

Inspection of a good school: The Cobbs Infant and Nursery School

Wood Lane, Appleton, Warrington, Cheshire WA4 3DB

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 April 2022

Outcome

The Cobbs Infant and Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils said that this is a happy school where they love to learn and be with their friends. This is no surprise as the school's positive values and warm and friendly relationships are at the heart of The Cobbs.

Pupils feel safe and value the highly supportive, welcoming environment. They know that staff care about them. Pupils trust staff to help them when they need support.

Leaders and staff are ambitious for every pupil, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Children in early years and pupils in key stage 1 are expected to achieve highly. Staff are successful at making this happen. Pupils are keen learners and said that their teachers make learning interesting.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils are keen to follow the 'golden' rules. Pupils know how to spot the different kinds of bullying. Pupils and their parents and carers said that bullying is dealt with quickly if it does occur.

From Nursery to Year 2, teachers make the most of the wonderful environment that surrounds the school to support the curriculum. For example, pupils develop their imagination and their artistic and scientific knowledge and skills through exploring the school's beautiful woodland area.

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

Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn. They have ensured that the curriculum is well designed in almost every subject. The curriculum in early years, which includes two-year-olds, is also well thought out, planned and delivered.

The key knowledge that staff must teach pupils is clearly set out in most subject curriculums. However, the curriculum is not as well designed in a small number of subjects. The knowledge that teachers want pupils to learn is not as clear as it could be.

This sometimes means that pupils do not get as much out of the curriculum as they could. Despite this, pupils achieve well across most subjects. In the main, the curriculum prepares children in early years and pupils in key stage 1 well for the next stage in their education and for life in modern Britain.

Teachers' enthusiasm for the curriculum motivates pupils. Teachers, including those in early years, explain new ideas clearly. They are knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach. They help pupils to remember important information and to make connections between different concepts. They provide pupils with regular opportunities to revisit and recap important learning.

Teachers use assessment strategies well to establish what pupils know and can do. They pick up and deal with pupils' misconceptions quickly. Teachers successfully use assessment information to inform the next steps in their teaching. For example, they appropriately check for gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.

A love of books and reading is an important feature of school life. The well-equipped library sits at the heart of the school. Each classroom has a cosy place for pupils to relax and read good-quality books.

Children get off to a good start with learning to read from the moment they start school. They enjoy songs, rhymes and stories in Nursery. Leaders have recently introduced a new phonics programme. Staff teach this with increasing confidence. In the Reception class, children quickly get to know letters and sounds and how to blend them together to make words. The books they have to practise reading match the sounds they already know. This helps pupils to become increasingly confident readers by the time they leave key stage 1.

Pupils who struggle to read benefit from additional support from well-trained adults. This builds their confidence and increases their fluency in reading. These pupils are identified quickly, so very few of them fall far behind their peers.

Staff identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND well. These pupils are given the support they need to access the curriculum and succeed. For example, teachers plan carefully and adjust learning where needed. Leaders ensure that these pupils have the same opportunities to access the school's ambitious curriculum as their classmates.

Pupils behave well around school and in class. They are polite and courteous. Older pupils can be heard reminding younger ones to walk in corridors and are keen to lend a helping hand when peers need assistance.

Pupils relish their responsibilities. For example, members of the school council, called friends of school, were proud to take chocolates and cards into the local community. They offered them to the public as random acts of kindness. Pupils enjoy the range of clubs on offer and said that everyone has a chance to take part, in, for example, yoga, sports and technology clubs.

Staff feel well supported by leaders with their workload and well-being. They are proud and happy to work at the school. Governors know the school well and offer a good range of expertise. They hold leaders fully to account for their work to improve the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff and governors are well trained and knowledgeable about keeping children safe. The procedures in place to identify and report concerns are well understood by all staff.

Leaders are strong advocates for vulnerable pupils and their families. Where safeguarding needs are identified, support is timely. Leaders engage well with external agencies when needed.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including how to manage risks when online. For example, pupils learn about cyber-bullying and can clearly describe how to stay safe when on the internet. Pupils know what to do if they have a concern about their safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not given sufficient thought to the essential knowledge that pupils must learn. Pupils do not achieve as highly as they could in these subjects. Leaders should revise the curriculum content in these subjects so that teachers know exactly what knowledge pupils must learn and when this should be taught.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2012.

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

Unique reference number	111001
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10210956
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	314
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Donna Marsh
Headteacher	Sarah Taylor
Website	www.thecobbs.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a small unit attached to the main nursery building that offers provision for two-year-olds.
- School leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about their work and school life. The inspector also spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, who is also the early years lead. She also spoke to the special educational needs coordinator and the early career teacher mentor. She held discussions with staff that focused on the well-being and safeguarding of pupils.
- The inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with two representatives of the local authority.

- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to school improvement, safeguarding and the checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted’s Parent View, including the responses received via the free-text facility. She also considered the responses to Ofsted’s staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- The inspector talked with pupils about the books that they like to read. She also heard pupils read.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work. The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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M1 2WD

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