

Coombe Hill Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102576
Local Authority	Kingston Upon Thames
Inspection number	354520
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Jane Chesterfield

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	360
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christiane Hodson
Headteacher	Chris Hodges
Date of previous school inspection	28 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 16 lessons or parts of lessons and observed 16 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at school policies and documentation, safeguarding records, pupils' work, assessment data, monitoring records, strategic planning and the minutes of governors' meetings. Questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 105 parents and carers were analysed.

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

- the current picture of attainment and progress in the school
- the impact of strategies to improve the attainment and progress of pupils learning English as an additional language
- teachers' success in using assessment strategies to meet the needs of all their pupils
- the effectiveness of leaders in maintaining standards and quality since the last inspection.

Information about the school

Coombe Hill Juniors is a large school which serves a suburban area of Greater London. More than half the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, and just under half are learning English as an additional language. These figures are well above the national averages. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. These needs consist mainly of moderate learning difficulties or speech and language difficulties. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school has gained many awards, including the Basic Skills award, the Healthy School award and Artsmark.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Coombe Hill Juniors is an outstanding school which has maintained a track record of excellence for nearly a decade. Parents and pupils are very satisfied with and appreciative of the school and what it offers them. One parent commented, 'It is an excellent school with imaginative teaching and a happy atmosphere,' while another felt that, 'teaching is of a high standard and staff are very approachable and helpful.' Pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at school and are full of praise for their teachers and activities. One said, 'Lessons are always really exciting,' and another commented, 'If you think you don't like something, teachers make you enjoy it by doing fun stuff.'

Senior staff have successfully created an environment where pupils of many different backgrounds and nationalities have a common belief that learning is fun and a shared goal of achieving as well as they possibly can. As a result, their achievement is outstanding. Pupils make consistently good and often outstanding progress throughout the school, from starting points which are generally above average. By the time they leave the school, they reach very high standards in English, mathematics and science, year after year. This is because teaching is consistently good and frequently outstanding across the school, and because the curriculum is exciting, imaginative and stimulating in all areas. All staff recognise the needs of the high proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language, and make sure that their teaching methods suit these pupils. The school's increased focus on assessment since the last inspection has meant that teachers are very aware of the progress their pupils are making, and can give them extra support where required. As a result, pupils with all types of special educational needs achieve better in this school than similar pupils do nationally.

Pupils learn outstandingly well because the school equips them with exceptional study and social skills, and ensures that they are very well prepared for secondary school. In all lessons, pupils are told which skills they will be developing as well as what knowledge they will be gaining. This means that pupils have a very clear insight into what is expected of them and make all-round progress at a very rapid pace. Their behaviour is excellent at all times, and they have a great understanding of their responsibility towards others and the school community as a whole. They feel very safe in school and speak warmly of the support their teachers give them in all aspects of school life. The enduring success of the school is down to the energy, enthusiasm and hard work of the headteacher, senior staff and governors. They are never complacent about the school's success and are constantly looking for new ways of improving the school, particularly in taking advantage of new technology and new initiatives for the future. One of the keys to this success is the strong sense of teamwork in the school. Staff are very happy and committed to their work, thanks to the clear channels of communication and the many

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opportunities for continuing professional development available to them. The school has had to curtail its provision of community education and access in recent years because of impending building work, but has plans to restore and improve on community facilities in the near future. Monitoring of the school's work is regular and systematic, and self-evaluation is accurate. Senior staff have an excellent understanding of the school's strength, and ambitious but realistic plans for the future. The school has outstanding capacity for further continuous improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Proceed with plans to redevelop community space within the school by the end of 2010, and set up planned community programmes and facilities.

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

The work seen in lessons and in pupils' books confirms that standards are very high by the end of Year 6, and that progress for all groups of pupils is always good and often outstanding across the school. Pupils are on track to meet or exceed challenging targets at the end of this academic year. They have outstanding work habits and a genuine love for learning. In a Year 3 music lesson, for example, pupils showed excellent independence and team-working skills as they wrote a story and set it to music in small groups. Pupils respond thoughtfully to their tasks and understand what is expected of them. In a Year 5 English lesson on using persuasive writing to produce holiday posters, for example, pupils realised that a climbing holiday was much more difficult to sell to a wider public than a beach holiday, and that they would have to use a different type of vocabulary if they were given the former task. Pupils work readily in pairs and spark ideas off one another. One pupil described their classroom routine in this way: 'You sit next to someone and work together.' This makes for classrooms which are buzzing with energy and vitality.

Pupils are lively and confident, but always know how to behave safely and show consideration for others around the school and in the playground. They obey instructions from adults instantly and without fuss. Pupils make the most of opportunities to be active and healthy in their playtime games and in their sports lessons. They say that they feel safe at school and that most people get on very well together. One commented, 'People have arguments, but peer mediators help sort that out and it really helps.' Pupils of all ages are very keen to take on responsibility, as peer mediators, for example, and also as house captains, school councillors or as members of the green team. Their eagerness to come to school is shown by their consistently above-average attendance. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding. This is evident from the entries made in their learning logs, which the school uses to encourage pupils to reflect on the progress they are making in their lessons and their personal development. Pupils take a great pride in using these books and make serious and well-considered entries. One boy, for example, had written, 'I know my value at school,' and underneath had drawn a picture of himself wearing his

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badge of responsibility.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Pupils enjoy consistently high quality teaching and a stimulating curriculum throughout the school. Teachers plan thoroughly for all the different ability groups in their classes, and are very aware of the needs of learners who do not speak English as a first language. To support them, teachers make very good use of visual aids, such as the interactive whiteboard, reinforce and repeat vocabulary and ideas, and use questioning to check understanding. This benefits all pupils. Lessons have a good pace and no time is wasted. In a Year 4 physical education lesson, for example, the teacher displayed the objectives for the lesson while the pupils were changing, and showed video extracts of class members demonstrating the skills to be covered. This saved time when the pupils went outside. Support staff are very well deployed in and out of class, and make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning.

The quality of teaching is equally strong across all subjects, so that pupils enjoy a very well-rounded education. Lessons seen in, for example, music and physical education

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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were just as carefully planned, interesting and exciting for pupils as those in literacy and numeracy. History and geography work viewed in topic books showed a similar picture of challenge and excellent links between subjects. Year 3 pupils, for example, were asked to write at length on 'Why invaders leave,' which gave them an excellent opportunity to show their developing historical understanding and analytical skills. The curriculum is very well extended with clubs, visits and special events. Year 6, for example, have recently been offered an afternoon per week of 'colleges', or options, where they can choose to develop a range of skills, including wood working and cooking. A visit to a local art gallery, to see the work of an artist who has created furniture from driftwood, has both raised pupils' ecological awareness and helped them create finely observed paintings and drawings of the exhibits. These are typical of the high quality of pupils' creative work displayed around the school.

All pupils are well known to staff and their progress tracked closely. Those who have personal difficulties or who may be vulnerable are very closely monitored and supported. There are helpful links with outside agencies where necessary. Pupils are given good guidance as they move from the infant school and then move on to secondary school, so that they settle quickly and adapt well to change. Pupils have every faith in the adults around them and feel very well cared for. One commented, 'If we have any troubles, we just go to our teachers for help.'

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Outstanding leadership from the headteacher and senior staff has enabled the school to maintain its track record of excellence. They inspire the rest of the school team with confidence and have been described by staff members as 'brilliant'. Staff feel valued and able to flourish at the school, and consequently are prepared to work hard and give of their best. One commented, 'Since joining the school I have felt welcomed and supported,' while another was pleased that 'teachers are encouraged to add their own interests and enthusiasms to school life'. Techniques for staff development are innovatory. Teachers are able, for example, to video their own lessons and watch them privately, sharing their findings with their line managers if they wish. As a result, teachers are able to assess their own practice in an objective way. Systems for tracking pupils' work are similarly at the cutting edge of development. The school is refining its computer-based system to enable parents to access their children's data with effect

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from September, after a pilot run this term. The governing body provides outstanding support and challenge to the school. Their organisation and procedures operate extremely smoothly, and they are not afraid to question the decisions made by the school and the local authority.

Procedures for safeguarding are robust. Risk assessments are thorough and training for child protection is up to date. The school works exceptionally well to promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination. All groups of pupils at the school achieve better than their counterparts nationally. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Pupils benefit from good local, national and global links which help them to understand how life is lived by others. The school has recently lacked the facilities to provide the adult and family education opportunities which the community previously enjoyed, but hopes to reinstate these when planned building works are complete. It has forged excellent relationships with parents and with other organisations. Links with other schools, for example, have enabled the school to share support services such as counselling and speech and language therapy, and to draw on the expertise of specialist secondary teachers.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
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	1
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	1

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were very happy with the school and what it offers their children. They unanimously agreed that their children enjoyed school and were safe at school, and that teaching was good. A few felt that the school did not help them sufficiently to support their

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child's learning, did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour or did not take enough account of their suggestions. Inspectors investigated these views but did not uphold them. The school works very hard to communicate with parents and carers in the ways that best suit them, and is currently developing excellent systems which will enable parents and carers to check their children's progress online and work with them on web-based projects. School records show that unacceptable behaviour is handled in a firm and fair way, and pupils' questionnaires and comments indicated they felt happy with the way others behaved in school. A few parents and carers commented that they did not want their children to stay in the same classes throughout their school career, but inspectors' observations showed that relationships in all classes were good and that pupils worked very well with their classmates.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Coombe Hill 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 105 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 360 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	65	62	39	37	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	67	64	37	35	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	39	37	63	60	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	39	59	56	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	53	50	48	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	30	64	61	7	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	34	62	59	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)	32	30	59	56	5	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	34	61	58	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	29	65	62	7	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	23	67	64	7	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	49	47	50	48	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	56	45	43	0	0	0	0

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

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

Overall effectiveness of schools

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

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

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

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

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

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



10 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Coombe Hill Junior School, Kingston upon Thames KT2 7DD

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently, and for helping us with the inspection. We really enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and sharing your lessons.

We found that your school is giving you an excellent education. These are just some of the things that we liked about your school.

- You love being at school and you are making good and often outstanding progress as you move through the school.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you are very happy to take on responsibility around the school.
- You have excellent relationships with your teachers and you are always keen to learn.
- You feel very safe and secure at school, thanks to the efforts of your teachers.
- You are very well looked after and you get extra support if you need it.
- You enjoy an excellent range of opportunities in and out of class.
- The senior leaders are doing an outstanding job and know how to make sure the school gets better and better.

To help the school improve even further, this is what we have asked the school to do.

- Give the local community the chance to use the school's facilities as they used to do in the past.

Good luck for the future! You are very lucky to be at such a good school where you are being so well prepared for the next stage of your education and for your future lives. I am sure you will make the most of everything the school has to offer you.

Yours sincerely

Jane Chesterfield

Lead inspector

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