



Cowes Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118156
LEA Isle of Wight LEA
Inspection number 280249
Inspection dates 2 February 2006 to 3 February 2006
Reporting inspector David Marshall AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Edinburgh Close
School category	Community		Cowes
Age range of pupils	4 to 9		Isle of Wight PO31 8HF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01983293261
Number on roll	272	Fax number	0198329361
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs A Johnson
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2000	Headteacher	Mrs C Sice

Age group 4 to 9	Inspection dates 2 February 2006 - 3 February 2006	Inspection number 280249
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Cowes Primary is an above average size school and takes pupils from reception to Year 4. Most pupils are of white British heritage and very few have English as an additional language. There is an average percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and two with statements of specific need. The school is popular and has a waiting list at Year 4. Almost all benefit from pre-school educational provision. Pupil's level of attainment on entry is average. In the last two years, four teachers, including the head teacher, have left the school and four have joined.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspectors agree with the school that it provides a good, and improving, education for all its pupils. It provides good value for money and has made substantial improvements in the last year in raising pupils' achievement. New staff are well supported by their colleagues and have benefited from excellent guidance from the headteacher. The provision in the Foundation Stage is a strength of the school and children make very good progress. The quality of education throughout the rest of the school is good. Teaching is hardly ever less than good and all pupils are now achieving well. Assessment information is used very well to plan for learning and to identify pupils who need extra help. Throughout the school lessons are well planned and teachers aim to make learning fun. The expectations of pupils' behaviour, and the pace of lessons, are very good in most classes, but there are minor variations across the school, where teaching is not as brisk as it should be. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good. Pupils are cared for very well, and all are made to feel safe and secure. The curriculum is exciting and enhanced by a good range of additional activities. Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about other cultures. The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides first-rate leadership and she is ably supported by all staff. Teamwork is good, strengths and weaknesses are speedily identified and developments are now being driven forward at a good pace. The school's capacity to improve further is very good.

What the school should do to improve further

Make better use of monitoring to improve the pace and challenge in some lessons. Improve provision for pupils' cultural development and awareness of life in a diverse society.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school and the inspection team agree that standards are improving and achievement is now good. Children's attainment on entry to the school is average. In the reception classes, children get off to a flying start due to very effective induction procedures, consistently very good teaching and the stimulating curriculum. Children make good progress in all areas of learning and standards in the current reception classes are above average. In Years 1 and 2 the emphasis put on developing speaking and listening skills has had a positive impact on the standards pupils reach in reading and especially in writing. National test results for Year 2 in 2005 were above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. New arrangements for pupils to have individual improvement targets in mathematics this year are already beginning to enhance their progress. There is now a secure system in place to track the progress each pupil makes and identify where additional teaching will be most beneficial. As a result pupils in Years 3 and 4 are making better progress than last year and many are working at levels above expectations for their age. There is an upward trend in standards across a wide

range of subjects. Drama, music, art and design, physical education and information and communication technology (ICT) are improving well as the outstanding curriculum gives many opportunities for pupils to develop their creative, sporting and musical talents. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties is good, as is the progress of those pupils with special gifts or talents. Pupils who do not speak English as their first language, achieve as well as their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils are confident and mature. Most are becoming increasingly responsible for planning their own work and making decisions on how best to present it. Pupils have excellent ICT skills, and enjoy presenting the results of their research through high quality multi-media presentations. Their independence and good standards in literacy, numeracy and ICT prepare pupils well for their future economic well-being. Attendance is above average and rising and pupils are enthusiastic about coming to school because there are "lots of fun things to do". The school works hard to overcome restrictions imposed by the limited outdoor play space for children under five, for example taking them to the local park and beach, ensuring that physical and creative development is not impeded. Pupils are involved well in decision making, for example, through discussions in their council on how to make the school more environmentally friendly. The school places great store on pupils' development of healthy lifestyles and learning how to look after themselves well and keep safe. Consequently these aspects of personal development are very good. The very good school ethos and relationships between pupils and staff have a positive impact on all aspects of personal development. Pupils have very good attitudes to work and behave very well because they help to develop school and class rules. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The school has identified the need to develop further the pupils' understanding of other cultures in today's society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are variable and good overall; some outstanding lessons were seen. Teachers have high expectations and make learning enjoyable. They build well on pupils' previous learning and work is well matched to their interests. This, combined with pupils' excellent attitudes and behaviour, results in good progress. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are diagnosed well. For example, Year 2 pupils with learning difficulties showed huge enthusiasm when presenting their research to their classmates and parents about the sinking of the Titanic. Pupils learn enthusiastically because of skilled teaching, good questioning and effective support by teaching assistants. Most lessons challenge and consolidate pupils' thinking and give them good opportunities to discuss, evaluate and express their ideas. Good use

is made of resources. In the several outstanding lessons, the pace was brisk, the tasks challenging and the pupils were involved throughout with many opportunities to reflect on their work to improve it further. In the few lessons where teaching was good or satisfactory the pace slowed for short periods so that some pupils were not always doing as well as they could. Marking is used well to assess pupils' understanding and to set targets. Regular homework is set that complements class work and promotes pupils' enjoyment of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school considers the curriculum to be good but inspectors judge it to be outstanding. The curriculum is well balanced and enhanced by some very strong features. It meets the needs of all pupils well and stimulates an enjoyment for learning and lays good foundations for future well-being. Very good links are made between subjects, which makes learning meaningful. This is especially so in the planned opportunities to use English skills in other subjects. Good provision is made for ICT. Every class has an interactive whiteboard, which adds to the impact and interest of lessons. The school is innovative. It ensures that pupils enjoy learning through lively and interesting themed days and weeks, such as 'World War II Day'. There is a very good range of sporting, musical and creative activities, which often make use of visiting experts and good links with a local sports college. Planned opportunities for higher attaining pupils are good and include local visits to stimulate learning. The school makes very good use of visits, visitors and a Year 4 residential visit to enrich learning and pupils' personal development. There is a good range of after school activities, which are well attended.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are very well cared for and receive good guidance and support. The school is a happy, safe community where learning thrives. Very effective links with the adjacent pre-school playgroup ensure that children transfer smoothly and get off to a good start. All members of staff are alert to the personal safety of pupils and child protection procedures are good. All adults are briefed regularly to ensure that they are kept up-to-date with latest requirements. There are good procedures to ensure pupils' day-to-day health and safety. However the school is constantly seeking ways to improve, for example, completing checks on a daily basis to ensure pupils' health and safety at all times. Teachers assess work thoroughly and marking is good. Records of pupils' progress are good. Pupils' individual learning targets are reviewed with them regularly and shared with parents and carers. As a result, pupils are clear about what they need to improve. Teachers are able to plan work that challenges and extends pupils but they do not always achieve all they have planned in all lessons. Teachers increasingly involve pupils in assessing their own work. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well because needs are accurately identified and classroom provision is appropriate.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Although leadership and management are good overall, the headteacher's leadership is outstanding. The deputy head and all staff and governors provide good support. One of the key roles of all staff is to follow the headteacher's exemplary lead and relate effectively with all pupils, parents and the local community. They are very successful in meeting this aim. Teamwork now is of high quality and everyone plays their part in moving the school forward. There is a clear understanding of strengths of the school and areas that need more development, because of the clear-thinking and perceptive headteacher who is driving up standards. The school's self evaluation is detailed and accurate. The school development plan provides clear guidance on relevant issues for raising standards and takes into consideration support and initiatives from all sources, including parents and pupils. Management at all levels is improving with new and effective systems in place for coordinators to monitor pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning. Many governors are new to their roles and are beginning to be involved in school activities. They bring a wide range of skills to bear as they begin to act to support the school well, challenging decisions and requesting explanations where this is judged to be necessary. The opinions of parents and pupils are valued and frequently acted upon. The school has good links with a range of other schools and organisations, to promote a high quality education. The school is very well placed to continue its successes and develop them further and has a very good capacity to improve, reflected in its recent success in raising standards.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for welcoming us so warmly during our recent visit to your school. Thanks especially to those children who helped us find our way around and those who talked to us during the inspection. I am glad to tell you that we think your school is good and provides you with a really exciting start to your education. We were particularly pleased with these things:

* Your headteacher and staff do a good job in organising the school and looking after you.* You are all making good progress with your work.* You behave very well, work hard and listen carefully to your teachers. This helps you succeed at school. * All the adults in the school look after you very carefully. They always make sure that you get help if you need it.* Your school council does a great job.

Your teachers are always trying to help you improve and we have asked them to make the school even better by making all your lessons as good as most of them are. The staff are planning to give you more opportunities to learn about life in Britain today, you must continue to listen carefully and take note of what they say.Finally, we would like to thank you once again for all your help. We wish you well in the future.With kind regards