

Corsham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126184
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	360015
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Steffi Penny

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	549
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Elspeth Griffiths
Headteacher	Mrs Fiona Allen
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. They visited 23 lessons and saw all class teachers. Inspectors held meetings with parents, groups of pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work in both sites and the Brook Centre. They looked at pupils' exercise books, school data about pupils' achievement and progress, monitoring records, safeguarding and child protection documentation and other school documents.

The inspection team analysed questionnaires completed by staff, pupils in Years 3 to 6 and those from 295 parents. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of the school's interventions to improve pupils' learning
- how well pupils know their targets and what they need to do in order to improve their work
- the accuracy of the school's judgements about itself and the involvement of staff and governors in the process.

Information about the school

This is a much larger than average primary school. Following a Collaborative Fresh Start in 2007 with a local primary school in special measures it now uses two sites. On the Broadwood site there are 140 pupils with 411 at the Pound Pill site. Based at the Pound Pill site are the Corsham Area Extended Services Hub and the North Wiltshire Speech and Language Specialist Learning Centre, known as the Brook Centre, for 18 pupils, most of whom also have a range of additional needs. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average. The school serves some military families and pupils with Traveller heritages; pupil mobility is higher than is normally found.

The new school is led by an executive headteacher along with two heads of school who have strategic and operational responsibilities for each site. Snapdragons Nursery, a private provider, offers before, after and school holiday care for primary aged pupils on both sites. The school has achieved numerous awards. In 2010 it gained Artsmark Gold, the Inclusion Quality Mark, and Accredited School 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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Corsham Primary is an outstanding school. It has achieved its aims of being a centre of excellence and innovation in primary education. Its work is highly appreciated by pupils and their families. One parent, reflecting the view of many, wrote 'the school is full of caring, dedicated staff who work incredibly hard to give a great time and meaningful education to all children', and inspection evidence concurs.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage children all get off to a cracking start and are extremely well prepared for learning that is more formal when they enter Year 1. The school knows that for increasing numbers of children this formality is too challenging and they are looking forward to making further improvements to the curriculum in Key Stage 1 from September.

Overall, attainment for the last three years is around the national average, reflecting the capability and amount of catch-up that some pupils have needed due to their previous inadequate education. However, the progress that pupils have made has continued to increase and is outstanding. There are many reasons for this. The outstanding leadership, at all levels, working in harmony with governors, ensures that provision is constantly under review to generate the best outcomes for pupils and value for money in the use of resources. The extensive use of accurate, up-to-date tracking data by all teaching staff to inform lesson planning and other activities is exemplary. This, when linked to the flexibility of a dynamic and exciting curriculum and pupils' in-depth knowledge of their highly personalised targets, ensures that pupils cannot fall behind in their understanding and learning. A prime example is the 'Go4it' Award, which sets aspirational goals that challenge and promote the importance of learning.

Pupils' regular participation in a wide range of after-school activities is evidence that the vast majority of them want to take action to improve their health. Pupils have positive attitudes and the drive to make things happen, taking part in applications for many of the school's awards, for example Healthy Schools, Sports Active Mark and Eco School Award. They enjoy their learning because of the enthusiastic staff who make learning fun through generally good and increasingly outstanding teaching. Where teaching is outstanding adults use their finely honed observational skills to know exactly when pupils need different challenges in their work. In these lessons pupils are also exceptionally independent in increasing the challenge of their work. Lessons that are not outstanding have similar features but teachers' observational skills are not so well developed and pupils have fewer opportunities to challenge themselves.

The school is unstinting in its efforts to meet the widely differing needs of its pupils shown by how effectively it welcomes and assimilates pupils with widely differing needs

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highly successfully. Excellent attention is given to all aspects of the care, guidance and support of pupils. As a consequence pupils feel safe and well cared for in school and behave exceptionally well. The development and well-being of individual pupils facing challenging circumstances is a significant strength. Layers of personalised support for pupils and their families are central to the school's inclusive approach. For example, The Learning Hub caters specifically for a small group of pupils who need to develop very specific 'life skills'. The determination to constantly improve the work of the school is shared by all staff and governors. The school is in an excellent position to continue to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment by increasing the proportion of outstanding lessons by improving:
 - teachers' skills of observation to identify where pupils are at in their learning
 - the effectiveness of pupils being able to demonstrate to staff when they find the work too easy or too hard and for them to have direct access to more challenging work when the latter occurs.

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

When children join the school in Reception their developmental levels are below those normally found in children of this age. This is particularly so for reading, writing, aspects of personal, social and emotional development, along with aptitudes for learning. The school re-benchmarked the pupils' attainment levels following the Collaborative Fresh Start and considerable discrepancies were found between much of the previously published Key Stage test results at the Broadwood site. This is one reason why the outstanding progress that pupils make is not reflected in published progress and attainment results. Current school assessment information, which is exceptionally well monitored and moderated, triangulated with inspection evidence shows that pupils' achievement is good and rapidly improving year on year. This is because very well-targeted support has enabled the vast majority of pupils to make the best of the opportunities provided by the school.

An outstanding example of the way that the school brings out the best in pupils and staff was seen in a science lesson where pupils were investigating the role of sugar in bread making. They made hypotheses and worked them through by using detective skills, exploring the internet and hard questioning of each other. A further stunning lesson had pupils improving the quality of their sentences, for example by using three high level connectives. They peer marked each other's work against National Curriculum success criteria helping each other to improve their work and to meet their challenging targets.

The school can point to striking examples of where it has helped individual pupils overcome significant barriers to their education. Interventions by specialists help those

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with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make outstanding progress and in particular increase their self-esteem. Pupils who are identified as gifted and/or talented are given a wide range of appropriate challenges in and out of the lesson so that they reach their potential.

Pupils successfully apply their well-developed basic skills for a broad range of purposes and are very well equipped with wider skills and personal qualities needed for their next phase of education. For example, pupils themselves promote healthy eating through growing their own vegetables, running sports day and the daily Calm Kids' sessions which prepare them for their learning. They enjoy taking on lead roles of responsibility to make outstanding contributions to their own and the wider community, for example as peer mediators, playground buddies, town and school councillors, and listening friends.

Pupils are consistently punctual and really enjoy their learning. Attendance would improve if parents did not take their children on holiday during school term time.

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	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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

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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Teachers identify pupils to work in focus groups, to cater for those who are finding the learning in a particular lesson difficult or rather easy. These groups change during each lesson. In all the lessons seen, pupils were given every opportunity to indicate to the teacher where they think they are in their learning against rigorous and challenging learning targets. In a small number of lessons, this sometimes hinders the flow of the lesson and pupils need more time to have a go at the given task before they can tell how well they are progressing. In the very best lessons, pupils move freely between different levels of challenge and activity by teacher direction and through their own choice. For example, in a numeracy lesson those pupils who felt they understood the written method for multiplication chose to move to a separate table to undertake harder work on prime numbers. Others in the same class worked together on the interactive whiteboard to practise more basic multiplication skills. This was in conjunction with the rest of the class working on multiplication sums with two or three digits. When the sums that the rest of the class were doing became harder, some of the pupils doing the harder work again chose to move back to join the main class activity until they were securely confident.

The vibrant curriculum and learning environment stimulate pupils' enthusiasm and take full account of their interests. An example of its creativity is the way the school copes with the havoc that the Christmas Pixies create when they pay impromptu visits. In all the lessons seen pupils regularly work with and help each other in their learning. Excellent use is made by adults of pupil learning champions and pupil partnership work, where pupils talk with each other to work out answers to problems and share ideas. In many cases this involves pupils helping to assess each other's work in relation to their own and class targets.

The school works extremely effectively with families, children and a wide range of agencies to support pupils and their families. Extended Services work collaboratively with other schools to provide a hub that enabled the school to provide Family Learning courses for pupils and their parents, such as The Early Birds course for parents with children diagnosed as being on the autistic spectrum.

The Brook Centre is an additional class within the school that helps children with specific speech and/or learning difficulties to develop key communication skills and fully access the curriculum. Here pupils are taught by the stage of their development, their needs and capabilities, by a collaboration of specialist teachers and assistants along with speech and language therapists. The exceptional provision for these pupils ensures that they are full members of the school, taking part in activities whenever they can, being integrated into class activities and returning to mainstream provision where appropriate. A great strength of the school is the consideration and welcome pupils extend to those with complex needs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1

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	
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?

Leaders and managers at all levels are relentless in their drive for sustained school improvement. Senior leaders have created a dedicated team of adults, wholly committed to the welfare and academic success of the pupils. They have a very accurate assessment of the school's strengths and needs, which translates into highly effective strategic planning for future development. Governors are very supportive of the school and fully involved in setting priorities. They use their expertise very well in financial and educational matters. All leaders are very effective in communicating high expectations. The school sites are large and complex but great care has been taken to ensure a safe working environment for all pupils. The school has rigorous policies, which are assiduously monitored. They cover all aspects of safeguarding, ensuring that the welfare and safety of all pupils are of the highest priority. Staff have an excellent and comprehensive understanding of safeguarding issues and receive regular child protection training to ensure their knowledge is kept up to date.

The school promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination exceptionally well. It has relevant information about different groups of pupils and carefully evaluates their performance across the curriculum and contribution to school life. Everyone is treated equally and fairly and this is reflected in the excellent relationships evident throughout the school and the respect adults and pupils show to others. The school promotes community cohesion well and it has planned and evaluated its work to develop pupils' understanding of local, national and international matters effectively. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of cultural differences. The school is currently broadening pupils' international links.

Pupils and parents are known as individuals and rightly have high levels of confidence in the school's ability to advise them correctly. This is already making a significant contribution, such as through programmes focusing on developing resilience in families. An example of this is 'Crafty Thursdays' which is run by parents, for parents, with the support of Extended Services, providing a point of social networking for parents.

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

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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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage, gaining confidence and an excitement for learning in all that they do. There is a strong atmosphere of friendship and caring among the children through following the excellent adult role models. The children acquire the kind of learning skills that equip them extremely well to progress rapidly in the future. For example they gain the ability to work independently as well as sharing and working cooperatively with their peers. They know about the benefits of making the right food choices and apply this understanding in snack and lunch breaks. All achieve to the maximum of their ability due to teachers and support staff matching work and intervention very precisely to individual needs. Young children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make exceptional progress because of the highly targeted and specialist adult support available.

Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage work very effectively together as a teaching team. The overall manager has created a closely knit unit within each site and across them both. Comprehensive and accurate assessment records of the ways in which children are developing are used to inform future learning experiences. Exemplary practical activities are carefully planned to link precisely with the six areas of learning, and to ensure that children gain good skills in exploration and investigation where they learn to think critically and creatively. As a result the curriculum is exciting and fully enriched. There is full and robust guidance and support provided to ensure that all children are safe and well cared for. Whether working practically indoors or outdoors, children have a strong sense about how to look after themselves and are confident to confide any concerns that they have.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

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Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents, with some having more than one child at the school, who responded to the confidential Ofsted questionnaire are very happy with the education which the school provides. Parents felt that the improvements made for the children at the Broadwood site and commitment of all staff was a particular strength; inspection evidence concurred. A very small number of parents raised differing concerns about the work of the school. Inspectors investigated their concerns but found insufficient evidence to support their views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Corsham 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 295 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 549 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	195	66	97	33	3	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	214	73	81	27	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	147	50	131	44	12	4	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	157	53	126	43	5	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	178	60	112	38	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	145	49	128	43	14	5	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	148	50	142	48	3	1	1	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)	154	52	122	41	1	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	148	50	131	44	8	3	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	163	55	112	38	14	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	119	40	144	49	16	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	186	63	105	36	2	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	193	65	99	34	2	1	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.



14 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Corsham Primary School, Corsham, SN13 9YW

Thank you for your very warm welcome when we came to your school to see how well you are doing. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing you at work and at play. The things you and your parents or carers told us were very helpful in making our judgements on how well the school is doing. We enjoyed talking with you about your work and listening to you sing so beautifully in assembly. You are excellent ambassadors for your school! This letter is to let you know what we found out.

Your school is outstanding in almost every way. You and the adults work very hard. They help you to understand what you are being taught and you make excellent progress in your work. Your behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. Everyone in the school cares for each other wonderfully. There are lots of clubs and visits, which you participate in enthusiastically. You make an excellent contribution to the local community and care for those who are less fortunate than yourselves. We did notice that some of you go on holiday when you should be in school.

You have such fantastic adults who are always looking for ways to make your school an even better place to be. We have asked them to increase the amount of outstanding lessons you have. We think that some teachers need more help to be able to tell when you find the work too hard or easy. We have also asked them to find more ways that you can let adults know when the work is not at the right level of challenge for you. You can help by quickly letting adults know when your work is too easy or too hard ?

□Go4it'.

Thank you for being so polite and helpful during the visit. We hope that you continue to enjoy your learning and do your best. Please thank your parents or carers for the helpful comments they made on the questionnaires. We know you have a great website so if you want to see the full report please go to ours which is at this link:

www.ofsted.gov.uk

With our very best wishes for your futures.

Steffi Penny

Her Majesty's Inspector

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