

# Inspection of Cobourg Primary School

Cobourg Road, London SE5 0JD

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Inspection dates:

1 and 2 March 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils described this school as a friendly and kind place to learn. Leaders and staff keep pupils safe. Pupils know that they can talk to adults if they have any concerns. Leaders also provide 'post-boxes' around the school so that pupils can let staff know when they are feeling worried about something.

Throughout the school, the atmosphere is calm and welcoming. Pupils were keen to say how much behaviour has improved. This is because teachers use clear and consistent systems to support pupils' behaviour. Pupils know and understand the expectations that staff have of them. Pupils behave well in classrooms and in the playground. Lessons are rarely disrupted, and pupils are respectful towards their peers and adults alike. Pupils said that bullying is rare. Staff deal with any problems quickly and fairly.

Leaders and staff want pupils to learn well. In mathematics, for example, they have designed an ambitious curriculum shaped by high expectations of all pupils. However, not all subjects are planned and taught as effectively. While leaders have identified this and are making improvements, pupils' knowledge remains underdeveloped in some subjects.

Pupils enjoy taking part in sporting activities. They were especially proud of their participation in the recent tag rugby tournament and coming first in a bowling competition with other local schools.

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

Leaders have prioritised improving English and mathematics. Plans for these subjects set out the knowledge pupils need to learn in a logical sequence. In mathematics, for example, teaching explains new learning clearly. Staff assess what pupils have learned in previous lessons and build on from this in a systematic way. Teachers provide effective additional support for pupils who have gaps in their understanding or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils' needs are identified accurately.

Plans for other subjects such as science and history are new and not as well developed. Sometimes, teaching does not support pupils to know more and remember more over time. Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge or do not understand key knowledge securely. Staff and leaders are beginning to assess where these gaps are. Work is underway to get pupils back on track. Nevertheless, assessment approaches are not consistently effective in helping teachers to identify what knowledge pupils need to go over again.

Inconsistencies in the planning and teaching of the curriculum are also evident in the early years. Children get off to a positive start in the Nursery class. This is because they benefit from well-planned opportunities to build up their knowledge

and explore the world around them. Stories are an integral part of leaders' approach. For instance, staff used a story time session to teach children about different vegetables and how they are grown. Children put this knowledge into practice by planting their own seeds. In the Reception class, however, children's learning and development is not catered for as well.

Leaders have introduced a well-sequenced programme for teaching early reading. Resources are typically closely matched to pupils' developing phonics knowledge. However, the phonics programme is not followed consistently well across all year groups and classes, including in the early years. This means that some pupils develop gaps in their phonics knowledge. Some older pupils, including those with SEND, also continue to find reading difficult. The books that these pupils practise reading with are not consistently well matched to the sounds they know. When this is the case, pupils are unable to use their knowledge to read unfamiliar words. This can be demotivating and reduces pupils' enjoyment of reading

Through well-targeted training and guidance, leaders are rightly focusing on building staff's expertise and confidence in teaching the curriculum. While clear improvements are being secured, for instance in mathematics, pupils' progression through the curriculum remains uneven across subjects.

Leaders have also focused on creating a shared understanding of how everyone should behave in school. This work has been highly successful. Pupils' aspirations, curiosity and resilience are celebrated and nurtured in the classroom. Pupils collaborate well with their peers and stay focused on their learning.

Leaders make sure that pupils' personal development is promoted effectively. For example, pupils learn about how to keep healthy and look after their well-being. Pupils and families were recently encouraged to take part in the 'Fizz Free February', which promoted the importance of making healthy drinks choices. Pupils also learn about wider society, including the role of British values. School council members take pride in the role they have in their school.

Governors are supportive. However, they have not provided leaders with the challenge needed to improve the quality of pupils' education. Recent changes to the governing body mean that governors are developing a clearer understanding of what needs to improve and their role in this.

Staff recognise that improvements need to be made in the school. They feel that leaders are considerate of their workload and staff morale remains high. Leaders are focusing on making the curriculum better, and staff are supportive of this work.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors make sure that safeguarding is a high priority. The relevant recruitment checks are carried out on staff before they start to work at the school.

Staff know pupils and their families very well. They are vigilant and they know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil's welfare or safety.

Staff receive up-to-date safeguarding training, including on e-safety and extremism. Staff with responsibility for safeguarding work with external professionals to make sure pupils get the help they need promptly. Leaders monitor attendance closely to ensure that they know where pupils are and that they are safe.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have not ensured that the school's curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced in some subjects, including in the early years. Some plans are new, and leaders have not fully adjusted them to take into account pupils' needs and prior learning. Pupils do not learn as successfully as they should in all subjects. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is well planned to enable all pupils to acquire secure knowledge and skills. This includes making sure that the planned programme of learning builds effectively on what pupils already know and can do.
- Some checks on pupils' learning are not providing leaders and staff with helpful information on what pupils have learned. As a result, gaps in pupils' understanding persist because teaching does not prioritise filling them. Leaders need to put in place assessment approaches that fully support the delivery of the curriculum and enable teachers to help pupils catch up on any missed learning.
- Early reading and phonics are not taught consistently well, including in the early years. Sometimes, lower-attaining pupils and pupils with SEND practise reading with books that are not suitable. Pupils can find this frustrating, and it holds them back from developing their reading fluency. Leaders need to ensure that all staff are well trained in the teaching of phonics and early reading. This includes making sure that they select reading books that are well matched to pupils' place in the phonics programme. This will help pupils to practise and consolidate their learning and support them to see themselves as readers.
- Governors have not supported and challenged leaders with suitable rigour. This means that some areas of weakness identified in the previous inspection have not been addressed in full. The governing body needs to take timely and decisive steps to ensure that all pupils receive a good quality of education.

## **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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 the school and 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	100782
<b>Local authority</b>	Southwark
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211663
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	288
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Trevor Cunningham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Linda Ali (Acting Headteacher)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cobourg.southwark.sch.uk">www.cobourg.southwark.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 and 14 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- The acting headteacher has been in post since September 2020.
- A new deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher were appointed in September 2021.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the acting headteacher, leaders and members of staff. The inspectors also met with representatives from the local authority and those responsible for governance.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and history. For each of these subjects the inspector held discussions with

subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with staff and pupils, and looked at pupils' work. Other subjects were also considered as part of this inspection.

- The inspectors considered the views of staff and pupils through the Ofsted online surveys. The inspectors spoke with parents and considered the 37 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses from parents.
- The inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and at lunchtime. They spoke to a range of staff about their views of behaviour, their workload and well-being. The inspectors also spoke with pupils to consider their views.
- The inspectors spoke with leaders, pupils and staff about the school's work to keep pupils safe. The inspectors also considered safeguarding records, documentation and the single central record of staff suitability checks.

### **Inspection team**

Adam Vincent, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Simon Jackson	Ofsted Inspector
Jonathan Newby	Ofsted Inspector

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