

Inspection of a good school: Cobden Primary School

Cobden Road, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS12 5LA

Inspection dates:

5–6 November 2019

Outcome

Cobden Primary School continues to be a good school.

However, the inspector has some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very positive about the school. It is no wonder that attendance is rising. They are proud to attend Cobden. Nearly all parents hold the school in high regard. One parent said that 'The children and parents are all known by the leaders of the school. This gives the school a personal edge. I am very proud to say my children attend Cobden.' Another rightly said that 'Cobden Primary is a very warm and caring school.'

Pupils said some of the best things about school were how safe they felt and having friends. They love their lessons and learning new things. Pupils like how teachers can be both strict but also fun and approachable. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and try their best. Despite this, pupils' early reading skills and knowledge of number facts and times tables hold them back. Many do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils feel very safe and indeed are safe. They value 'lockdown' practice and regular fire drills. They have a growing awareness of the need for good mental health. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe out of school. Behaviour in school is good. Older pupils help younger pupils at playtime. Bullying is not tolerated. The school is a happy place to be.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Since the last inspection, leaders have improved some parts of the curriculum. They have made sure that staff are well trained in how to teach mathematics. Important areas of the mathematics curriculum are planned well and taught in an order that helps pupils understand. This is now also the case in history and geography. Lessons build on what pupils already know. Teachers are clear about what pupils need to learn. Pupils can usually remember what they have learned because lessons build knowledge progressively. For other subjects, whole-school plans are timetabled to be changed so that the whole

curriculum is coherently planned in the same way.

The school's curriculum provides relevant and meaningful opportunities for pupils to explore and learn about the wider world. This starts just beyond the school gates, in the immediate locality. Learning then spreads to Leeds and surrounding districts, and then across Great Britain and beyond. Pupils speak with zest about visits such as to Brimham Rocks or Bolton Abbey. They look forward to the residential visit in Year 5. Pupils develop an appreciation of human creativity, achievement and spirituality. They enjoy activities such as visits from theatre groups and learning about artists and composers.

Pupils speak with maturity about tolerance and respect. They are well behaved around school and have positive attitudes to learning, especially in key stage 2. Almost all pupils are motivated to succeed. They try their hardest in their work.

Over time, pupils' early reading and mathematical knowledge and skills have been weak. Pupils are still making a slow start in their learning. They have not got time to catch up by the end of Year 6. Although pupils' achievement in mathematics is improving, many older pupils cannot quickly recall times tables and number facts. Younger children are not grasping important mathematical concepts or learning and remembering key facts.

Younger children's phonics knowledge is improving. This is a slow process and teaching requires more urgency. Expectations of which sounds children need to know at certain times of the year are not yet high enough. Reading books are becoming matched to pupils' reading skills. This means some can read with confidence on their own. Not all pupils have reading books they can read by themselves. These pupils do not learn to read as quickly as they should. The love of reading is not promoted strongly in school. Pupils have little time to read for pleasure while at school. Many of the pupils who shared their views reported that they rarely read at home.

The early years is a nurturing and caring environment. It prepares children well both socially and emotionally as they move into key stage 1. Relationships with parents are strong. Teachers provide activities that strengthen children's fine and gross motor skills. The development of children's language skills is rightly still a priority. Developing children's basic skills in reading, writing and number needs further improvement.

The school is well led. Leaders make every effort to support teachers. This ensures that staff do their jobs well. Staff love working at the school. Many have stayed at Cobden since the start of their careers. Leaders and teachers alike put pupils at the heart of all the school does.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained and know how to keep children safe. The regular updates for staff give them information about risks to watch out for. Staff with designated responsibility for safeguarding know pupils and their families well. The work of the family support worker is invaluable. Governors fulfil their responsibilities in respect of safeguarding. The local

authority recently completed a thorough safeguarding audit. The school received a glowing report. Where appropriate, staff communicate with outside agencies. Pupils have detailed knowledge about the dangers they may face online and how to avoid these.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Many pupils do not achieve well across the curriculum. Published data for the end of each key stage shows that a large proportion do not meet the government's expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders must ensure that pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics quickly improve.
- The school's approach to the teaching of phonics is slowly becoming stronger. Further work must be done to ensure that younger children's phonics knowledge and language skills give them the foundations for all learning. This is especially in the early years and Year 1. There needs to be a greater urgency in teaching and higher expectations of what children and pupils know by the end of each term.
- Some pupils' reading books connect closely to their phonics knowledge as they are learning to read. These pupils read with increasing confidence because they do not get stuck on difficult words. Leaders need to make sure that all pupils who are learning to read use books to practise that contain only the sounds they know.
- Some pupils are starting to develop a love of reading. Further work is needed to raise the profile of reading in school and allow all pupils time to read. Reading areas and class libraries are not well used. Leaders need to ensure pupils read regularly in school so that they can read fluently and with understanding.
- Younger pupils are too slow to learn key mathematical knowledge and grasp important mathematical concepts. Leaders must make sure that children from an early age have secure mathematical understanding to allow them to apply and use their developing mathematical skills in a range of situations. Too many older pupils are held back because they cannot quickly recall times tables facts and simple number bonds.
- The curriculum is becoming more coherently planned and sequenced in history and geography. Leaders must ensure that further work is completed so that this is the case for all subjects, especially in the creative arts and technology subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged Cobden Primary School to be good on 19 April 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

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|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Unique reference number | 107963 |
| Local authority | Leeds |
| Inspection number | 10110823 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 219 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Mrs Deryn Porter |
| Headteacher | Mrs Paula Head |
| Website | www.cobden.leeds.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 19 April 2016 |

Information about this school

- This school is an average-sized primary school.
- It has a Nursery class for children from the age of three, held during mornings only.
- The school runs a daily breakfast club for pupils.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is close to triple the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is above average.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff, including the family support worker and business manager.
- I met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also met a representative of the local authority.
- I took account of the 2019 school survey of parents' views as there were very few

responses to Ofsted's parent questionnaire, Parent View. I scrutinised the seven parents' comments on the free-text facility. I also considered the 17 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

- I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at playtimes and lunchtimes. I gathered pupils' views about the school through formal and informal discussion, including with the school council.
- I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans and safeguarding documents. I also evaluated information relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- I looked in-depth at the following subjects: reading, mathematics and history. This included discussions with leaders of these subjects, visits to lessons, discussions with teachers, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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