

Cedar Road Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121911
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	340040
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Joseph Peacock

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	415
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Starkey
Headteacher	Kay Gerrett
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons and observed 14 teachers. They held meetings with the headteacher, governors and staff, talked to parents and children, and looked at school planning and assessment data. They examined the school's documentation including minutes of governors' meetings, improvement planning and that relating to safeguarding and children's welfare. They scrutinised 151 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and those returned by staff and pupils.

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

- the effectiveness of strategies to raise attainment, especially for boys in writing
- how effectively assessment information is being used to accelerate pupils' progress
- the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and its impact on children's learning indoors and out
- how effectively modern technology is used to support and enhance pupils' learning.

Information about the school

The school is much larger than average and its accommodation is managed under a private funding arrangement. A major refurbishment programme was completed two years ago. Most pupils are White British and one in five pupils is from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is in two Reception classes. A breakfast club and after school care are provided. These will be inspected and reported on separately. The school has gained national Healthy Schools status.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. There is a strong feeling of 'togetherness' with all staff and governors determined to ensure the pace of improvement will continue. This unity of purpose stems from the headteacher who is the driving force for development. Her experience and passion are inspiring a common ambition amongst staff and governors to make the school even better. Self-evaluation is over-cautious in some respects because all are determined to be sure that any improvement is secure. Rigorous monitoring of provision and outcomes gives everyone a good understanding of strengths and areas still to improve. A highly effective partnership with parents and carers is fully involving them in school improvement as their views are sought and valued. The collective efforts of everyone involved with the school are being enhanced by effective advice and support, tailored to meet the schools needs, from an external school improvement partnership. Inspectors share staff and governors' optimism for the future. There is clearly a good capacity to improve further.

Core values of integrity, respect, care, compassion, hope and responsibility are promoted effectively, giving pupils of all ages clear benchmarks on how to conduct themselves. The excellent care, guidance and support for individual pupils are instrumental in fostering positive attitudes, good behaviour and caring relationships between pupils and with staff. Pupils are happy, friendly and confident and stay extremely safe. The very occasional incidents of challenging behaviour are quickly resolved, ensuring learning and the enjoyment of school are not affected. Pupils make an excellent contribution to their community.

Most enter Reception with skills that are below those expected. Effective leadership and management ensure all aspects of provision are good, enabling children to make good progress. However, the outdoor learning area is cramped for the number of children and limits the range of experiences staff can provide.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, invariably do well but performance data for the past three years shows attainment is not high enough. In some lessons, more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged by their work and, as a result, the proportion achieving above average standards is lower than it could be. More could be expected in some lessons to ensure learning is challenging for pupils of all abilities in order to accelerate progress. In many classes, the limited number of computers means that the culture amongst pupils to make use of modern technology is not well established. Pupils are keen to improve their literacy skills and told inspectors that they would like more fiction books to read. The stock is relatively small for a school of this size.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in Years 1 to 6 by:
 - ensuring that more able pupils are provided with appropriately challenging work
 - making more effective use of modern technology to support and enhance learning in lessons
 - constantly checking during lessons that pupils of all abilities have work which challenges them successfully and builds on their prior learning
 - improving the stock of fiction books in the library.
- Improve outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage by developing a wider range of experiences for children such as gardening or adventure play.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils are well behaved in lessons and listen attentively to their teachers. They benefit from the close support of their teachers and support staff, especially when trying to learn new work. In the lessons observed, there was a good atmosphere for learning with pupils concentrating and trying their best to complete the tasks set for them.

Attainment tends to fluctuate from year to year depending on the varying ability of pupils and proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school is trying to iron out these differences and, through more consistently good teaching, has succeeded in closing the gap between boys and girls attainment. Although attainment is average in English and science and just below average in mathematics for the current Year 6, school data clearly show that most pupils make good progress from their relatively low starting points. Pupils attainment in writing is not as good as it is in reading and this year, girls are not doing as well as boys in mathematics. Initiatives to drive up standards such as, 'Talk for Write' and 'Drama for Writing' are proving to be effective. In 2009, for example, attainment in English was significantly below average largely because of weaknesses in writing but it has now risen as a result of the effective implementation of these strategies.

Pupils' personal development is a defining aspect enabling pupils to leave with a solid base of lifetime core values which equip them well for the next stage of their education and shape them as good citizens. Most show a maturity beyond their years in their relationships and conversations with adults. Pupils respond well to the high expectations for their behaviour, making school a calm, very safe and harmonious community. Many make a significant contribution to school life as school councillors or enjoying the good range of after-school clubs. Pupils are also heavily involved in activities within the local community. The happy music produced by members of the junk band is impressive, lighting up assembly with their uninhibited performance. Music groups are 'phenomenally fab' was a typical comment from parents about concerts performed for parents and groups within the local community.

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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	3
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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

In a large majority of lessons, teaching is effective and this ensures pupils make good progress. Most teachers succeed in making learning challenging and interesting. Pupils finding learning difficult benefit from a friendly and supportive relationship with helpful adults. Expectations of pupils' behaviour are high and pupils live up to those expectations. In a small minority of lessons, teaching is less effective when teachers' introductions are too long and expectations of what pupils of different abilities can do are not high enough. Pupils are increasingly involved in assessing their own progress, adding to their understanding of how to do even better.

The well-planned curriculum has a strong focus on helping pupils to develop essential skills to equip them well for their future. Regular assessments identify who needs additional support and in what aspect of their learning. Strong links are being developed between subjects in order to promote basic literacy and numeracy skills more effectively. Although most pupils have good computer skills, the shortage of resources in classrooms means that they have few opportunities to use computers to support or enhance learning in the different subjects. The music curriculum is a significant strength

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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and many pupils enjoy learning to play instruments and performing in groups. There is a wide range of popular after-school clubs catering for all interests and abilities. These provide valuable skills for life for pupils.

Staff know pupils well and provide excellent support and guidance, especially for those from the most vulnerable circumstances. Their caring approach is a key factor in raising pupils' self-esteem and leading by example on how to form lasting relationships. The quality and effectiveness of the support is routinely evaluated and the expertise of specialists from other agencies often sought to ensure pupils' needs are being met. Every effort is being made to encourage good attendance and punctuality and most parents are supporting the school's efforts to improve attendance from average to above average. Transition arrangements are particularly effective enabling pupils to settle quickly in new classes and look forward with confidence to future learning experiences.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Discussions with staff and their responses to the inspection questionnaire clearly demonstrate their enthusiasm and wholehearted commitment to school improvement. Staff, who share the same ambition, work well together as a team to drive improvements forward by rigorously monitoring and evaluating all aspects of provision and outcomes. Subject leaders are increasingly involved in evaluating the quality of teaching in their subjects. Their evaluations are shared and discussed in depth, helping to make teaching more effective.

The governors are well led and organised. Most visit regularly and are involved in setting challenging targets and evaluating how well they are being met through their monitoring visits. The steady improvement since the previous inspection reflects their effectiveness in challenging staff and their involvement in bringing about improvement.

The outstanding partnerships with parents and carers are reflected in the positive comments in the questionnaires. 'A pleasure to be part of school' and 'couldn't ask for more' are typical comments. A wide range of external agencies are highly effective in supporting the care and welfare of pupils. Staff constantly promote equality of opportunity and resolutely tackle any discrimination or harassment. Safeguarding procedures are good with the school meeting national requirements well. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion, having evaluated carefully each

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aspect and implemented action plans for future development.

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	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

Children make a flying start in Reception because of the nurturing and supportive environment that values each, individually. Most enter with abilities which are below those normally expected for their age. The consistently good teaching and learning ensures that children make good progress. By the end of Reception, skills are broadly average in all areas of learning. The strong focus on improving writing skills has been particularly effective this year in ensuring a higher proportion attain the level expected. Staff show a high level of expertise in managing the challenging behaviour of a small minority of children. Most quickly settle in and happily work on their own or in groups, enjoying the good range of activities planned for them. Parents and carers are made welcome and many stay and support their children and staff at the beginning of the day or sometimes during lessons.

The outdoor learning area is too small but staff plan and compensate well for this, packing in a good range of activities which ensure the quality of learning outdoors matches that indoors. However, the limited space means that activities such as using wheeled toys, adventure play equipment and gardening which would excite children and provide valuable learning experiences are largely unavailable. Despite the best efforts of staff, the cramped outdoor area sometimes limits the development of key skills in children's social, physical and language development.

Leadership and management are effective because the teaching staff work well

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together, sharing expertise. The excellent transition arrangements from feeder nurseries and from Reception into Year 1 ensure children are confident and happy about the next stages of their education.

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

Views of parents and carers

Parents' extremely positive views about the school are reflected in the good response to the inspection questionnaire. For almost all of the questions, the proportion who agreed and strongly agreed was over 90 per cent. A few want to see their children make better progress and help the school more to achieve this. A very small minority think that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors agree that raising attainment should continue to be a school priority. They found that parents are very effectively involved in all aspects of school life supporting homework for pupils and helping with fund-raising and events such as the end of term magic show. Behaviour management is a strength of the school, ensuring pupils feel safe and are happy at school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cedar Road 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 151 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 415 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	90	60	58	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	94	62	53	35	3	2	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	74	49	71	47	3	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	59	39	81	54	10	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	73	48	73	48	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	76	50	66	44	8	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	66	44	84	56	1	1	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)	74	49	69	46	2	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	67	44	78	52	5	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	60	40	74	49	9	6	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	57	38	83	55	7	5	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	87	58	59	39	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	90	60	54	36	2	1	2	1

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.



16 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cedar Road Primary School, Northampton, NN3 2JF

Thank you for being so friendly, helpful, and good-mannered when we inspected your school.

Yours is a good school. Many of you already know this, as you told inspectors how much you enjoy being pupils at Cedar Road. Well done to all of you for being so sensible and caring towards others. Your good behaviour is making the school a happy one for everyone. You stay extremely safe and you make an excellent contribution to your community. All of you like your teachers and the excellent care, guidance and support that they provide make sure that you feel safe and cared for each day. Your parents also agree with you and had lots of positive things to say about how the school involves them.

The inspectors were impressed with the generally good quality of teaching and learning. In some lessons, however, we thought that you could manage even harder work. We know that all of you are trying your best to improve your writing this year and we can tell you that standards are rising. We know that many of you can do even better and we are asking staff to do all they can to raise standards, especially in English and mathematics. We would like to see you using computers much more to help you to learn. You told us that you want more fiction books to read and we agree that the school should have more for you. In Reception, we have asked staff to explore ways to make the outside area much bigger so that you can have even more exciting things to do out of the classroom.

There is a lot you can be proud of about your school. Your headteacher, with the support of hard-working governors and staff, is helping to make school the exciting and interesting place it is for you. We hope that you will continue doing your best and help school to be even better.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joseph Peacock

Lead inspector

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