

Courtney Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109054
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	309861
Inspection dates	23–24 September 2008
Reporting inspector	George Logan

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 on roll	
School (total)	196
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	25
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie White
Headteacher	Keith Ledbury
Date of previous school inspection	11–13 October 2004
School address	Courtney Road Kingswood South Gloucestershire BS15 9RD
Telephone number	01454 866670
Fax number	01454 866674

Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	23–24 September 2008
Inspection number	309861

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized primary school. There are currently seven classes in the school; two of which have mixed-aged pupils. By September 2009, each of the seven classes in the school will be a single age group.

The pupils are predominantly White British, with a small number from minority ethnic groups. A very small number of pupils are of Gypsy/Roma heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is just below average. Although almost all pupils have had some pre-school experience, their attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the Reception class, is slightly below the level expected for their age. The school hosts an after-school club and a pre-school, both of which are managed by outside providers.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Courtney Primary provides a satisfactory education. It has significant strengths. Most parents rightly value the positive ethos of the school, the strength of community, the commitment to inclusion and the good care and support. As one commented, 'I am extremely pleased with the school and its friendly atmosphere!' Pupils develop positive attitudes to learning and their personal development is good. They feel very safe and are confident that adults will help them. They have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy. Their good attendance and good behaviour clearly suggest that they much enjoy school.

Children achieve satisfactorily. They have a good start in Reception. They make good progress, with almost all acquiring the expected skills by the end of the year, because of the well planned curriculum and effective teaching. Planning, assessment and overall provision in the EYFS are good, although the outdoor area does not provide a sufficiently rich learning environment. While there is much good teaching in the school at present, the impact on pupils' achievement over time has been inconsistent. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress and standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2. Progress has been variable in Years 3 to 6. Instability in staffing in Years 3 and 4 has seriously affected pupils' achievement, particularly in writing and mathematics. However, dynamic teaching in Years 5 and 6 enables most pupils to catch up and achievement there is rapid, though progress and standards in writing and mathematics, average by the end of Year 6, still lag behind reading and science, where the pace of learning is more effectively sustained and standards are above average. Not enough pupils attained the higher levels in writing or mathematics in 2008 and the school recognises that its support for academically able pupils could be improved. Pupils with additional learning needs receive effective support, so that they make satisfactory progress. Through specialist teaching, pupils acquire good skills in physical education and music. The good curriculum meets pupils' needs well. In all years, teachers plan effectively for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils willingly support the good range of extra-curricular activities.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a vision for improvement and provides clear direction. However, achievement and standards have not always been judged against national trends so that self-evaluation has in some respects been over generous. School leaders now analyse data more rigorously, to ensure that irregularities, particularly in mathematics, are identified promptly. Governors partly fulfil their role as 'critical friends', but do not focus sufficiently on achievement. The school has satisfactory capacity to build further upon recent changes.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Reception children achieve well. Effective transition arrangements enable them to settle in quickly. They are cared for well. Relationships are close and supportive, so that children make good gains in personal and social development. Links with parents are well developed. Children behave well, have positive attitudes and readily initiate activities.

Good teaching ensures that children develop independence and make good progress in most areas of learning. Although few children are working at the higher levels, the proportion working at the expected level when they enter Year 1 is above that found nationally. Standards continue to rise as a result of the reflective and effective leadership of the Reception teaching. For example, implementing a systematic approach to teaching phonics has enabled children to become more skilled in linking sounds and letters. Children's skills in calculation have also improved significantly. Assessment procedures effectively identify the next steps in learning. School leaders recognise the need for a better resourced outdoor area, to provide a more stimulating context for learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils, particularly the older and more able, make more rapid progress and attain higher standards in mathematics and writing.
- Ensure teaching in Years 3 and 4 provides sufficient challenge to enable pupils to make greater and more consistent progress in their learning.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children achieve well in Reception and almost all reach the expected level. Standards in Year 2 are broadly average. Standards in Year 6, though average in writing and mathematics, are above average in reading and science. However, while overall targets in English and mathematics in 2008 were broadly met, fewer pupils than expected attained the higher level in writing and mathematics. Pupils make steady progress in Years 1 and 2. Progress in Years 3 to 6, though satisfactory overall, has been adversely affected by instability in staffing in Years 3 and 4. This has particularly impacted upon mathematics and writing, leading to slow, and sometimes insufficient, progress in those years. Rigorous teaching in Years 5 and 6 has been effective in tackling the shortfall, so that achievement in these years has been rapid. Nonetheless, overall performance, particularly in mathematics and writing, has been constrained by missed opportunities earlier on. The school is working to secure greater consistency and pace in pupils' progress, and to raise expectations, particularly of academically gifted pupils. By contrast, pupils with additional learning needs, with effective support from teaching assistants make steady progress and some make good progress. The progress of the few Gypsy/Roma pupils is inconsistent, in spite of generally good attendance. The few pupils at an early stage of learning English, all of whom are young, make good progress in their knowledge of spoken English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are enthusiastic and friendly. Most behave well and exclusions have reduced significantly. Pupils feel very secure, saying that bullying is rare. Attendance is good and has improved because of the school's rigorous procedures.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy, reflected in their awareness of diet and support for physical activities. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Their engagement with the ethnic and cultural diversity of contemporary Britain has improved significantly, while international links, particularly with Finland, have been carefully nurtured. Pupils contribute well to the school community through the school council, an effective 'voice' for their views. They support younger pupils well and undertake many classroom 'jobs'. They have a good awareness of safe practices in relation to the Internet and mobile phones. Links with the wider community, through local schools and the Royal British Legion, are well developed. Pupils' good personal qualities, ability to work well cooperatively and experience of enterprise activities contribute well to their future well-being but this is no more than satisfactory because of the rate of progress in pupils' basic skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although most teaching observed was good, inconsistent expectations in Years 3 and 4 have, over time, constrained pupils' achievement. In most lessons, teachers motivate pupils well, relationships are close and the environment for learning is well organised. Regular checks on pupils' progress ensure that staff are aware of what pupils need to do to move forward. Most lessons have a brisk pace which moves learning on quickly, although occasionally teachers talk for too long and this restricts pupils' opportunities to learn. Planning is thorough and has regard to the needs of identified groups of pupils. Teachers encourage independence, giving the youngest pupils, for example, good opportunities to record work independently in science. Pupils are increasingly encouraged to evaluate their work. Teaching assistants support pupils with additional learning needs effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The EYFS curriculum covers the areas of learning well, although the potential of the outdoor area is not fully realised. The curriculum for Years 1 to 6 has been successfully recast to match pupils' needs. Effective teaching of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills through other subjects enriches learning. Practical science activities are strongly developed, underpinning above average standards. Stimulating topics provide a good framework for learning. In addition, pupils have good opportunities in physical education and music, enhanced by specialist teaching. As a result, standards in physical education are high. Provision for pupils who need additional support is well targeted on what they most need to learn. However, the school recognises the need to extend provision for pupils identified as gifted or talented. The good range of extra-curricular activities, including three residential visits, is well supported and impacts positively on pupils' academic progress and personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is a significant strength. Staff, assisted by an effective family support worker, establish close partnerships with parents. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust. Staff know individual pupils well and ensure that their welfare needs are met effectively. The school has strong links with external agencies. Looked-after children receive good support and protection. Academic guidance is generally good. All pupils have both group and individual targets in literacy and numeracy and, occasionally, in science. Pupils know what their targets are and some confidently evaluate their progress. However, there is inconsistency in the implementation of targets between classes so that the impact on standards is variable. The school is working to ensure that teachers' marking, some of which is exemplary, provides consistent guidance to move learning forward at a faster rate.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides dedicated leadership, driving through significant improvements and successfully managing change. There is a clear vision for what the school needs to do to improve further. The leadership team demonstrates a high level of concern for everyone in the school community. The monitoring of teaching, while thorough, has not had sufficient impact on inconsistencies in achievement. Although in many respects the school knows itself well, it has not been sufficiently rigorous in relating pupils' performance to the national context. As a result, self-evaluation has overvalued some aspects. However, systems for checking on pupils' progress are now good and there is a greater focus on identifying variations in learning. The contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. The school recognises the need to develop further its links with all parents, so that they can better support their children's learning. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are conscientious and knowledgeable and challenge senior managers, but do not yet hold the school sufficiently to account in relation to achievement. The school has, at present, satisfactory capacity to improve.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise Standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B



25 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Courtney Primary School, Kingswood BS15 9RD

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed meeting you and briefly sharing your lessons. We found that, although satisfactory overall, your school continues to improve and has many good features.

The main things that we found are these.

- Most of you behave really well in lessons.
- Standards are average generally, but are particularly good in reading and science by Year 6.
- Most of the teaching we saw was good, but the many changes in staffing in Years 3 and 4 have affected the progress you make through the school.
- The Reception class is good and provides well for the youngest children.
- The school makes sure that you are cared for well, and you are very aware of how important it is to eat healthily and take regular exercise.
- The curriculum is good, with a wide range of out-of-school activities.
- Those in charge of the school make sure that it runs smoothly.

We are asking the school to make these changes so that you do even better.

- Make better provision for able pupils, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- Ensure that those of you in Years 3 and 4 make more rapid progress in your learning.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

George Logan
Lead Inspector