

# Combe Down Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109230
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bath and North East Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	363743
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 September 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mo Roberts HMI

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	391
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Karen Coates
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Richard Bullard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6–7 July 2010
<b>School address</b>	Church Road Bath BA2 5JQ
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	14–15 September 2011
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons and 14 teachers. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and two parent governors. Telephone and face-to-face discussions with randomly selected parents were conducted, in addition to telephone conversations with those who specifically requested contact with the inspection team. Meetings were held with senior staff, including the English, mathematics and Early Years Foundation Stage leaders. Documentation scrutinised included: the local authority's notes of visits and their regular contact meeting records; the single standards development plan; records regarding the care and protection of pupils (safeguarding); minutes of governing bodies meetings; school policies and assessment information. Inspectors also analysed 169 parental questionnaires.

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

- The rate of progress pupils made in Key Stage 1.
- Evidence that children are still entering school with generally above average skills, how their first assessments are carried out and whether the Early Years Foundation Stage is, as the school suggested, now outstanding.
- The impact of the attainment of pupils with special educational needs on the Level 4 outcome data for the group that have recently left, together with evidence on whether provision was sufficiently well adjusted to meet their needs.
- Evidence on whether the school had made sufficient progress to remove the Notice to Improve.

## Information about the school

Combe Down is a larger than average primary school. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average and few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities, and the number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs are below the national average. The most common type of special need is moderate learning difficulties. At the time of the last inspection, the school was given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement was needed in relation to safeguarding pupils.

**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

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school no longer requires significant improvement. Combe Down Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Steady improvements have been made since the last inspection. The pupils' behaviour and attendance remain good. Their positive attitudes to learning, as well as their spiritual, moral, social development, also continue to be strong features of the school. A busy, orderly, caring and happy atmosphere pervades the classrooms, even at this very early stage of the school year. All teaching observed was at least satisfactory and half was good. The Early Years Foundation Stage has moved from being good to being outstanding, giving pupils the best possible start to their education at the school. All pupils' knowledge about how to keep healthy is excellent.

Unvalidated 2011 test data show that a group of pupils who found mathematics hard in Year 6 narrowly missed their targets. Conversely, the potentially higher attaining pupils were exceptionally successful at the more advanced levels. In English, significantly better than average standards appear to have been maintained. Recent Key Stage 1 results are lower than last year and below what might be expected, given pupils' starting points. This is being decisively tackled by both a reorganisation of some staff and an exacting analysis to identify where and why some pupils' progress slowed down.

Pupils' assessment data is currently not clear enough. All staff are alert to the issue and they have wisely planned for the increased observation and analysis of pupil progress in every class. The subject leaders are all set to observe classes and to test out the accuracy of the assessments. Increased teacher moderation, within the school and externally, is correctly viewed by staff as critical in moving the school from satisfactory to good. A new electronic tracking system has been introduced this term to help with the analysis of results.

The specific weaknesses in the safeguarding system identified at the last inspection have been fully rectified. However, the existing systems, procedures and policies failed to identify that some child protection training was overdue and that the related policy had not been reviewed by the governors within the required annual time frame. The inspection team therefore verified through case studies and interviews that the school's actual practice in child protection is satisfactory and ensured that staff were booked on the required training before the end of the inspection. Auditing of this area is not rigorous enough.

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Senior leaders have a clear programme for developing the school further. This plan is part of a pilot scheme for developing schools being developed by the Department for Education and will be closely monitored. Leadership is satisfactory. However, devolving more of the day-to-day school management to the leadership team is rightly seen as of critical importance so that the headteacher has time to plan strategically and monitor policies and developments more effectively. Middle managers have also lacked time for their roles in the past, although the school has recently taken measure to improve this; developments are still at an early stage. Governance satisfactory and has begun to act more in its capacity as 'critical friend' to the school but the communication channels between the school and some governors are not working effectively. This sometimes results in an unproductive tension. Parents feel that communication with the school has improved, especially this term, but say they are not always getting a timely response to their concerns.

The school's capacity for improvement, given the outstanding practice and exemplary assessment model in the school's Early Years Foundation Stage, the appointment of a permanent deputy headteacher and the improvement in higher level outcomes for mathematics, is deemed to be satisfactory. However, there is no room for complacency in the school's on-going self-evaluation.

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?**

- Rigorously moderate pupils' assessments and then interrogate the school's tracking data to ensure any pupil in danger of failing to meet their maximum potential is identified and supported, especially those who find mathematics difficult.
- Develop the leadership and management by
  - ensuring middle managers have time and support to fulfil their roles in improving more consistent year-on-year pupil progress
  - carrying out regular audits to make sure all aspects of safeguarding and child protection training and related policies are up to date
  - speeding up the information flow between the school, parents and the governors, and ensuring governors complete their first-hand observations of the school's work.

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

Pupils make satisfactory progress to attain standards that are above the national average overall. However, there is a lingering concern that some pupils' rates of progress are not entirely consistent as they move through the school. A few individuals do not appear to achieve the potential they showed when they joined the school but as yet there is no identifiable pattern to this. Pupils' confidence and

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accuracy in spelling is improving; for example, Year 4 pupils were keen to accurately incorporate evocative adjectives in their writing about The Romans, with pupils of all abilities keen to develop their related vocabulary. Pupils respond to teachers’ increasingly high expectations and clear instructions by behaving well. They are taking pride in their work in their new classes. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to others in their classes. Pupils show an exceptional understanding of what is involved in keeping themselves healthy. They understand how to grow food and the importance of exercise. Year 1 pupils measured their heart rate in a physical education lesson and most knew why it is important. Pupils learn how to care for the environment. They are involved in the local community through events in the church, like the forthcoming harvest celebrations, as well as in cultural and music events in Bath. Girls and boys get on very well together regardless of background or ability. Pupils are developing good working habits and work well in pairs when acting as ‘talking partners’ to cement their learning. Their basic skills are generally good by the time they leave the school and form a strong foundation for their future lives and economic wellbeing. They can assess risks and know how to keep safe; for example, they appreciate the improved school security and are aware of the dangers associated with the narrow lane outside the school.

*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>	2
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>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<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?

Pupils are keen to learn because of the good relationships between adults and pupils. While the proportion of good lessons is increasing, inconsistencies remain, and this potentially slows progress for a few pupils. In lessons that were satisfactory rather than good, the teachers tended to do too much work and pupils were passive, sometimes sitting for too long. However, there are also exciting elements in lessons, ranging from finding out what a leek looked like, as part of preparation for harvest festival, to pupils keen to learn to investigate how light was reflected in a darkened room. Within lessons, assessment was clearly evident in all classes, as teachers were observing, questioning and monitoring how the pupils were doing in their new classes. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities generally achieve as well as other pupils in their classes but there is a need for more regular monitoring of their progress when they are having additional interventions. Teaching assistants give appropriate but unobtrusive extra support when needed. The marking system is generally being used to good effect and the pupils understand how it works and how they need to respond.

A creative curriculum is enabling cross-curricular links and good evidence of the study of mathematics within history topics was evident. The opportunity to develop pupils' understanding in a range of areas through appropriately varied activities in the lessons is satisfactory overall. In some slower lessons, there is still room to sharpen some of these tasks to ensure the maximum rate of progress. Enrichment opportunities, through visits and visitors, are regular features and pupils recall them with pleasure. They were also delighted by the Year 6 production at the end of last term. The school is justifiably proud of the range of clubs and residential opportunities offered. Provision for encouraging healthy lifestyles is a particular strength, including the gardening activities.

Staff know their pupils very well and due attention is given to their welfare and well-being. This results in good personal development. At this early stage of the school year with their new teachers, they were not confident to be really independent in their learning. Good support is given to pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable. Pupils with dual placements with a special school are made welcome. The school draws appropriately on a wide range of external agencies to provide well-targeted assistance when the need is identified. Children's safety and security are a priority; pupils appreciate the secure site and say very strongly that they feel safe in school and are confident that all the adults will help them when they need assistance. Child protection arrangements and safeguarding are satisfactory but are not yet systematically monitored. Health and safety requirements are met and risk assessments are clear. Some other policies, such as the behaviour policy, are overdue for review.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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<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>3</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders seek improvement in a thoughtful step-by-step approach. The new senior leadership team is keen to make a difference. Increasingly, their roles are being shared, with different staff beginning to lead on various phases and aspects of the school, so some issues are now being resolved earlier. However, the system for parents and carers to raise concerns is still insufficiently clear. Of the respondents to the questionnaire, 27% felt the school's leadership was too slow and lacks decisiveness when dealing with their specific concerns. Subject leadership is being paired in the key areas to ensure continuity and increased challenge. Until this term, subject leaders have not had sufficient time to monitor the teaching of their subjects directly. The new system for tracking the progress of individual pupils is clearly aimed at helping to more sharply identify any times where pupils' progress slows.

Governance is satisfactory; governors understand their role is to support and challenge the school. Getting this balance just right is taking time and effort. A clear duty of care was evident amongst all adults in the school, thus ensuring pupils are appropriately safeguarded despite the glitch regarding training due dates. Recruitment arrangements now meet the set standards, as does the single central register of all staff. The curriculum includes personal safety and life skills. The school is a smoothly run community which strives appropriately for equality of opportunity for all. Pupils are encouraged to take full roles in the school council and have positive attitudes to the few peers from different cultural backgrounds. The improved quality of teaching helps build pupils' confidence. However, pupils' understanding of community cohesion, multicultural British communities and diversity is not as strong as their spiritual, moral and social appreciation.

*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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>

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<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</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

All aspects of the provision are first rate and resources have been exceptionally carefully selected to stimulate learning and enquiry. The setting has met high external quality assurance standards and the children’s outcomes over time are excellent. Planning is of a high standard and allows ample opportunities for children to direct their own learning and develop their independence. Children were attending for only half days during the inspection as they were being inducted. Every last detail had been thought through and children consequently were settled and happy and had already mastered the basic expectations and routines. They were very keen to learn and showed good early skill when, for example, finding ‘one more’ or ‘one less’ when doing practical mathematics tasks. Mixing colours was also much enjoyed, along with snack time! They mostly enter with skills that are well above those expected for their age. Those who initially are less far forward catch up rapidly, due to the good attention given to their needs and because the staff are all so adept at modelling verbal interaction and tasks. Children are respectful and quick to use pleasant forms of speaking. They generally remember to express their appreciation politely. The health and safety and welfare requirements are meticulously monitored. Pupils’ assessment in their learning diaries are accurate and a joy to read and become, parents told us, a prized family possession when children leave. Families are given excellent information about the setting and staff are available and willing to immediately follow up any issues that arise each day. The leadership and management, as well as the teaching and learning, are excellent. Forward plans already incorporate some of the latest early years’ review and research.

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

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

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## Views of parents and carers

The parents who answered the questionnaire mostly supported the school overall. However, questions were raised by about one in three of these parents and carers about the sufficiency of the detail they are given about their child's progress and/or were concerned their child may not be challenged enough. Other concerns focused on whether the school's overall aspirations are high enough. Inspectors found that there is a need to further improve the accuracy of pupils' assessments and to listen and respond in a consistent and timely fashion to parental views and concerns about pupil progress. While communication with parents is said by all to be improving, it still has some way to go before it is consistently good. The complaints policy is not well publicised or understood. Families are then unclear regarding the best route to take to resolve any issues that arise. There was no lack of aspiration evident in the school staff; they all recognise that the school must continue to improve so it reaches a good standard. The extended leadership team expressed a strong determination to achieve this together and their plan to do so will be closely monitored.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Combe Down CofE 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 169 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 391 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	93	55	64	38	10	6	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	96	57	69	41	3	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	28	17	115	68	18	11	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	20	84	50	31	18	9	5
The teaching is good at this school	45	27	92	54	23	14	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	36	21	100	59	27	16	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	51	30	107	63	7	4	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)	55	33	91	54	9	5	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	35	21	90	53	29	17	4	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	15	88	52	31	18	6	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	19	84	50	30	18	7	4
The school is led and managed effectively	21	12	91	54	25	15	21	12
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	51	30	90	53	16	9	4	2

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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"> <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.**

16 September 2011

Dear Pupils



**Inspection of Combe Down CofE Primary School, Bath BA3 5JQ**

Thank you for the help you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed seeing you learn in your new classes. We also enjoyed talking to those of you with whom we ate our lunch and those who came to speak to us. Thank you for filling in the pupils' questionnaire, and it was good to find out how much you enjoy school. We agreed with those of you who told us how your school had improved recently, so we have said it is now a satisfactory school and no longer needs a Notice to Improve. There are still some things that need to improve even more but here, first, are some of the best things about your school.

- You all behave very well and are well mannered; the little ones soon learn this from older pupils and their teachers. The Early Years Foundation Stage is really outstanding.
- You listen and learn well in your lessons, and this means that by Year 6, you reach standards in English and in higher level mathematics that are much better than those found in most schools nationally.
- Your school is a happy community and you are exceptionally knowledgeable about how to keep fit and healthy.
- You are sure that all the adults around you care for you, including the teaching assistants and the dinner staff.

So that your school improves even more, we have asked the teachers to do a few things:

- Firstly, meet together and check you are all learning as much as you can, especially in mathematics.
- Secondly, make sure leaders:
  - involve the teachers who lead subjects in checking the quality of the lessons in that subject and see that all of you are making the maximum progress you are capable of in the subject
  - check up on their paperwork and training to make sure everything to help them keep you safe is always up to date
  - speed up the information going to the governors and parents from school.

Please help by continuing to try hard in class, and good luck in your new classes.

Yours sincerely

Mo Roberts  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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