

# Cowbit St Mary's (Endowed) CE Primary School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	120611
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	339730
Inspection dates	15-16 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Sudworth

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

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Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sheila Woodham
Headteacher	Mrs Maureen Martins
Date of previous school inspection	5-6 March 2007
School address	Barrier Bank Cowbit Spalding Lincolnshire PE12 6AE
Telephone number	01406 380369
Fax number	01406 380369
Email address	Lorna.hutson@cowbit.lincs.sch.uk
Registered childcare provision	Little Angels
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	11
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	14 November 2005

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Age group	3-11
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. The inspector visited eight lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, and a group of pupils. He observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documents and also samples of pupils' previous and current work. He also visited the pre-school provision.

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

- The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the attainment of the children and the progress they make.
- The progress of more capable pupils across the school.
- The school's success in addressing weaknesses in pupils' mathematics skills by the end of Year 6, and attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 as well as the progress pupils make in writing across the school.
- The school's provision for the increased number of pupils who speak English as an additional language.

## Information about the school

The school is smaller than average. There are three classes, all of which contain mixed ages. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below that in most schools. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much lower than usually found and the percentage of pupils who are in the early stages of learning English is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities is higher than that nationally. Pupils begin the Reception class full-time in the September before their fifth birthday and they are taught alongside Year 1 pupils. Most, but not all children, from the school's own managed pre-school setting transfer to the Reception year.

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

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Some features of its provision are good. It has continued to improve since its last inspection. It has tackled the points for development well, although there is still scope to extend the opportunities for pupils to write across different subjects as the curriculum develops. The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school. They speak well of the school's care of their children and appreciate the improvements taking place which are contributing to the pupils' enjoyment of school. As one parent writes, 'The school has a lovely, welcoming feeling and the children are always very polite and well behaved.' Parents accurately judge pupils' behaviour and attitudes as positive features. The pupils' personal development is a particular strength.

The teaching staff are relatively inexperienced yet enthusiastic and keen to do their best for the pupils. While teaching overall is satisfactory, elements are good, such as the respect the teachers earn from the pupils because of their good preparation, the way that they manage pupils and the good relationships forged. Staff accept advice willingly and take action on it to improve the quality of their work. Some of the teaching observed was good. Teachers do not always use assessment of pupils' previous learning well enough to ensure that all pupils in the mixed-age classes are challenged appropriately, especially in mathematics which has been a weaker subject over time. In the Reception and Year 1 class, there are insufficient opportunities for the Reception children to initiate their own learning and to learn through practical experiences. Pupils make satisfactory progress across the school from their relative starting points with little difference in rates of progress between different groups of learners. Staff are becoming more skilled in providing for more capable pupils and this brought increased success in the 2009 national test results for Year 6 pupils. The staff are also exploring new techniques, and with some success, to help those who are in the early stages of learning English to accelerate the progress they make. Good links with the secondary school have prompted the planning of a new initiative for bilingual secondary pupils to visit regularly to support pupils with little English. This project was to commence following the inspection.

Attainment is broadly average but national test results vary from year to year because of the small cohorts taking the tests. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or difficulties in any particular year can affect the results much more so than in many other schools nationally. The school is in the process of changing the curriculum to make it more appealing for the pupils. However, this is still at an early stage in ensuring that the planning incorporates and links learning

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skills for different subjects as well as providing work that is matched to the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes.

The school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve. Self-evaluation is accurate and there is a trend of improvement but some weaknesses remain, for example, in mathematics because the work provided in lessons is not matched well enough to pupils' needs. While attainment improved in 2009 in both Year 2 and Year 6 in both English and mathematics, the school has not yet managed to sustain a trend of good progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend children's learning and progress in the Reception class through increased opportunities for children to initiate their own learning both inside the classroom and from quality experiences outside.
- Use assessment more effectively to plan learning for pupils' different abilities in mathematics and English so that their progress accelerates across the school.
- Refine the new curriculum plans so that they support the staff in teaching new skills for different ages and abilities in the mixed age classes.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

### Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily in lessons and enjoy their learning. They are willing, want to please and try hard. They contribute well in group discussions and listen to their teachers attentively. At best, pupils present their work very neatly in their exercise books with a good style of joined handwriting but there is inconsistency from pupil to pupil. The school is adopting good strategies to combat areas of previous weakness. For example, it has recently begun a spelling programme in which pupils are grouped by ability with the aim of contributing to improved writing standards. A reading incentive has been introduced to get pupils to read more at home and to read a greater variety of material. These are beginning to lead to improvements in both reading and writing. Staff are endeavouring to match work more in mathematics to pupils' abilities and to get pupils to apply mathematics to real life situations. While a start has been made on this, teachers do not yet use records of what pupils already know well enough to challenge all pupils appropriately. Consequently, mathematics results have not improved as much as those in English. Children in the pre-school make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

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Pupils take an active part in contributing to school life. The school council organises many charity events to support good causes in the local and wider community and it recently organised the open day for parents. Pupils have engaged in local debate about a new local road scheme and made their views very clear. They have also worked with the police to discuss possible consequences with speeding drivers. The pupils have a good understanding of safe and healthy living and show a good knowledge of what constitutes healthy food and good exercise. Pupils participate well in after school opportunities which include sport. They regularly take part in exercise and in the good range of extra activities and sports. They know how to keep themselves safe, such as when crossing roads. Pupils get along very well together and support one another. They buddy new pupils to help them settle and make new friends. The good links with the church and pupils' involvement in the local community support their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The standards that they reach and the skills acquired prepare them soundly for the next stage of their education. Children in the pre-school make good progress in their social development.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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	2
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 <sup>1</sup>	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

### How effective is the provision?

Pupils are well cared for and form respectful and trusting relationships with adults and other pupils. This is also the case in the pre-school. Evidence of the school's good care for each other is seen in the way the school coped with the quite recent death of a member of staff. Pupils enjoy their learning because staff work hard to

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<sup>1</sup> 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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make the content interesting and prepare the materials well which assists the effective use of time. Marking is usually up to date. The quality of teachers' written comments about pupils' work is satisfactory. The match of work to pupils' needs and abilities is better in English than in mathematics where it does not always promote enough challenge. This is because knowledge of pupils' competence in mathematics is not used well enough in planning new work for different abilities.

In a good Year 5/6 English lesson, an effective link between science and English engaged the pupils well because the content had been very carefully matched to different pupils' needs. The effective use of teaching assistants ensured that the different abilities were well engaged with their learning at appropriate levels. Teachers make good use of modern technology to present the work. They ensure that pupils are aware of the main purpose of the learning and what it is expected they should be able to do by the end of the lesson. In one lesson, excerpts from a documentary film of life on a desert island were used well to get pupils to focus on different elements of the film and this promoted productive group discussions.

Teachers track pupils' achievements carefully and target pupils well who are not making the expected rate of progress. Good use of intervention programmes supports such pupils and those who find learning the basic skills difficult. These programmes assist them to catch up with their learning. Good systems are in place for pupils to assess themselves in their understanding of their work so that they can receive extra help to help them understand. The process of setting pupils personal targets in mathematics and English is developing in order that they can be more aware of the next steps in their 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
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

### How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides determined leadership and this has led to continuing improvement. The priorities in the school development plan in consultation with staff, are the correct ones. Attainment is improving but there is more to do to ensure that all pupils are challenged at their own level to raise standards even further, particularly in the core areas of reading, writing and mathematics, and to ensure greater consistency in pupils' progress from year to year. A good start has been made in using new staff to monitor specific aspects of work. The mathematics leader, for example, has analysed difficulties pupils are experiencing across the school in aspects of mathematics with a view to improving results. New mathematics

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resources have been purchased to support this effort. These have yet to impact fully on pupils' progress. The headteacher's monitoring of teaching and learning is helpful in supporting the quality of teaching, although this has not yet resulted in a balance of teaching strategies in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that the children engage more practically in their learning. Governors are supportive and beginning to use effective strategies to monitor the school's work, such as using focused visits to make reports to other governors. Several governors are new but there is a good range of expertise to increase further the effectiveness of the governing body. The school has not yet been assessed for financial standards competency but continues to prepare for this. The governing body reviews the priorities on the school development plan regularly at their meetings and so keeps abreast of developments.

There is good engagement with parents and they think well of the school. The staff and governors work effectively to involve pupils in community matters and help them appreciate different faiths and cultures. The school also links in well with other professional agencies to support pupils with particular learning difficulties or disabilities and this supports their progress. Safeguarding procedures are thorough and meet requirements. The school is particularly vigilant about child protection matters. Thorough checks are made of all the adults who work in the school and policies and procedures are well considered.

*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	3
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	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	3
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	3

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The attainment of the Reception children when they start school varies from year to year depending on the number of children in the small cohorts who may have special education needs and/ or disabilities. Typically, the children start with abilities that are lower than those expected of four-year-olds. Children achieve satisfactorily in the

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Reception year. While attainment overall is below the levels expected for their age in reading and writing by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, most come close to meeting age related expectations in the other areas of learning.

Provision is satisfactory. Teaching in both the Early Years Foundation Stage and the pre-school is satisfactory. The staff ensure that the children receive a well balanced curriculum that fulfils the required areas of learning. Nevertheless, the organisation of their learning does not enable the children to have enough opportunities to learn through doing and engaging with one another. This limits their personal development and opportunities for speaking and listening.

The staff are friendly and caring and work together well. They ensure that the children wear appropriate dress for their activities. In a lesson in which the children drew the outline of their house and then painted it, all the children put on their own overalls. The children get on well together and forge a respectful relationship with the staff. Their behaviour is good.

Assessment files show that regular recordings are made of the progress that the children are making across the different areas of learning which help to inform future learning. The outdoor area is shared with the pre-school setting but its use at separate times by both organisations restricts opportunities for children to choose their activities. Occasional shared lessons with the pre-school, such as for physical education, enhance the children's social development and their preparation for Reception. A new system is being used to teach Reception children their letter sounds in an effort to improve their reading skills but it is too soon to judge its success.

Links between the Early Years Foundation Stage and the pre-school are good and these help the children to settle quickly when they transfer to the main school. The leadership of the pre-school provision is satisfactory.

*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

## Views of parents and carers

Parents express largely positive views of the school and indicate that the school is a happy place. They comment that staff work hard in restricted accommodation. Fewer

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than 10% of the questionnaires raised any concerns. These mainly related to concerns about the information provided about pupils' progress but there is no evidence to justify these concerns.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cowbit St Mary's CE (Endowed) 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspector received 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 75 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	64	16	36	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	64	14	32	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	52	17	39	4	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	57	17	39	1	2	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	23	52	18	41	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	57	17	39	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	59	18	41	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	50	20	45	2	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	48	20	45	3	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	48	21	48	2	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	45	22	50	1	2	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	24	55	17	39	2	5	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	64	14	32	2	5	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 all 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

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>the following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.



17<sup>th</sup> September 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Cowbit St Mary's CE Endowed Primary School, PE12 6AE

Thank you for your help when I visited your school. It was good to talk to you and see your work. Thank you for sharing it with me and telling me so much about what you do. You obviously enjoy school and get along well together. You are just like one big family. I was interested to learn about the work you do in raising money to help others and the way in which you get involved in your local community. I was pleased to learn that you had given your views about the new road planned for your area.

The school provides a satisfactory education for you and it continues to improve. The staff are very keen to do their very best for each one of you and to make your school even better. There are three areas that I have asked the school to look at particularly in making further improvements.

- I have suggested that the Reception children be provided with more opportunities to work practically and to have a chance to make their own choices both inside the classroom and in their outside area.
- I have asked the staff to use their knowledge of what you can do more regularly when they plan the work for you so that you make even better progress.
- I have asked the school to build in to the new curriculum plans more tasks and activities that meet all your needs and abilities in mixed-age classes.

Thank you once again for your help, I wish you all well for the future and hope that you will continue to work hard.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Sudworth  
Lead Inspector

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