

Inspection of Cowes Primary School

Edinburgh Close, Cowes, Isle of Wight PO31 8HF

Inspection dates: 11–12 February 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Effective relationships between pupils and staff make this school a caring and friendly community. Pupils feel safe and happy. The 'right' to learn, be safe and be respected underpins all that the school does.

Pupils enjoy the many interesting visits, events and clubs that are on offer. Even in the school holiday there is a club to attend. These activities help pupils to be resourceful and thoughtful. Some pupils run a school horticultural show, for example. On one morning every week, a pupil team leads everyone in a lively 'Wake Up, Shake Up' dance routine. Pupils like to help others and are proud of their charity efforts.

Leaders focus on equipping pupils well for their future. Staff expect pupils to flourish as learners and citizens. They want the very best for them. Pupils are proud of their classwork. They are especially pleased with their high-quality artwork, displayed in their gallery. Pupils are polite, and they listen when their teachers explain things. They told inspectors that there is very little bullying. If any occurs, teachers are quick to sort it out.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and teachers have been successful in improving the quality of education in reading, writing and mathematics. In these subjects, the curriculum helps pupils to develop knowledge in a logical order. They have plenty of opportunities to practise what they have learned. In mathematics, for example, pupils now become fluent in number skills. They are developing strong reasoning skills.

Leaders' work to improve the wider curriculum is well under way in most subjects. In subjects such as science, teachers are ambitious for pupils. They have given careful thought to what pupils need to learn and when. Reception children think about how to be 'fair' when investigating, for example. As pupils move through the school, they make strong progress to devise and plan their own experiments. By Year 6, pupils are adept at making predictions and explaining their findings. However, in a few subjects, curriculum planning lacks detail and coherence. Pupils have a patchy understanding in some areas, such as in history. They enjoy their topics but have not learned the really important knowledge that they should know.

Leaders prioritise reading throughout the school. In Reception, children learn phonics at a fast pace. Pupils build upon this knowledge in key stage 1, so that most become confident early readers. Teachers give extra help to any pupils who fall behind. They help most of them to catch up before they move into key stage 2. A few pupils are not getting the precise and timely support that they need. For example, they do not practise reading using books that match the sounds they are learning well. Older pupils enjoy reading well-chosen books with their class. They are skilful at finding information and looking for meaning.

The Reception curriculum inspires children's interests. They work well together and are creative in their learning and play. The adults help children to develop a rich vocabulary. Conversations take place that encourage children to explain their ideas. Already, they are learning what it takes to be a good friend. They are developing positive personal qualities.

The school helps pupils to develop positive attitudes to their learning. They attend regularly, and they understand and follow routines. This ensures that classrooms are purposeful. Teachers provide support for the very small number of pupils who sometimes find it difficult to behave. Over time, their behaviour improves.

Effective support helps teachers to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In the best planned subjects, most pupils with SEND make strong progress. They build upon what they already know and can do. Staff go out of their way to make sure that pupils with SEND join in the wider opportunities that the school offers.

Pupils enjoy having responsibility by taking roles that benefit the school community. Events such as International Day help pupils to appreciate the wider world. Pupils have opportunities to meet people with different backgrounds, beliefs and talents. One of the high spots for pupils is their weekly 'Quest' activity. This provides expert teaching to help pupils extend their sporting and cultural talents.

Leaders are driven by their vision that the school should develop the whole child. An effective governing body supports the school to keep improving. Staff, including some who are very new to their roles, feel that leaders support them well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated leader makes sure that all staff understand that keeping children safe is at the top of their list of priorities. There are regular updates so that no one forgets what the signs of abuse are, and how to report them.

Leaders can help families to find the support they need as early as possible. Leaders communicate effectively with other agencies, including by sharing concerns when it is necessary to do so. The curriculum supports pupils to learn how to stay safe, including when they are online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, leaders' revisions to curriculum planning are at an early stage. In these subjects, the curriculum is not yet sufficiently coherently planned. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders are in the process of making necessary improvements. In making the inspection

judgements, the transition arrangement has been applied. Leaders should ensure that rigour is applied to all foundation subject planning, and teachers have the professional development that they need, so that sequences of lessons in all curriculum subjects help pupils to build a cumulative body of knowledge as they move through the school.

- Reading remains a current school priority. The school has an effective phonics and early reading programme, but leaders are not making sure that it is consistently implemented. This is having a particular impact on a small number of the weakest readers. Leaders need to ensure that teachers implement the programme exactly as it is planned so that the school fully meet the needs of all pupils.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	118156
Local authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	10122230
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Amy Duncan
Headteacher	Stephanie Praetig
Website	www.cowesprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 June 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act

Information about this school

- The school's roll has declined since the previous inspection. In the current Reception class, and in future years, the school will have one class in each year group. At present, the school is in a period of year-on-year changes to class organisation.
- The school continues to offer breakfast and after-school care. In addition, the school runs a holiday club that runs for 50 weeks of the year.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met the headteacher, deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders, teachers and other staff. The lead inspector met the chair of governors and two members of the governing body, and also spoke by telephone to a representative of the local authority.

- We talked with the designated leader for safeguarding and scrutinised documents and records relating to keeping children safe. We reviewed the checks that the school makes to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history, and personal, social and health education. For each of these subjects, we discussed the quality of education with curriculum leaders. We visited lessons with them. We listened to some key stage 1 pupils reading. We talked with teachers and pupils, and we looked at a range of pupils' work.
- We considered 35 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, including 21 written comments. We also met informally with parents at the end of the school day.
- We considered the views of the 33 pupils who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire, and the 17 staff who responded to the Ofsted staff survey.
- We observed pupils' behaviour on the playground, in the lunch hall, at the breakfast club and in classrooms. We met pupils both formally and informally to gather their views about the school.

Inspection team

Linda Jacobs, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

James Munt

Ofsted Inspector

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