

Cobden Primary School

Hume Street, Loughborough, LE11 1AF

Inspection dates 25–26 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and his deputy are providing very effective leadership and guidance.
- Governance has improved significantly and is a real strength of the school.
- Subject and key stage leaders have helped to create an interesting and exciting curriculum that motivates the pupils so that they are keen to do well.
- Behaviour in lessons is good because the pupils are engaged in their learning.
- The curriculum includes a wide range of activities that support good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Attendance has improved significantly because of the rigorous checks on absences and the effective joint working with parents.
- The school works closely with parents to provide individual and family support to help their children’s learning.
- School leaders have been rigorous in checking the quality of teaching and learning over time.
- Teaching has improved significantly over time, and the classrooms are now attractive and stimulating and support learning well.
- Attainment is very low on entry to the school but is now in line with national averages by the time the pupils leave at the end of Year 6.
- Leaders and other staff check regularly on the pupils’ attainment and progress to make sure that good progress is being maintained.
- Support staff have been trained well. Consequently, they provide good support for disadvantaged pupils and those who do not speak English as their first language to make sure that these pupils also make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment in writing, although improving fast, is below that in reading and mathematics.
- Some pupils do not have a good enough understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- In some classes the more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently in lessons.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 20 lessons or parts of lessons. They also observed pupils working in smaller groups. Four of the lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors also heard pupils read and checked their reading records.
- Meetings were held with the senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of the teaching staff.
- A meeting was held with the Chair of the Governing Body and a parent governor.
- Many discussions took place with pupils both formally in two groups and informally in lessons and on the play areas.
- The inspectors took account of the views of 16 parents from Ofsted’s online questionnaire (Parent View), and conversations were held with many of the parents at the start and end of the school day. The inspectors also analysed the 27 responses to the questionnaire for staff.
- The inspectors observed the academy’s work and looked at a number of documents, including: the academy’s own data on pupils’ recent and current progress; planning and monitoring documentation; reports on the quality of teaching over time; records relating to behaviour and attendance; the school’s improvement plan; documents relating to safeguarding; and the minutes of various meetings, including those of the governing body.

Inspection team

Nigel Grimshaw, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Alwyne Jolly	Additional Inspector
Pippa Jackson-Maitland	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This academy is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- It converted to an academy in March 2012. When its predecessor school, Cobden Primary School and Children's Centre, was last inspected by Ofsted in March 2011, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- Less than half the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The majority of the school population are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly from Bangladesh, and this number has increased in the time since the academy was formed.
- Almost two thirds of the pupils speak English as an additional language. This proportion is much higher than the national average.
- The percentage of pupils arriving at the school and leaving the school during the school year is above average. Many of these pupils arrive speaking little or no English.
- The proportion of pupils supported through a statement of special educational needs or the new education, health and care plan is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is well above the national average. This is additional funding provided to schools for children in the care of the local authority and those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The academy's governors manage a daily breakfast club.
- A pre-school group operates on the school site under the auspices of the school governors.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment in writing by increasing the focus on grammar, punctuation and spelling and providing more opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in a range of other subject areas.
- Make sure that approaches to providing challenge for the more able pupils in lessons are consistent and make better and more consistent use of targets, especially in mathematics, for the pupils to achieve.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and his deputy model high professional standards in their work, are committed to the success of the school and have created a staff team that is also committed to the same goal.
- Rigorous checks on classroom practice and regular checks on pupils' progress since academy status was granted have led to good improvements in the quality of teaching, behaviour and standards of attainment.
- Subject and key stage leaders are clear about their roles and responsibilities and support the senior leaders effectively in moving the school forward. They also provide good role models for staff. As a result, the breadth of leadership has developed well.
- The school's leadership team has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement within the school. The areas for improvement identified previously have been tackled successfully and are no longer issues for the school and have become strengths. This includes the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) and provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The academy's leaders have demonstrated the capacity for further improvement.
- The systems for managing the performance of staff are rigorously applied and linked successfully to their professional development through training and the sharing of good practice. Targets for staff to achieve linked to pupils' progress have sometimes lacked challenge, but the school leaders are addressing this.
- Subject and other leaders have provided strong support to the senior leaders and governors in the development of a broad and balanced curriculum. Careful thought has been given to the way that different subjects can link together in topic work to provide an enjoyable and meaningful programme of learning for the pupils. The pupils unanimously say that they enjoy their work in school and this is echoed in the views of parents. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of clubs, visits to places of interest and visitors to the school.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well by the school. The elected school council has regular opportunities to contribute ideas for improving the school. A harmonious community within school has been created in which the pupils show respect for each other's views during discussions in lessons and play together caringly outside at break times. In the 'achievement assembly' they showed genuine appreciation of the successes of other pupils and provided warm applause.
- The school leaders and governors have made very effective use of the pupil premium funding provided. As a result, the gaps between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and their peers have closed and often now they outperform their peers. The use of small-group work and the appointment of additional staff to make this possible have been very beneficial. These staff are well trained to fulfil their roles.
- The additional sports funding, provided to all primary schools, has been used equally effectively. The appointment of a sports development officer has raised the quality of teaching in this area and staff are benefiting by observing good practice so that their own standards of teaching physical education have improved. Opportunities for pupils to participate in sports have increased and they are benefiting from a better appreciation of how to lead healthy lifestyles.
- The school works very closely with the parents, and the parents appreciate this. Several parents commented on the success of the sessions in school organised for them and for their families. One parent said, 'I am new to the area and the school made us incredibly welcome and invited us to the family and parent sessions. We have made new friends already as a result.'
- Safeguarding procedures have been applied rigorously and fully meet statutory requirements. There are good procedures in place for appointing staff, checking on visitors to the school and making sure the school environment is secure.

■ The governance of the school:

- The introduction of several new governors last year, including the highly motivated Chair of the Governing Body, has revitalised the governance of the school. Governors are now regularly attending training to improve the way they carry out their roles and responsibilities. They are actively involved in checking the school's practice, including a three-day monitoring programme that was very well attended. Some governors have an exceptionally clear understanding of the performance data and hold the school's leaders to account robustly for the performance of all groups of pupils within the school. Through the monitoring programme, they have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and a clear view of priorities in the short term and longer term. They have a good understanding about the effectiveness of the appraisal of staff on improving teaching and learning, and how the pay progression links to pupils' performance. They are well aware of the successful use of the pupil premium and sports funding. The governing body also effectively checks on safeguarding procedures regularly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school, including at playtimes and lunchtimes when they play cooperatively. A small minority of pupils have behaviour that is challenging, but staff have strategies that usually cope effectively. Pupils have been involved in agreeing the school rules, which now stress the importance of correct behaviour and, therefore, find them helpful and they respond to them well.
- There is a considered behaviour policy which helps pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and encourages them to think carefully and considerately about the consequences of their actions.
- Pupils, and the vast majority of parents, agree that instances of bullying are rare and are dealt with promptly and effectively so that they do not re-occur. Pupils from different backgrounds and cultures work and play together harmoniously.
- There have been no instances of permanent exclusions since the school became an academy.
- Almost all pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They are keen to do well and take pride in the presentation of their work. Occasions of disruptive behaviour in lessons are very rare.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils and their parents agree that pupils feel safe at school. Pupils are keen to look after resources and keep the school clean and tidy.
- Security of the site is good and visitors to the school are checked carefully on arrival. Risk assessments are carried out rigorously for trips undertaken outside the school.
- The large majority of pupils arrive on time at the start of the school day and also for their lessons during the day. Attendance has improved significantly over the last two years because of the consistent and robust actions taken by the school leaders and the work undertaken with parents and families. Attendance is now in line with the national average.

The quality of teaching is good

- School records that have been externally checked and confirmed show that the quality of teaching over time has improved and is now consistently good or better in almost all classes.
- The improved teaching, and the pride shown by pupils in their work, have led to the work in pupils' books showing good improvements over time. As a result, standards by the time the pupils leave the school are

now in line with national averages and sometimes better. Progress levels in each year group are now consistently good or better.

- Teachers plan work that the pupils find interesting and enjoyable. This was particularly true of an exciting lesson in Year 3 where the pupils were highly motivated as they acted out the first moon landing.
- There is evidence of consistent and effective marking in books across the school, particularly in literacy. The marking generally provides clear guidance for pupils on how to improve their work
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well by well-trained learning support assistants. These staff work closely with the class teachers to form effective teaching teams in lessons and, consequently, these pupils achieve well.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are also supported well in lessons. Induction procedures are good and so they soon settle into school life.
- The challenge provided for the most able pupils is not consistent across all classes. Some of them say that they find the work easy, whereas others are given extension tasks that really make them think carefully about their work.
- Homework is set on a regular basis and is often referred to in lessons. Pupils say that they enjoy homework and this reflects their positive attitudes to learning. Failure to complete homework is rare.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The vast majority of children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are much lower than those typical for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy.
- By the time they leave the academy at the end of Year 6, they attain standards that are now in line with the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics, and most pupils are in a good position to succeed in the next stage of their education.
- As a result of the improvements in the quality of teaching and the drive of the school leaders to raise attainment, the results in 2014 showed good improvements on previous results in 2013. Attainment levels in writing improved well in 2014 but were still just below those in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress, and this is now more consistent across all year groups because the weaker teaching has now been eradicated.
- In 2014, two pupils achieved the very high Level 6 results for the most able pupils in mathematics. However, the achievement of the most able pupils over time is inconsistent. It is an area that the school is beginning to address, but the actions have yet to have sufficient impact in all key stages.
- Improvements in the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) have led to good improvements in reading and are now improving writing. Results in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 were well above the national average for 2013.
- Pupils enjoy their reading. At the start of the school day some parents were reading with their children while sitting on seats in the playground area waiting for the bell to ring.
- Through the regular checks with individual teachers on pupils' progress, any pupil slipping behind in their work is identified quickly and given additional support to accelerate their progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because they receive good-

quality support from well-trained learning support assistants, usually in smaller groups so that they receive more individual attention. The provision for them is well planned by the teachers and the school's special educational needs coordinator.

- Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make good progress because their induction into school life is good and they are given good support from when they start, often in their own language.
- In 2013, there were no differences in the outcomes for the disadvantaged pupils and those for their peers and similar pupils nationally. In 2014, disadvantaged pupils actually outperformed their peers in school by about a term because of the good support they received.

The early years provision is good

- The children start school with skills and knowledge well below those typical for their age and, despite leaving the Early Years Foundation Stage still below national averages, the children make good progress. Disabled children and those who have special educational needs are identified early and given extra help and so they, too, make a good start to their school life.
- The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently good. The way that the areas of learning are taught is very effective because the learning is interesting and fun for the children. Relationships between the staff and pupils are very strong indeed and, therefore, the children are very happy at school and enjoy being there and develop good attitudes to learning that they then carry with them through school.
- The learning environment, both indoors and outside, is attractive and stimulating and is an exciting place for the children to learn. Displays support learning while also celebrating the children's work.
- Good, early links are made with the parents, and the joint working with parents is a real strength of the setting. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress, and the interaction between staff and parents at the start and end of the school day is particularly good.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has created a strong team ethic, and staff are mutually supportive and work very effectively together. All the staff monitor the children's progress carefully and are, therefore, able to identify clearly the next steps in each child's learning. Plotting each child's progress is, therefore, effective but records lack an overview of progress for the whole cohort of children so that comparisons with national averages could be more easily identified.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139366
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	447994

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	350
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marshall Easom
Headteacher	Michael Stevens
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2011
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