

The Coombes Church of England Primary School

School Road, Arborfield, Reading RG2 9NX

Inspection dates	17–18 May
Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- There has been much turbulence in leadership for the past two years. Some important national developments have not been implemented in the school. Governors have had no strategy to secure improvements. Consequently, the quality of teaching has declined significantly.
- Not enough pupils across the school are making expected progress in English and mathematics. The curriculum is inadequate and teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils are not accurate as they do not have a thorough understanding of the national curriculum.
- Lessons do not enable pupils of different abilities and groups to succeed. Teachers do not use their knowledge of pupils to plan suitably challenging tasks.
- Children in the early years are not making enough progress because teaching does not effectively promote learning. Activities in the indoor and outdoor provision do not cover all of the areas of learning.
- Disadvantaged pupils underachieve. Leaders have not spent the pupil premium effectively.
- Leaders have not identified the most able pupils. No provision is made for this group.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make even less progress than other pupils. Extra support is not effective.
- Equal opportunities are not well promoted. Pupils do not have equal chances to achieve.
- Governors and some leaders have an inaccurate understanding of the school's effectiveness. They do not understand pupils' progress information well enough so they cannot use this to hold others to account.
- Opportunities to develop pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding and knowledge of British values are not embedded. Pupils are not well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Not all adults are applying the new expectations of pupils' behaviour well enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The consultant headteacher has recently introduced important changes and helpful new systems. It is too early to see the impact of these.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are strong. Safeguarding is effective because adults prioritise pupils' welfare.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the leadership, management and governance of the school by ensuring that:
 - all governors and leaders have a secure understanding of pupils' progress information
 - leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness
 - governors take an active role in the strategic development of the school
 - governors effectively hold senior leaders to account
 - pupils across the school receive a suitably challenging curriculum that is broad and balanced
 - pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding and British values are effectively promoted
 - equality of opportunity enables all pupils to have an equal chance of success
 - effective provision is in place to ensure that all groups, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability, make good progress
 - the new systems for tracking pupils' progress in all subjects, performance management, behaviour management and raising standards in teaching and learning are embedded.

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment to secure good progress for all pupils across the range of subjects, including in the early years, by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils can do and the progress that they can make
 - making sure that regular and accurate checks are made on pupils' learning
 - ensuring teaching actively promotes learning
 - using assessment information to provide suitably challenging lessons that match all pupils' learning needs
 - increasing teachers' understanding of the progression of knowledge and key skills in all subjects.

- Improve outcomes for children in the early years by making sure that children have access to activities to support their development across the areas of learning both inside and outside.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

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

The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- There has been much turbulence in leadership for the past two years, resulting in many changes to systems and no clear direction for the school. This means that some important developments have not taken place. For example, the most recent national curriculum and changes to the way that teachers assess pupils' learning were not implemented before January 2016. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning has declined significantly since the last inspection.
- The consultant headteacher has only recently joined the school, and this is for a fixed period of time. It is not yet possible to see the impact of his work. Nevertheless, he has already accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses in the school. From the outset, he has taken steps to raise morale among the staff and enabled them to see where changes must be made. He has developed a clear action plan to address some key shortcomings such as introducing a system to enable teachers to measure pupils' progress.
- The impact of middle leaders is limited. There have been several changes to their roles and, until recently, they have not been involved enough in checking or improving the quality of teaching and learning. However, middle leaders welcome the recent changes and the clear direction of the consultant headteacher. They recognise that the delay in introducing the new curriculum and assessment has adversely affected pupils' learning. Middle leaders are starting to make some changes, such as increasing the frequency of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) lessons for pupils.
- Leaders have not provided teachers with clear direction or support to enable them to improve. The consultant headteacher has recently put in place regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers now receive helpful feedback that also forms a part of the process to manage their performance. However, this system is new and has not yet led to improvements in teaching or pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders have not identified the most able pupils. Therefore, there is no provision for this group of pupils within the curriculum and their progress is not monitored. Consequently, the proportion of pupils exceeding the standards expected for their age in key stage 1 and key stage 2 were no better than the national average last year.
- The pupil premium is not well spent. Disadvantaged pupils do not receive effective additional support to help to improve their learning. As a result, disadvantaged pupils' achievement is lower than that of their classmates and others nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability receive limited additional support. This support mainly focuses on improving their reading. Leaders do not monitor closely enough the impact of this support to ensure it improves outcomes. Consequently, pupils who have special educational needs or disability do not make enough progress and their attainment is low.
- The curriculum is incomplete. Teachers are now starting to plan units of work that meet the expectations of the national curriculum. Therefore, pupils do not yet receive a challenging curriculum that meets current requirements. Provision for subjects other than English and mathematics is even less well developed. Therefore, the curriculum is not broad or balanced. Nevertheless, the curriculum has some features that make it interesting for pupils. For example, the Year 6 pupils recently enjoyed a 'Shakespeare' topic, where they studied 'Macbeth'.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding is not well developed and pupils are not aware of British values. This is because successive leaders have not planned sufficient opportunities for this aspect of learning. There are some chances for spiritual development during assemblies. For example, pupils were asked to reflect on how a story related to the life of Jesus. Nevertheless, these opportunities are not embedded. Pupils are not well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that equal opportunities are well promoted. Pupils from different groups do not achieve well because effective provision is not in place to meet their varying needs.
- The additional sports funding has been spent well. Pupils benefit from a specialist teacher and lessons in the on-site swimming pool. Extra-curricular activities such as dance, rugby and basketball ensure that the majority of pupils participate in sports. The school has been successful in some inter-school competitions such as cross country and recently won a local authority award for the best primary school for sports. Consequently, physical education is a relative strength of the school.
- The local authority recognised that the school needed significant support and put in place an improvement board to hold leaders and governors to account. However, the local authority has been too optimistic about the impact of the recent change to leadership.

- The diocese has worked closely with the local authority to review the school's effectiveness. Following on from this, they have provided some support to leadership.
- Just under a half of parents feel that the school is well led. Some expressed concerns about the high level of turnover in staffing and the negative impact that the many changes of leadership have had on the quality of teaching. Nevertheless, the large majority of parents are positive about the school. In particular, they appreciate what one parent described as 'the caring for each other' ethos.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Despite taking some steps to improve, the governing body is not effective. For example, governors have not ensured that the pupil premium funding has been spent well. Furthermore, the quality of teaching and learning has declined because governors have not developed a clear strategy for improvement to smooth the transition of successive school leaders.
 - Although governors visit the school and ask leaders some questions, they do not hold leaders to account enough. This is because governors do not have an accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness. Not all governors show that they understand pupils' progress information well enough.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The consultant headteacher and the acting headteacher have taken steps to ensure that pupils' welfare is everyone's priority. Staff have recently received training and know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil. The school has worked well with other agencies to take actions to promote the welfare of vulnerable pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- Frequent changes to leadership have meant that teachers have not received adequate feedback or direction to enable the quality of teaching to improve. Instability in staffing has led to pupils' learning being disrupted. Consequently, pupils across the school are making slow progress.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Delays in introducing the 2014 national curriculum mean that lessons do not reflect the higher expectations. As a result, pupils' books show that they are not reaching high enough standards in writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not have a strong enough understanding of the recently introduced assessment system. Therefore, assessments of pupils' learning are not accurate and teachers often provide tasks that are too easy or too hard for pupils.
- Until very recently, pupils did not receive regular phonics teaching and staff did not have sufficient knowledge of phonics. This knowledge is still only developing as some staff do not support pupils to read unfamiliar words by breaking them into different sounds. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check over the past three years has not been better than the national average.
- Teachers do not challenge pupils enough. In many lessons, teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to think things through for themselves. Teachers and teaching assistants often give pupils the answers. This reduces the progress that pupils make.
- Mathematics lessons do not routinely develop pupils' problem-solving or reasoning skills. Pupils' books show that pupils often complete repetitive exercises rather than apply their knowledge to more complex investigations. As a result, pupils' progress in mathematics is limited.
- Teaching does not cater well enough for different groups of pupils. Not all teachers are aware of the range of abilities and different groups in their classes. Teaching does not address different pupils' learning needs and does not enable some pupils to overcome barriers to learning. Consequently, different groups of pupils are not achieving well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are strong. However, pupils' personal development is reduced when adults provide too much help and make tasks too easy or repetitive. Some pupils said that work is 'too easy'. This reduces the pupils' confidence to tackle challenging tasks.
- Incidents of discrimination and bullying are rare. Pupils say that it is 'uncommon' and are confident that

staff will support them if they have a problem. Most parents agree that their child is well looked after at school.

- Pupils know some ways to keep themselves safe. Each year group is taught road safety and how to stay safe on the internet. Older pupils could explain the term 'substance misuse' and describe the impact of drugs and alcohol on the body. There are some opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep safe and healthy.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The consultant headteacher has introduced a new system to manage pupils' behaviour that sets out clear expectations, rewards and sanctions. There is evidence that this is starting to have an impact. For example, pupils said that playground behaviour has recently improved. Nevertheless, pupils don't always behave well. In the dining hall, older pupils ran to their seats and shouted across tables to each other. Adults are not yet consistently applying the new expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- In class, pupils try to listen to their teacher and show concentration. However, when tasks are too easy or challenging or lessons do not capture pupils' interest, their attention wanders.
- Very few pupils have been excluded on a fixed-term basis in the last three years. The pastoral care worker provides effective support to some pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour. Consequently, incidents of poor behaviour are reducing.
- Since 2013, pupils' attendance has been similar to the national average. Leaders provide effective challenge to families of pupils with higher rates of absence. The pastoral care worker promotes good attendance through her work with parents and pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

are inadequate

- Across the school, not enough pupils are making expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Some pupils have not made any progress. Therefore, pupils are not reaching the standards expected for their age. This is because the curriculum is not effective and teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Leaders are still developing assessments in subjects other than English and mathematics. Until recently, there was no assessment information for children in the Nursery. Leaders are not yet able to explain the progress that pupils are making in these areas.
- Disadvantaged pupils' achievement is weak. In 2015, gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates, as well as others nationally, increased in key stage 1 and key stage 2. Disadvantaged pupils of all ages do not receive effective additional support with their learning. Consequently, their rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics are as low as other pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are making even less progress than their classmates. Most of these pupils have low attainment. Additional support does not effectively address their needs and enable them to catch up.
- The most able pupils are not identified and lessons are not sufficiently challenging to enable these pupils to reach standards above those expected for their age. In 2015, the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 were no better than average.
- Children join the Reception Year with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. At the end of the early years, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development has been similar to the national average for the past two years. Activities do not develop their learning. Consequently, not enough children make typical or better progress in the Reception Year.
- Last year, boys did not achieve as well as girls, particularly in reading and writing. At the end of Year 2, boys' attainment was lower than that of girls and other boys nationally in reading and writing. Fewer boys reached a good level of development than the girls at the end of the Reception Year. In Year 6, only a very small minority of boys reached the higher level in writing. Current information shows that boys and girls are making similarly low rates of progress in English and mathematics.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are only making similar progress to their classmates across the school. This is because teaching is not tailored to their particular needs.
- In 2014, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in phonics fell to below the national average. Last year, attainment in phonics increased and was similar to the national average.

Early years provision

is inadequate

- Leaders do not yet have a good enough oversight of children's progress through the early years. This means that their view of the effectiveness of teaching is overgenerous and not enough has been done to address underachievement. Consequently, some children do not make typical progress from their starting points to achieve the expected levels at the end of the Reception Year.
- Staff do not make accurate checks on children's learning. In the Nursery, assessments have only just started to take place. As a result of inaccurate assessment, activities do not build on what children know and can do.
- Teaching does not promote children's learning well enough. Adults do not interact with children quickly to seize chances to develop their skills and understanding. Activities are not sufficiently challenging as teachers often provide children with the answers.
- Inside and outside, there are few activities to spark children's interest and further their development. As a result, children do not make enough progress across the different areas of learning.
- Children behave well and show that they can keep themselves safe. They listen carefully to adults, show good manners and are kind to each other. In the lunchtime club for Nursery children, one child reminded another, 'You need to say thank you'.

School details

Unique reference number	135617
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	10000926

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	550
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carole Craven
Headteacher	Neil Lyddiatt (acting headteacher)
Telephone number	01189 760751
Website	www.thecoombes.com
Email address	admin@coombes.wokingham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28–29 September 2011

Information about this school

- The Coombes Church of England Primary School is much larger than the average primary school.
- Children in the Nursery attend on a part-time basis.
- Few pupils are known to be disadvantaged and eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average. Few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below average.
- The school meets the current government's floor standard, which sets out minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- There has been no permanent headteacher for two years. The deputy headteacher has worked with several interim headteachers to lead the school.
- Currently, a consultant headteacher from Whiteknights Primary School is providing significant support to the school. This support is due to end in July 2016. The deputy headteacher is acting headteacher.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum and governance structures on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 34 lessons and parts of lessons, four of which were conducted jointly with the acting headteacher and consultant headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, pupils, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to 14 parents on the playground and took into account 172 responses, including 153 comments, to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered one letter from a parent.
- There were no responses to the staff or pupil questionnaires.
- A range of documents were looked at, including the school's information about pupils' achievement and records concerning pupils' attendance, behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

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Brian Macdonald	Ofsted Inspector
Douglas Brawley	Ofsted Inspector

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