

Inspection of a good school: Comberton Primary School

Borrington Road, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY10 3ED

Inspection dates:

8–9 January 2020

Outcome

Comberton Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this happy school. They are safe and well cared for. They develop positive attitudes to learning and behave well. Pupils work and play together happily and treat adults and each other with respect.

Pupils are very clear about the difference between bullying and bad behaviour. Their trust in adults means that they are confident about reporting both if they occur. Adults deal quickly with incidents and take successful action to prevent it reoccurring.

The headteacher leads by example. He has created a united and hard-working team. Staff have high expectations of pupils and want the best for them, and this pays off. Parents and carers are full of praise for the school. Typical comments include, 'I have the utmost respect for the work Mr Freear and his team are doing at this school.'

Pupils enjoy all aspects of school life, including the wide range of clubs, trips and events on offer. For example, pupils perform on stage at the local theatre, compete in sports tournaments and raise money for charity. The school's link with a school in France also provides a real purpose for learning to speak French.

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

The school is expertly led by the headteacher and his team. Governors know the school well and check that it is continuing to provide a good education. Leaders ensure that pupils achieve well. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above the national average at the end of key stages 1 and 2.

Leaders have put in place an ambitious and well-balanced curriculum. They have begun to review and refine it to strengthen pupils' skills and knowledge even further. Science, history and physical education plans have been reviewed recently. Science is planned logically and builds on what pupils already know. Pupils can link information together. This

is the same in history. Leaders intend to apply the same review process to other areas but are mindful about teacher workload so are taking a phased approach.

Across different subjects, teachers check on how well pupils are learning. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff provide additional support, and specialist help is accessed via the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). This means that these pupils achieve as well as other pupils.

Reading is a high priority in the school. Children get off to a good start in the early years and Year 1. Staff are well trained in teaching phonics. Almost all pupils reach the standard required by the end of Year 1. If pupils are struggling, teachers use a range of ways to help them to practise words regularly. However, some pupils' reading books do not contain words which can be broken down using phonics. This means that they are not matched to pupils' abilities. This reduces the progress that pupils make, especially the less able and pupils with SEND. Pupils love listening to stories and they read daily. A good range of books are available both in classes and in the library.

Pupils' writing is of a high standard. They have good subject vocabulary and can write extensively in different styles and for different purposes. For example, Year 5 pupils wrote high-quality descriptions of recycling following a recent visit to a local site.

Staff in the early years have created a safe and exciting learning environment. They involve parents in school life from the outset. A great example of this is the 'bedtime story' session hosted by school at 5pm once a term. Staff model storytelling for parents and provide biscuits and hot chocolate. Everyone attending wears pyjamas – including staff. During school, children quickly learn school routines and develop good attitudes to sharing equipment and taking turns. Activities are well planned and children develop their early skills effectively.

Pupils' personal development is a strength. Pupils develop good citizenship skills, and older pupils readily take on additional responsibilities, such as being digital leaders, sports crew and eco warriors. Parents are positive about how the school develops their children, both socially and academically. Staff teach pupils to appreciate other cultures and religions. Pupils know the school values. These underpin how pupils work, behave and treat each other.

Pupils take great pride in their own good behaviour. Lessons are rarely disrupted.

Staff are positive about the support they receive from leaders. All are proud to be part of the school. They appreciate leaders' attention to their well-being and the steps taken to reduce their workload. This includes how subjects are planned and 'review' days. Leaders have taken note of staff comments about marking and are considering how to reduce this, while keeping it purposeful.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular training so that they know how to detect signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. The safeguarding leader is quick to follow up any concerns. Leaders work closely with families and other professionals to ensure that pupils are safe. Careful checks are carried out to make sure that all adults working in the school are suitable to do so.

Important safety messages are taught through assemblies, lessons and school events. Pupils learn about online safety, road safety and how to cycle safely. Pupils share any concerns with a trusted adult. Pupil safety is of paramount importance to all adults and is taken very seriously.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have taken steps to implement an ambitious and balanced curriculum. There are already many strengths, particularly in the core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics. Improvements have also been made to curriculum planning in science and history. However, reviews of planning in other subjects are not yet scheduled. Leaders need to ensure that these reviews are carried out as soon as possible and ensure that pupils' learning is sequenced effectively in all subjects.
- Most pupils read well and from a broad range of books. However, less-able pupils, including pupils with SEND, sometimes have books which are not phonically decodable. Teachers need to ensure that home-reading books are well matched to the phonics that pupils learn in class. This will help them practise and consolidate their learning and aid their early reading ability.

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 the school to be good in July 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

Unique reference number	135047
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10122542
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	441
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Stephen Deakin
Headteacher	Paul Freear
Website	www.combertonprimary.com/
Date of previous inspection	5 July 2016

Information about this school

- There have been no significant changes at the school since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- I carried out deep dives in reading, writing and science. I also checked on history. I met with senior leaders and curriculum leaders, considered pupils' workbooks, conducted lesson visits and spoke with teachers and pupils.
- I met with five members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- I met with the SENCo and safeguarding leader. I checked the school's single central record.
- I observed members of staff hearing pupils read.
- I spoke with several parents at the end of the school day. I also considered responses to the online survey, Parent View, and the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey. I gathered pupils' views, both formally and informally, during the school day.

- I considered documents provided by the school, including reports from external bodies, details about curriculum planning and the school's action plan and self-evaluation. Attendance and behaviour information was also checked, alongside the school's website.

Inspection team

Heather Simpson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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