

Cobden Primary School and Community Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120097
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	358692
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Sue Hall

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

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	302
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Michael Stevens
Date of previous school inspection	18 September 2007
School address	Hume Street Loughborough LE11 1AF
Telephone number	01509 263485
Fax number	01509 238964
Email address	office@cobden.leics.sch.uk

Age group	5–11
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2011
Inspection number	358692

Registered Childcare provision	Cobden Nursery and Pre-school
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	40
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	Not previously inspected

Age group	5–11
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2011
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed thirteen teachers in parts of 25 lessons. The headteacher joined inspectors for several lesson observations. Meetings were held with the school's leaders, members of the governing body and pupils. There were brief discussions with a small number of parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of policies, planning documents, records of pupil progress, minutes of governing body meetings and data about pupils' performance. They examined documentation associated with the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe. Inspectors scrutinised 45 completed questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 61 by pupils and 31 by staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well do all groups of pupils achieve, including the boys, pupils of higher attainment and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, particularly in mathematics?
- Is attendance improving and does pupil behaviour have a positive impact on learning?
- How well do staff use assessment information to plan the curriculum in order to provide challenging activities for all groups of pupils?
- How effective are the leadership team in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision and identifying further areas for improvement?

Information about the school

The school is larger than the average-sized primary. It provides education for primary aged pupils and for children in the pre-school, the nursery and the reception class which are included within this report. Provision for those attending the on-site Children's Centre is not managed by the school's governing body and is reported upon separately. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average. A comparatively large proportion speak English as an additional language, their main languages being Bengali, Malay and Sylhetti. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the average. These additional needs include moderate learning difficulties and speech and language difficulties. A larger proportion of pupils arrives and leaves the school other than at the usual time. The school holds Artsmark silver, Intermediate International School, ECO School and Healthy School Awards.

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

This is a school that provides a satisfactory quality of education. There has been considerable improvement in several areas including provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage which ensures many now enter the main school with higher level skills than previously. Since the school became involved in the local authority improving school's programme a number of changes have resulted in stronger teaching, which is making a rapid impact on learning. The pupils enjoy coming to school. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. While the school has done much to improve attendance and has had a positive effect, it remains below the national average because of persistent absences and extended holidays. These have an impact upon pupils' achievement.

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make satisfactory overall progress in Years 1 to 6 and sometimes this is good, including in Year 6. Data from national test results indicate that in previous years standards have been low, especially in mathematics. However, attainment is improving as the rate of progress rises. There are few differences between subjects for current pupils. The current Year 6 are on track to reach standards only a little below national averages, but few pupils reach levels above the national expectation. A much better proportion of pupils from all backgrounds in Years 1 to 5 are now working at least at the levels expected for their age. As yet though, some higher-attaining pupils do not yet reach the levels they are capable of and boys from a range of ethnic groups do not do consistently well enough because they are not always interested in what they are doing or fully challenged.

The quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum is satisfactory and the proportion of teaching that is good is rising. Staff, including the large number in support roles, have good relationships with pupils and offer them lots of encouragement and praise that helps develop their self-esteem. The quality of teaching and learning, however, remains inconsistent and staff do not always demand enough of the pupils, including in discussions. The planning of lessons is variable and teachers do not always make best use of assessment information to provide challenging work that meets the needs of different abilities. Sometimes pupils are not clear what to do to improve their work. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory with considerable strengths in pastoral care particularly for vulnerable pupils.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The senior and middle-management team of staff with responsibility for key subjects and key stages is becoming increasingly effective in ensuring teachers are held accountable for the results achieved. Self-evaluation is accurate. The school is now on a clear path of improvement with the aim, vision and systems to ensure the changes made are consistently applied and embedded across the school. It has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the levels of attendance to at least the national average by:
 - working with groups of parents and carers to encourage regular attendance throughout the school year.
- Raise the standards achieved by pupils across the school by:
 - ensuring that pupils of higher levels of ability are provided with consistently challenging activities
 - ensuring that boys make better progress by providing activities that stimulate and interest them.
- Provide more consistency in teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that the questions staff ask the pupils encourage discussion and detailed replies
 - make reliable use of assessment information to inform the planning of lessons
 - give pupils a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

As they move through the school all groups of pupils make satisfactory progress and for a growing number of pupils this is good. Pupils generally enjoy their time here and especially practical activities. The school has put a lot of effort into improving pupils' writing and has had some success, as seen in the neat and accurate work in many books. Mathematics has also improved. Year 6 pupils made good progress when working out the area and perimeter of different shapes because the teachers provided good opportunities for them to discuss what they know and to share ideas of how to work out the answers for more complex shapes. Data show that in some previous years pupils of White British heritage and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities made less progress than similar groups of pupils nationally. The inspection identified no major differences in the progress of these particular groups, but girls often do better than the boys and some higher-achieving pupils make slower progress than other abilities. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe and the behaviour of the large majority of pupils is good. This good behaviour in lessons supports their learning. Pupils from different backgrounds get on noticeably well with each other. While a few pupils have concerns about the behaviour of a small minority they know poor behaviour is not acceptable in school and that staff take action when necessary. Pupils respond well to the many opportunities for reflection and discussions about the different faiths and celebrations of the many cultures in school. They have a satisfactory understanding of how to adopt healthy lifestyles. While there is appropriate provision for physical education occasionally some girls are less involved in activities than boys. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to take on responsibilities and contribute to the school community but their contribution to the wider community is not fully developed.

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Attendance is inadequate because there are still high levels of absence, including at times of specific celebrations, and persistent absentees, including time away for extended holidays.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and learning, whilst satisfactory overall, ranges from outstanding to that which is inadequate. The best learning and progress is made by the youngest children in the pre-school group. Consistently good progress is now also made in Year 6 where staff challenge pupils to think of alternative strategies in their work and to do even better. Teachers manage pupils well so that their behaviour for learning is good and lessons are usually conducted in an orderly manner. A large number of staff are employed in support roles often with four or five adults in a class, which ensures pupils get lots of help. However, occasionally sports coaches do not teach pupils how to improve their skills well enough. Teachers make broadly satisfactory use of assessment information to inform planning. But, with staff using a variety of planning formats and no planning for some sessions at the end of the morning this makes monitoring difficult and does not ensure that all activities support learning well enough. The curriculum is satisfactory and the continuing focus on writing has enabled many pupils to produce good quality work. The more recent focus on developing strategies to solve mathematical problems is also

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showing positive results. However, there are still inconsistencies particularly in the middle years.

The pastoral care of the pupils is a strong and established feature of what the school provides for local families especially those whose circumstances make them the most vulnerable. Several pupils are new to learning English and some become part of the Loughborough New Arrivals Project. There is also effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The help and encouragement provided by staff has made a positive impact on improving pupils' independence and behaviour and by providing a better level of challenge in many activities. This enables pupils with moderate learning difficulties to make similar progress to their peers. However, staff occasionally miss the opportunity for all pupils, including those with speech and language difficulties, to develop their speaking skills further. Impartial advice on transfer and transition arrangements is noted as a positive feature by pupils and parents. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school has had some success in encouraging attendance, for example through charts in the school entrance and a focus in assemblies on 'going for goals' plus work with external agencies to follow up persistent absences.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The staff work well together with a shared vision for improvement, with one reflecting the views of others that 'Cobden School has moved on significantly since our last inspection'. The headteacher and deputy have an effective grasp of assessment information. There are satisfactory procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning although these have not always been thorough enough in some subjects to completely eradicate weaker teaching. Senior subject and phase leaders are skilled practitioners who have worked with growing success to embed the use of assessment information to support planning. However, several changes are at a relatively early stage and not always applied consistently. Governance is satisfactory. Governors hold the school to account and have an appropriate plan to develop their programme of focussed visits in order to extend their effectiveness as critical friends.

The school meets requirements to safeguard the pupils well, including careful checks of those who work in school, good child protection procedures and thorough risk assessments. The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers is satisfactory but the school could do a little more to inform and involve them in the education of their children by making staff and information more readily available. The links with a range of external agencies that promote learning are also satisfactory and

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those to support pupils' well-being are more effective. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily and helps tackle discrimination in a determined manner. However, staff have not always used information to check that provision for some groups, including those of higher attainment, is meeting their needs well enough. There have been a number of actions that have contributed to the school's strong community cohesion with its local community, though national and international links have less impact on learning.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Many of the children in the school have attended the pre-school, the nursery and the reception class. They make good overall progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Progress is outstanding for children in the pre-school group where activities are particularly imaginative and based on 'real-life' learning epitomised in children using real tools to take a defunct printer to pieces to investigate what it is made of. Photographs of the previous day's visit as part of the Forest Schools programme showed their enjoyment when using saws, hammers and nails and cooking bread on an open fire. Provision in the nursery is satisfactory. Provision in the reception class is often good and these children have use of a large and well resourced area that ensures a good balance to curriculum planning. The staff collate a good range of information about the levels of children's skills in all areas from entry and regularly review this to assess what progress the children are making. Leadership and management of the provision is effective with the leader providing good cross-phase links with Key Stage 1. Provision in the three separate classes has historically been quite separate and managed by different groups. This is now all managed by the governing body but is not yet working as a cohesive unit. Nevertheless, children make good overall progress sometimes from a low base and now enter Year 1 with skills only a little below average.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Only a small proportion of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. The large majority who did so indicate that they are pleased with the quality of care and education provided. Only a small number gave any information in their responses or in discussion with the inspectors. A very small proportion indicated concerns about behaviour. Inspectors found that the large majority of pupils behave well. The individual issues noted as other concerns were discussed with the headteacher as part of the inspection but followed no particular pattern.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cobden Primary School and Community Centre 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 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 302 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	73	12	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	58	18	40	0	0	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	25	56	20	44	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	67	13	29	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	30	67	12	27	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	60	15	33	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	53	21	47	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)	27	60	16	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	64	14	31	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	60	15	33	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	53	19	42	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	67	13	29	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	69	12	27	1	2	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



10 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cobden Primary School and Community Centre, Loughborough, LE11 1AF

Thank you very much for making the inspectors welcome when we visited your school recently. My colleagues and I enjoyed meeting you, especially the groups we talked to who helped explain what you all do. We also liked meeting you in lessons and break-times and when we attended assembly. I enjoyed chatting to several of you at lunchtime and especially seeing how much progress the youngest children in the pre-school make because of the really exciting things they do there. Thank you also for the questionnaires that you filled in for the inspection.

We think your school provides you with a satisfactory quality of education and that there have been a lot of improvements in the last year or two. The school has good ways of making sure you are kept safe and you have a good understanding of how to keep yourself and others safe. We were very pleased to see that you behave well, have positive attitudes to your learning and get on well together. The school is good at making sure you get extra help when you are finding life a bit difficult.

The headteacher, governing body (who are the people who help to run the school) and staff have agreed to work on some main areas to improve the school. These include:

- helping to improve your attendance at school so that you can all make better progress in your learning
- to make sure that those of you who find learning easy and the boys make better progress by providing even more interesting and challenging work
- improving the planning of lessons to give you more opportunities to discuss your ideas and to make sure you know what to do to improve.

You can also all help by encouraging your parents and carers to make sure you come to school regularly.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead inspector

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