

# Comberton Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	135047
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	381786
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Charalambos Loizou HMI

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 sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	387
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anna Sutherland
<b>Headteacher</b>	Veronica Wilson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 April 2009
<b>School address</b>	Borrington Road Kidderminster DY10 3ED
<b>Telephone number</b>	01562 754704
<b>Fax number</b>	01562 753907
<b>Email address</b>	Office@comberton.worcs.sch.uk

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<b>Registered childcare provision</b>	Comberton First Steps Childcare EY288813
<b>Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision</b>	34
<b>Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision</b>	11 November 2005

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<b>Age group</b>	3-11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	15–16 May 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	381786



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Charalambos Loizou

Her Majesty's Inspector

Geoffrey Dorrity

Additional Inspector

Tracey Kneale

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 26 lessons and observed 15 teachers and some teaching assistants who were teaching at the time of the inspection. Inspectors heard pupils read and scrutinised their workbooks. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and pupils and an inspector spoke to some parents and carers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Questionnaire responses from 114 parents and carers were analysed, together with 95 responses from pupils in Key Stage 2 and 18 from staff. Inspectors scrutinised the arrangements and records kept to safeguard pupils. They also looked at the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation as well as assessment data that teachers use to monitor pupils' progress.

## Information about the school

This is larger than the average-sized primary school with an Early Years Foundation Stage comprising a Nursery class for three-year-olds who attend part time and two Reception classes for four-year-olds. The school also manages on-site childcare provision for children aged three, as well as out-of-hours breakfast and after-school sessions for up to 34 children aged between three and eight years.

The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. Other pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, with the largest groups represented by pupils of mixed White and Black Caribbean, Indian or Chinese heritage. A small number of pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average (including those supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs). The main areas of additional need include moderate or specific learning difficulties, such as speech, language or communication.

The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has a number of national awards, including Arts Mark Gold, International School status and national recognition through the Leading Aspect for Performing Arts. At the time of the inspection pupils in Year 6 were undertaking National Curriculum tests.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- Comberton is a good school and pupils’ attainment is rising well. The senior leadership team provides strong and ambitious leadership which continually strives towards further improvement. There is good teaching which has improved well since the school’s previous inspection and pupils continue to behave exceptionally well. The school is not outstanding because some pupils just fall short of their expected attainment targets.
- Pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points. Their attainment is in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and is continuing to rise. Teachers and leaders have improved assessment since the previous inspection. This helps to monitor how well pupils are doing but checks are not regular enough to ensure that all pupils, particularly some of average ability, reach their targets.
- The teaching is good and is improving well. In the vast majority of lessons, the teaching is good and some is outstanding; none that is inadequate. In some lessons, particularly a few in Key Stage 1, teachers do not expect enough of the pupils so that a small but notable number of pupils of average ability make slower progress than other pupils.
- Pupils’ behaviour is outstanding and they feel very safe. They are considerate and thoroughly enjoy learning. They have excellent opportunities to show initiative and the school is very successful in improving pupils’ personal development and confidence.
- Provision and outcomes for children in the registered childcare and the schools’ Early Years Foundation Stage are good. These lay secure foundations for learning, particularly in early literacy and mathematics. Excellent attention is given to the children’s welfare, safety and personal development. There is good teaching throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, although children are not always given tasks or asked questions that extend their learning further.

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- The school is well led and managed. Senior leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and what is needed to improve further. Reviews of pupil and staff performance are planned systematically. School improvement planning is ambitious and effective. However, the plans do not include stages or milestones to ensure that monitoring staff performance and pupils' progress are undertaken with sufficient frequency or rigour.

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

- Sustain the rise in attainment and accelerate all pupils' progress in English and mathematics by:
  - ensuring that more pupils of average ability reach or exceed the levels expected for their age in all classes
  - checking pupils' work and learning more often to ensure they all reach their expected targets
  - ensuring that teachers use their marking more consistently and robustly to help pupils understand their targets and the next steps needed to improve their work.
- Build on the good and outstanding teaching that exists to share best practice across the school, particularly in Key Stage 1, so that all lessons have a greater impact on pupils' learning by:
  - ensuring that the work provided in all lessons is sufficiently demanding and matches the needs and abilities of the pupils, including more extended tasks and questioning for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
  - monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching more sharply to ensure that all the teaching is at least good.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils achieve well. Attainment is rising and is in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics by the time pupils leave the school. Increasingly, more pupils are exceeding the levels expected for their age and standards are edging closer to above average levels by the end of Year 6.

Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age. They make good progress and their attainment is close to that expected in all areas of learning by the time they start Year 1. Attainment in English and mathematics in some year groups is above that expected because of more consistently good or outstanding teaching. This accelerated progress also reflects the increasing vigilance of teachers and assistants in lessons

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when directing and supporting pupils' learning. However, when the teaching is only satisfactory, pupils of average ability in particular make slower progress.

The teaching is narrowing gaps and inconsistencies in the attainment of different groups. Last year's test results and teachers' assessments show that pupils of higher abilities did much better compared with previous years. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because staff plan effective intervention work to improve pupils' basic literacy and number skills, including consistent phonics teaching (the teaching of letters and the sounds they make) in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. This also accounts for pupils being able to read with competence, fluency and independence by the end of Year 2, so that reading standards are in line with the national average. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, as do the small number who are in the early stages of learning English. However, assessments show that some pupils of average ability (approximately one in ten) just fall short of their expected levels because some of the teaching does not expect enough and assessments are not frequent enough to intervene sooner if pupils fall behind.

Pupils make rapid progress in those lessons where teachers' expectations are more ambitious. In a mathematics lesson in Year 4 for example, the teacher ensured that pupils were given sufficiently challenging questions and problems to extend their knowledge of multiples and fractions. Pupils benefit most when teachers give them time to correct mistakes or to work with others to read challenging texts and extracts from books that broaden their vocabulary and improve the accuracy of their writing. This was seen to very good effect in a Reception lesson when the children wrote accurate accounts of the features of their 'wild monster'. Some of the teaching is too overbearing though, leaving little scope for pupils to explore further or extend their knowledge and understanding. The vast majority of parents and carers responding to the inspection questionnaire paid tribute to the efforts of the staff in helping their children make good progress. Inspection findings agree with these views.

### **Quality of teaching**

In most lessons teachers plan work that has suitably ambitious outcomes. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well which accounts for the continuous rise in attainment. Pupils' speech and language are improving very well as they benefit from the many opportunities they have to read aloud or express their views and share ideas. The most effective marking refers pupils to their specific targets, helping them to understand fully what is needed to reach the next level, although this is not consistent across classes. Lessons are much more effective when adults intervene and support while pupils are working as this helps them consolidate and extend their understanding and avoids them making repeated errors. The most effective teaching provides pupils with clear step by step direction towards ambitious learning objectives. Pupils in Year 6, for example, were guided through a clear process that helped them produce imaginative accounts of periods in history using their drafting skills to transfer notes when investigating primary sources. When the teaching is only

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satisfactory, some of the work provided is undemanding and the pace of learning is too slow, with over-long class discussions that are dominated by the teacher. The work provided in these lessons does not always extend pupils of different abilities, so that for some pupils work is too easy, or for those who find learning difficult, it is too hard.

The teaching is particularly engaging and interesting when the subject matter is carefully chosen to stimulate the interest of both boys and girls. For example, Year 3 pupils read accounts of the 'horrible' features of characters in Dahl's 'The Twits', which evoked lively debate that sustained the interest of boys in particular and helped all pupils produce accurate and well-formed writing. Workbooks include broad learning targets that point to different levels of attainment but pupils are not always provided with individual targets to ensure that they understand the next steps needed to reach higher levels.

Nearly all parents and carers who returned inspection questionnaires expressed satisfaction with the quality of teaching. Inspectors agree that the teaching is good. The curriculum is varied, stimulating and well planned to offer variety and interest through practical learning and visits to places of worship, exhibitions, museums or theatres. It incorporates a broad range of physical education, sport and the creative and expressive arts, as well as good quality French teaching. Pupils particularly enjoy their experiences at 'The Rose Theatre' as illustrated by the account of one pupil who commented, 'I put myself up for this (performance) at 'The Rose'; I am not as nervous now as I was when I was in Year 1.' A technology project called STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) enables pupils to present innovative projects to a panel of judges along with teams from other schools. The school has won this event four times over two successive years and pupils speak enthusiastically and with pride about this well-established event.

**Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils are polite, courteous and thoughtful. They are exceptionally well behaved. Parents and carers also endorse this view of typical behaviour. The school's very clear behaviour management policy has created a calm, productive and positive climate for learning and socialising. This is also evident in the excellent before- and after-school clubs and provision which are very much appreciated by families and pupils themselves. Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in much improved and above average attendance rates. Pupils are very punctual and many say that they like school; 'It is really fun and we learn a lot,' wrote one, and another commented that, 'It's a great school. They help me with everything; it's the best!' Effective mentoring and support for pupils with special educational needs have a positive effect on those pupils who are potentially the most vulnerable, including those who have emotional difficulties, or who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour.

Pupils spoke warmly about their relationships with other pupils and adults, 'Everyone wants you to do well,' and when asked about their achievement and how they mentor younger children, one Year 6 pupil stated that, 'I know I am now at Level 6

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in reading but I really want to help the younger ones get to Level 6 too.’ This caring and responsible attitude is endemic across the school. Parents and carers agree that pupils feel very safe. Pupils trust that adults will deal effectively with any forms of name-calling, bullying or intimidation on the very rare occasions that these occur. Pupils are very clear about how to deal with different forms of harassment, including racial intolerance or cyber bullying. School councillors take on their roles seriously; they have recently conducted a survey of pupils’ views to improve Comberton School even more. Pupils are able to moderate their own behaviour to meet the high expectations set by teachers. This was seen to very good effect when an older pupil reminded a younger one to stop running in the corridor and to hold the door open for another pupil.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher and the senior leadership team have steered the school well since its previous inspection. Rising standards and the increasing impact of teaching on pupils’ learning and personal development, demonstrate that the school has good capacity to sustain further improvement. Teaching has improved through coordinated professional development work led by two skilful deputy headteachers. Termly evaluations of pupils’ progress are reviewed, although these are too infrequent to ensure that everything is being done to support pupils who may be falling behind. Assessments show, for example, that some pupils just fell short of their targets last year. Weekly planning meetings and reviews between class teachers and subject leaders contribute to addressing these inconsistencies but they are not formalised enough to ensure that all pupils reach their targets.

The school’s improvement plan and subject action plans provide a coherent framework that incorporates a timetable for reviews of pupils’ attainment and teachers’ professional development. The performance of staff is reviewed accurately by senior staff who offer appropriate pointers for improvement following routine lessons observations. This accounts for the increasing amount of good and outstanding teaching. However, improvement plans lack interim dates or milestones that encourage leaders to increase the frequency of monitoring of pupils’ progress and staff performance.

The governing body is skilled and competent in supporting and scrutinising the work of the school. Governors’ committees are well organised to check areas that need further development. The governing body is diligent and there is a schedule in place that ensures that governors meet with senior and middle leaders to hold the school to account for the performance of pupils and staff.

The curriculum and welfare provided for pupils make an outstanding contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Thoughtful assemblies support their spiritual and moral development very well. The school tackles discrimination well with a commitment to inclusion and equality of opportunity, reflected most in the strong pastoral support and care provided for pupils whose circumstances place them at most risk of becoming vulnerable. Pupils appreciate cultural and ethnic



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diversity when studying different religions and when visiting places of worship; they are very aware of their place in the community in tackling racial intolerance and gender discrimination. Pupils learn about cultural and ethnic diversity through visits and special projects in religious education. In addition, a link with a London school is being set up so the pupils can have more direct experience of cultures representing different ethnic minority heritages in the United Kingdom.

At the time of the inspection all safeguarding requirements were being met very well and, as well as being in line with statutory requirements, there are robust risk assessments of all school activities and resources.

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## The Early Years Foundation Stage delivered in the registered childcare provision

The care and welfare of children aged three to five is particularly strong. The attention given to the children is very effective in developing their speech, language and personal development. These strong features are also evident in the school’s out-of-hours provision before and after school.

Adults are particularly good at improving the children’s independence and confidence. Secure procedures ensure a safe hand-over of children to their parents or carers. Parents and carers have expressed high levels of satisfaction in questionnaires and in the comments made by those spoken to by an inspector. There are warm and trusting relationships between children and with adults. Children use the varied indoor and outdoor spaces well to learn through exploration. They cooperate well with other children. For example, when some children led others through the wooded outdoor area while improvising and playing ‘follow the leader’.

Children are being prepared well for the next stage of their development and education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The topic about ‘Australia’ is inspiring them to experiment with a range of resources, colours and malleable materials. Adults engage and organise activities well for the children but do not ask enough open-ended questions that extend learning further. For example, when blowing bubbles, questions often related to the activity rather than asking whether the children noticed how fast some bubbles were going to generate ideas about the changing effects of the wind. When collecting eggs from the chicken coop the children improved their speaking skills, excitedly describing how the eggs felt and how warm they were. Children made ‘Australian’ boomerangs using paper and card and described how they fly in the air. These and many other stimulating activities are supervised very well and encourage the children to share and work with others, although learning and questioning could be made more challenging at times.

Assessments of children’s development are collated and communicated to parents and carers. The setting is managed well and provides a secure environment for the children. Self-evaluation and robust risk assessments ensure that the children learn and play in a hygienic and safe environment.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage of the registered childcare provision, inspected under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
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 for the registered provision	2

## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



17 May 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Comberton Primary School, Kidderminster, DY10 3ED**

Thank you for helping us during our recent inspection. We really enjoyed talking to you and seeing your work. Along with the views of your parents and carers, your opinions were also very helpful. We were very pleased with your views on why you like school so much and we understand your reasons because we have judged that yours is a good school. You behave exceptionally well and you are improving your reading, writing and mathematics skills well as you go through the school.

As do you and your teachers, including those excellent school councillors we met, the inspectors would like the school to do even better. We have asked your teachers, governors and headteacher to raise standards even more by ensuring that:

- teachers check your progress more often and mark your work carefully to help you all make faster progress in English and mathematics
- teaching carries on improving so that even more is good or outstanding, and that in all lessons, you have work that is not too easy or too hard for all of you but is just right so you can all improve your learning and reach higher levels
- teachers and governors make sharper checks on your learning and on how well lessons are helping you to reach your targets and higher standards.

Everyone has to play their part to do this. You can only learn better if you carry on behaving outstandingly well and keep up your good attendance. Attainment is improving and, together with your parents and carers, you have contributed to improving attendance rates, as they are now above those of most primary schools. Well done and keep this up.

We wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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