmosphere is reflected in the 'meeting and greeting' time at the start of the day where parents and carers are given time to share information or concerns. Good use is made of a spacious and well-resourced outdoor area to support learning, but there are occasions when activities lack purpose.

Leadership and management are satisfactory ensuring that provision is improving steadily. However, at the moment, there is too much reliance on the school's senior leaders to move things forward and this means that some minor weaknesses such as the lack of structure to some free-choice activities are not being picked up or tackled quickly enough. Leaders have quickly established a good partnership with the new Children's Centre and staff are already benefiting from shared facilities and opportunities to work together.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

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Views of parents and carers

There was a very low return of questionnaires from parents and carers. Some are very happy with the school but others raised concerns. Positive comments included, 'My child loves school and always wants to come' and, 'The adults are always friendly and welcoming.' Some parents and carers are concerned about how the school tackles unacceptable behaviour. The inspection team saw none and found that the school has good systems for tackling it, should it occur. Several parents and carers are unhappy that one of the school gates has been closed, limiting access to the school. Inspectors found that this was done with local authority guidance in the interests of site security and pupils' safety. Inspection findings on leadership and management and pupils' progress are reported on elsewhere in the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cowley St Laurence CE Primary 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 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection.

In total, there are 358 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	11	31	19	53	4	11	2	6
The school keeps my child safe	9	25	21	58	2	6	4	11
The school informs me about my child's progress	9	25	19	53	6	17	2	6
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	28	17	47	4	11	5	14
The teaching is good at this school	9	25	20	56	5	14	2	6
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	19	18	50	7	19	4	11
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	22	22	61	3	8	3	8
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)	4	11	17	47	6	17	6	17
The school meets my child's particular needs	7	19	20	56	5	14	3	8
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	17	13	36	6	17	9	25
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	17	18	50	3	8	8	22
The school is led and managed effectively	5	17	17	39	7	19	8	22
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	6	17	21	58	5	14	4	11

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.



19 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cowley St Laurence CE Primary School, Uxbridge UB8 3TH

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. You were polite and friendly and we enjoyed talking to you. At the moment, your school is providing a satisfactory education. This means that we found some good things in the school but also some things that need improving.

Here are some of the things we found out about your school.

- You make satisfactory progress in the nursery and reception classes. It was great to see so many smiling faces when you were working.
- Satisfactory teaching means that you then make steady progress in the rest of the school.
- You behave sensibly most of the time and are happy at school.
- You know who to turn to if you have a worry and feel that you are kept safe. All adults in school are caring and give you suitable help when you have problems with your work.
- New leaders are moving the school forward quickly and have already done a lot to improve things. They are clear about what still needs improving.

Your teachers know that there is still work to be done to make the school even better.

We have suggested four things senior leaders need to do that we think will help:

- check that your teachers always expect enough of you
- ensure that the teaching of writing skills is more consistent across the school
- develop the role of more staff in checking how well things are going in the school
- give you more opportunities to take responsibility both in and out of lessons.

We wish you all well for the future. You can help your teachers by trying to present your work neatly all of the time.

Yours sincerely

Mike Capper

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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