

# Cossington Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123684
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	359486
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 December 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Carnaghan

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	58
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs A Thomas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs C Groves
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 June 2008
<b>School address</b>	Middle Road Cossington Bridgwater Somerset TA7 8LQ
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed seven lessons involving three teachers, and held meetings with staff, governors and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's policies, assessments and records, as well as 21 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Children's attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage to help judge achievement across the school.
- Whether teaching is consistently good enough to raise attainment.
- Whether the school's monitoring procedures have an impact on the quality of provision and outcomes.
- The impact of the increasing numbers of Roma pupils and the success of the school's actions to include these pupils.

## Information about the school

Cossington Primary School is much smaller than average. The majority of pupils are White British and about a fifth are of Gypsy/Roma heritage. All pupils speak English as their first language. The school has an above-average and rising proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities; the largest group of these pupils has speech, language and communication difficulties. There is a much higher turnover of pupils than is usual. The school holds Healthy Schools 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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

Cossington Primary School provides a satisfactory education. In recent years, changes to its intake have meant it has increasing numbers of pupils who face barriers to learning. The school's slow adaptation to these developments has meant that attainment is in line with the national average and that achievement remains satisfactory. Despite these changes, pupils' personal development and behaviour are good, and the school has a pleasant and safe ethos. A large number of pupils actively adopt and promote healthy living. Many enthusiastically participate in the sports and exercise on offer, particularly swimming. They appreciate the need to avoid certain foods and know the benefits of others. They enjoy growing vegetables on the school plot, helping to transform them into healthy soups and consuming them every Friday.

Pupils and parents are happy with their school. Many parents and carers wrote warmly of the good care given to pupils. One typical comment was, 'The needs and behaviour of my children are completely different, the school recognises this, treating them as individuals. I do not hesitate to recommend this school to prospective parents.'

Teaching has some strengths, particularly in positive classroom relationships and pupils' strong appetite for learning. Teaching assistants provide good support and work is well pitched to provide the correct challenge to all. However, closing sessions do not check and consolidate learning and the pace of some lessons is slow. Marking is inconsistent and, overall, does not offer enough advice to pupils on how to improve their work. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers can dominate, so children do not have enough opportunities for independent work and play. The curriculum offers interesting enrichment activities but the topics it covers are not all stimulating for pupils.

Monitoring has sought to develop consistency in teaching, despite staff changes. Leaders have identified weaknesses and sought improvements, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but have not been sharp enough to ensure that all variations in practice, such as in marking, have been eradicated. Governors are keen supporters of the school but do not have systems to help them check up on and rigorously challenge the school.

The school has successfully focused on addressing issues raised in the previous inspection. It has made some improvements in academic guidance and the provision

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for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is much better. Self-evaluation is accurate but lacks sharpness and this results in attainment being no better than average. The school development plan summarises the school's ambition to secure improvement well and provides a good template for the future. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- By September 2011, raise pupils attainment, by:
  - improving teaching so more lessons are good, through use of greater pace, more effective closing sessions and more focused marking
  - developing the curriculum so that it provides more memorable experiences to help develop pupils' skills.
- By April 2011, develop teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage so children have more opportunities to work and play independently, both indoors and outside.
- By April 2011, increase the quality and quantity of monitoring so school leaders and governors drive improvements more effectively, especially in teaching and learning.

About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Pupils enter Year 1 with attainment that is similar to or a little below average. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is also average with no significant variations between subjects. This represents satisfactory progress. This pattern is complicated by the relatively high turnover of pupils. In particular, the recent growth of a Roma Traveller site in the vicinity is changing the nature of the school population. Some pupils who are newly admitted have limited and intermittent experience of education and a high proportion face barriers to learning. The inclusive nature of the school and its success in engaging newcomers into its ethos does something to mitigate the impact of these changes, but high pupil turnover has limited attempts to raise attainment and progress for all pupils. However, recently improved provision affords pupils with moderate learning difficulties a more personalised curriculum and has lately boosted the learning for this and other special educational needs and/or disabilities groups.

Learning in lessons is satisfactory. Pupils benefit from teachers' clarity about what is to be covered and are keen to learn, showing good concentration. The work of Years 5 and 6 pupils in writing poetic sentences, personifying a tree, was demanding but good variation of challenge kept all pupils at full stretch; their enthusiasm and persistence ensured that the learning of the whole class was good. Given the variety

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of pupils’ starting points, the achievement of all groups of pupils is satisfactory.

Pupils report they feel very safe at school and parents have no concerns about this area. Pupils have a good grasp of how to avoid risks, whether on the internet or travelling by road. Bullying is very rare in a school where, as pupils confirm, good relationships are the norm. Pupils respond well to adults, to the benefit of their learning. They are considerate to one another, both in and out of the classroom.

The school council is an active forum where pupils have plenty of opportunities to make their views known. Its ideas have resulted in funds raised for charities and the installation of a ‘friendship bench’ for pupils who need company on the playground. Older pupils are proud of their roles as ‘big friends’ to the little ones in Reception, looking after them as they start school and at lunchtime. Pupils take part in village events such as ‘Cossington in Bloom’, to which they contribute plants and flowers.

Pupils develop good personal skills, especially in cooperation with one another. They apply their skills in literacy, numeracy and computing in various contexts. Attendance has been close to average for a number of years. Positive behaviour and attitudes are a convincing testament to pupils’ good moral and social development. They show good insights into the beliefs and views of others and engage effectively with pupils from different cultural backgrounds.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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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## How effective is the provision?

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan carefully so all pupils are well challenged and supported in lessons. Learning objectives are clearly outlined at the start of each session, so pupils know what is expected of them. Lessons are built on good relationships and pupils find them enjoyable. A good Years 3 and 4 English lesson, when pupils wrote shape poems, engaged all groups in their task because each had a different level of work. This was followed by a very good closing session where pupils' work was politely applauded and the use of powerful words was consolidated. However, this effective summing up of lessons is unusual across the school. The pace of some lessons is too slow and a lack of deadlines can reduce pupils' rate of learning.

Teaching assistants are well briefed and effectively deployed to where they are most needed, so that help for individuals is never far away. Where pupils are lagging behind, they are given intensive small group help. The school's adoption of this strategy after Easter 2010 has given a boost to some pupils' learning and precise assessments of progress indicate that, in these circumstances, they make rapid gains. Assessments for other pupils are less frequent so that, while progress is tracked, the school is not well placed to quickly identify those who may be falling behind. Marking is inconsistent. Where there is good practice, pupils receive clear advice on the quality of their work and how it can be improved. They have useful targets in literacy and simple ones in numeracy. Less effective marking gives praise where it is due, but does not diagnose how pupils could improve their work.

The school plans carefully to ensure that pupils develop important skills such as literacy, numeracy and computer skills through a number of subjects. However, while pupils' tastes are taken into account in planning, there is a lack of stimulus in some areas studied and displays of pupils' work are often uninspiring. The local area provides a good focus for many activities, such as the study of the battle of Sedgemoor and subsequent art work, based on contemporary local legends. Provision for pupils who have moderate learning and other difficulties is well adapted to their requirements.

Pupils' learning experiences are enriched by a number of visits and visitors. A residential trip for all Key Stage 2 pupils develops their initiative and independence and day visits to museums, galleries and theatres provide further enjoyable experiences. The school has a wide range of interesting and very popular after-school clubs covering various sports as well as cookery, sewing, drama and singing. Day events, such as a parents' and pupils' art day, are a further highlight.

Staff ensure that pupils feel safe at school and know there is always a sympathetic adult to turn to if they need advice or guidance. Support for pupils whose context makes them vulnerable has improved this year, with more focused small group and individual teaching. Better provision for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that these pupils are included in learning and progress as well as

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their peers. The school works hard to engage with pupils and families from Roma backgrounds. Staff have been trained and are sensitive to the customs of this community. They provide extra work and additional help to those pupils who are taken away from school to travel, but at the same time emphasise the importance of regular attendance to children’s education. Transition arrangements for pupils to move to secondary school are thorough and give pupils great confidence as they approach this important step.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Staff work as a close team, sharing values and an ambition to provide a safe, caring environment. They focus on developing the school but do not always act quickly to boost progress. In consequence, improvement is no more than satisfactory and has not moved pupils’ performance on to the next level. Changes in the school population have brought about challenges that the school is keen to address and its plans for the future are practical and based on a good understanding of areas for development. Teaching is monitored regularly but subsequent actions lack sharpness, so inconsistencies remain.

Concerted actions to engage all groups of pupils, such as those from Roma backgrounds, have improved pupils’ personal development and are starting to accelerate the progress of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Thus the school promotes equality of opportunity well and is effective in ensuring it is free of discrimination.

The governing body is keen to support the school and its members are well trained. They visit regularly, talking to staff and pupils. However, they do not systematically monitor the school and, although they receive regular written information, this reduces their capacity to challenge it and drive improvements. Governors have good systems to ensure the quality of safeguarding. The school adopts a thorough approach to safeguarding and has a comprehensive range of policies, including thorough risk assessments that are regularly revised and updated. All staff are thoroughly trained and the curriculum builds pupils’ growing understanding of this area.

Parents’ views of the school are largely favourable. They receive regular information about school life and are often consulted on significant changes to the school. Two

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curriculum workshops are held each year to keep parents up to date with the most recent developments. The community learning partnership makes a significant contribution to what the school can offer in numerous fields, such as sport, drama and provision for gifted and talented pupils. Partnerships provide good value for money, affording specialist help to the school in areas like behaviour support and the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The school has a good awareness of its local context and promotes cohesion within the village well. Its work has a positive impact within the school but has not been successful in engaging with the wider world; for example, there are currently no links with schools in contrasting environments.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

From starting points close to or a little below expectations, children make satisfactory progress, leaving the Reception class to join Year 1 with attainment that is largely typical for their age. Children are happy and settled and learn to make choices in their activities. Behaviour is good and relationships with other children and adults are warm and constructive. Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory.

While the area is well resourced, equipment is not organised to offer children enough free choice, indoors and outside. The classroom, which is shared with Key Stage 1 pupils, is not well laid out and organised. Teaching is focused and helpful but sessions have an imbalance towards formal teaching, not giving enough opportunities for children to initiate their own activities. This means they do not develop independence as well as they should. Adults manage children firmly but with

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great kindness and provide a safe environment. The extensive outdoor area is a little overcrowded and the school has plans to address this and offer better opportunities. Assessment is accurate and provides a clear picture of each child’s development.

The relatively new leadership has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve children’s development and progress. Adults work well as a team and have good opportunities for professional development. They engage effectively with parents. For example, the pre-school parent and child reading sessions are a popular response to some concerns that were raised.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

The views expressed by parents and carers in the inspection survey indicate a high degree of satisfaction with the school, with all respondents agreeing that their children enjoy school and that the school helps children to develop healthy lifestyles. A few parents expressed concerns, mainly over behaviour and the school’s leadership and management. However, inspectors found behaviour to be good and leadership and management satisfactory.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cossington 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 21 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 61 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	57	9	43	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	57	8	38	1	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	7	33	13	62	1	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	29	13	62	2	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	8	38	11	52	1	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	33	10	48	3	14	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	43	11	52	0	0	0	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)	5	24	13	62	2	10	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	6	29	11	52	2	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	29	9	43	3	14	1	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	29	12	57	3	14	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	7	33	10	48	3	14	1	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	52	8	38	2	10	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 all 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



13 December 2010

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Cossington Primary School, Bridgwater TA7 8LQ**

Thank you for your friendliness and helpfulness when the inspectors visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and it is good to know that you enjoy school so much. Your behaviour is good and this is a great help to your learning and personal development.

Cossington provides you with a satisfactory education. Teaching is satisfactory and lessons benefit from teachers concentrating on learning and from you being so keen to take part. The mixture of subjects you cover, called the curriculum, is satisfactory but is not always very stimulating. All staff care for you well and they do a great deal to keep you safe. The way you grow up as healthy individuals is outstanding.

In order to improve, I have asked the school to concentrate on:

- raising your attainment through more pacy lessons, good closing sessions and marking that gives you better advice, as well as a more interesting curriculum
- providing children in the Reception class with more chances to work and play independently
- arranging for school leaders and governors to check up on the school more thoroughly, especially on teaching, so that it improves.

Once again, many thanks for all your help. It was a great pleasure meeting you.

Yours sincerely

John Carnaghan  
Lead inspector

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