

Coupals Community Primary School

Chalkstone Way, Haverhill, CB9 0LB

Inspection dates 15–16 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Achievement is inadequate because standards are too low and the large majority of pupils in Years 1 to 5 are not making enough progress.
- Too much of the teaching is weak. Pupils are often given work to do that is too easy for them, especially the more able.
- Marking is not always specific enough in showing pupils how to improve their work.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length in English and other subjects.
- Pupils do not apply their skills in linking letters and the sounds they make regularly enough to support their reading.
- Pupils often spend too long on aspects of mathematics they already know and are not moved on to new concepts quickly enough.
- Behaviour requires improvement; pupils become restless too easily and their attention drifts in lessons.
- The school lacks the capacity at a senior level to be able to improve fast enough.
- Staff, such as subject leaders and teaching assistants, have not received sufficient training to be effective in their roles. This means the impact they have on pupils' progress is weak.
- The school does not teach pupils all the required aspects of the National Curriculum, particularly in science, humanities and mathematics.
- Governors have not held senior leaders sufficiently to account for the school's poor performance.
- Governors have not investigated what impact additional funding has had on improving eligible pupils' academic achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class.
- Pupils achieve well in Year 6 because the teaching is strong.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is good.
- Pupils feel safe at school and they learn how to keep safe.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons, including some jointly with the acting headteacher.
- Members of the inspection team heard pupils read and, with the acting headteacher, looked closely at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, safeguarding and subject materials, evidence of the school's partnership work and information for families.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils chosen at random. Discussions were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and other staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and two parent governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 31 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke informally to parents in the playground.
- The inspectors considered the 18 staff questionnaires that were completed.
- At the time of the inspection, Year 6 pupils were taking their national tests.

Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Joanne Freeman

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- It has one class in most year groups, apart from in Year 4, where there are two classes.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is average.
- The headteacher, who is retiring at the end of this term, was absent at the time of the inspection and had been away from school for some time. The deputy headteacher has become acting headteacher pending the appointment of a new headteacher.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment by the end of Key Stage 2.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - making sure that all pupils, especially the more able, are given sufficiently demanding work to do
 - ensuring that marking shows pupils specifically how to improve their work.

- Raise achievement in reading, writing and mathematics across the school by:
 - making sure that pupils apply their phonics (linking letters and sounds) skills when trying to read unfamiliar words
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length in English and in other subjects
 - ensuring that pupils are taught new mathematical knowledge and skills when key concepts have been mastered.

- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - the school has sufficient capacity at senior leadership level to drive improvement effectively
 - all staff, including subject leaders and teaching assistants, receive high-quality training to become effective in their roles
 - pupils are taught all the required aspects of the subjects in the National Curriculum, especially in science, humanities and mathematics
 - governors hold senior leaders sufficiently to account for the school's performance
 - governors know what impact pupil premium spending has had on improving pupils' academic achievement.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- Attainment is too low across the school and too many pupils are underachieving. This is because much of the teaching is weak.
- While standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2013 were broadly average, current school information shows that pupils in Years 1 and 2 are underperforming this year. No more than a quarter of Year 2 pupils have made the progress they should.
- Achievement continues to be inadequate in Key Stage 2 because the only strong teaching is in Year 6. There are considerable shortcomings in the quality of teaching in some other year groups. This means that pupils do not make the progress they should and their attainment is very low.
- In 2013, standards by the end of Year 6 were below average in reading and mathematics, and well below average in writing. This represented a decline since 2012. Too few pupils reached the higher levels of attainment. Pupils made inadequate progress in writing, in particular.
- Standards for pupils in the current Year 6 are even worse, despite effective teaching this year. This is because of underachievement when the pupils were younger. Two thirds of the pupils have not made the progress they should in writing and mathematics while they have been in Key Stage 2.
- Children join Reception with a wide range of skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. They make a good start because of stimulating and lively teaching. This prepares them well for Year 1.
- Pupils underachieve in writing because they do not write enough, including in subjects other than English. While there is an emphasis in lessons on talking about writing, sometimes this does not lead to them actually doing any.
- While pupils are taught phonics systematically in Reception and Year 1, they do not always apply their skills in phonics when reading, especially in Year 2. This means they struggle to read unfamiliar words.
- In mathematics, pupils' progress slows because they often spend too long on a topic and repeat concepts they already understand. This means they have gaps in their knowledge. Pupils described their experiences as 'mixed' and said they sometimes found work in Years 4 and 5 too easy as they 'kept going over things'.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make inadequate progress because there is inconsistency in the quality of support they receive. This is because staff have not all had the training necessary to meet these pupils' specific learning needs. However, the small number of pupils who receive specific support from a specialist teacher achieve well.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium also make inadequate progress because not enough is done to help them catch up with their peers. Too little of the funding has been channelled into promoting their academic progress as opposed to supporting them socially.
- In 2013, the gap in attainment between Year 6 pupils supported by the pupil premium and their

classmates was half a term in reading and one-and-a-half terms in writing. Eligible pupils performed better than others in mathematics. It should be pointed out, however, that the narrowness of the gaps is not due to eligible pupils performing well, but because all pupils perform equally badly.

- More-able pupils underachieve because often they are not given challenging enough work to do, and too few of them go on to reach the higher levels of attainment.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Too much teaching is weak and does not enable pupils to make sufficient progress. Tasks are often not related to the declared objective for the lesson so that pupils become confused and learn very little.
- Often children do not understand the teacher's explanation or the work is too easy for them. In some classes, the more-able pupils finish quickly and become bored, and the less-able pupils have to rely on adults to help them to do the work because it is too difficult for them.
- Exercise books show that, in most year groups, pupils do not make sufficient progress over time. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do and achieve are often too low and this results in work of a poor quality. For example, in many classes pupils have not produced enough work and have not been expected to write at length.
- There is very little evidence of work in some subjects, such as science and humanities. Pupils can go for weeks at a time without recording anything.
- Different teachers set targets for pupils in different ways and these are not all effective in helping pupils to move to the next level of attainment. Marking is inconsistent across the school. Some of the comments are not specific enough to show pupils how to improve their work. For example, one piece of writing had the encouraging but vague comment, 'good start'.
- Where teachers give pupils advice in their books, often there is no evidence that pupils have acted on it. For example, additional suggestions and requests by the teacher are not followed up by pupils.
- Reception children benefit from engaging teaching that focuses on developing their basic skills well. They understand what they are learning and apply themselves well to their work.
- Year 6 pupils have made good progress this year. The teaching is well tailored to their different abilities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Too often, in lessons, pupils' attention wanders and this results in low work rates.
- Pupils show respect for adults and one another and cooperate well when asked to work in pairs or groups. They say they enjoy much about their learning, but point out that sometimes the work is too easy. Pupils get on well together and their conduct around the school site is good.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school and

'You can talk about your worries to the teachers.' They say that bullying is not a concern for them and they are confident that adults will help them if they have a problem.

- Pupils know about different types of bullying such as cyber-bullying and how to keep safe when using the internet. Pupils benefit from cycle training and know how to stay safe around water, roads and fire. All the parents who responded to Parent View said they considered their children to be safe at school.
- Older pupils enjoy taking responsibility and helping the younger ones. They grow their own vegetables and raise money for charity. The school council represents the views of pupils well, for example, in how to improve play times.
- Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leaders, managers and governors have been unable to stem the school's rapid decline and there is too much weak teaching for pupils to make the progress they should. Standards are far too low given pupils' typical starting points. This means pupils are not well prepared for secondary school because they do not have the basic skills needed to succeed.
- The school lacks the capacity to improve itself because the headteacher is off on a long-term basis, the acting headteacher (formerly deputy headteacher) has had a class responsibility for Year 6 and nobody has been acting deputy headteacher. This has made it extremely difficult for senior leaders to make the necessary changes to drive improvement rapidly.
- Nonetheless, staff questionnaires show that staff welcome the support they have received from the acting headteacher and there is a determination in the school to turn things around.
- The school continues to be a place where pupils are valued and nurtured, and where they thrive emotionally. Discrimination is not tolerated. Sadly, this success does not extend to their academic achievement.
- Subject leaders and several other leaders are not effective in their roles because they have not been given the training or support they need to make a difference to pupils' achievement. Checks on teaching have not been rigorous or accurate enough until recently. The school's view of itself was overly positive, but the acting headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body now have a realistic view of the school's extremely fragile position.
- The accuracy of the school's performance information has improved and shows clearly how poorly pupils are doing. In the past, assessments have not always picked up the high level of underachievement and so this has not been tackled with sufficient urgency. This means that pupils have been allowed to fall behind and they have not had the equality of opportunity to succeed afforded to pupils in other similar schools.
- Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.
- Teachers now receive accurate assessments of their performance from the acting headteacher and are fully aware of their strengths and areas for development.
- While there are pockets of good practice in the subjects and topics that are taught, this is too

uneven for pupils to receive a broad and balanced education. In particular, they do not do enough work in science, humanities, or mathematics.

- Pupils enjoy a wide range of enrichment activities including clubs and visits. For example, Year 6 pupils were about to embark on a residential visit to the Isle of Wight. These contribute positively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The sports funding is being spent on specialist coaches – for example, for cricket – and for training for staff and on additional sports clubs. This is widening participation by pupils, with a beneficial impact on their health and well-being. It is also improving teachers' skills in teaching physical education.
- Parents are mainly positive about the work of the school because their children are happy and their conduct is good. They welcome the approachability of staff and all the special events that take place, such as the annual Maypole-dancing picnic.
- The local authority has taken an increasing interest in the school this year following the disappointing results in 2013. Since then, it has provided support and challenge to the school and given every assistance to the acting headteacher and governing body. Unfortunately, this support was too late and ineffective as it did not arrest the school's decline into inadequacy.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very supportive of the school but readily admit that they have not been in possession of the full picture about pupils' performance or the quality of teaching. Governors have not gained enough first-hand experience of how well the school is doing and have relied too heavily on the school's own information, some of which has portrayed a rather too optimistic picture of how things are. This has meant that the performance management targets set for staff have not always been robust enough. While governors have some understanding of how the pupil premium is being spent, they have not investigated its impact on the achievement of eligible pupils or asked searching questions about why this is inadequate. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124673
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	442634

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	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elaine McManus
Headteacher	Charles Hardingham David Maguire (acting headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	26 November 2009
Telephone number	01440 763933
Fax number	01440 712247
Email address	admin@coupalsprimaryschool.co.uk

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