

Inspection of a good school: Cobden Primary School & Community Centre

Cobden Street, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 1AF

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils hold positive views about attending this school. They appreciate their teachers. They know that there is a trusted adult in school who they can talk to. Pupils feel safe and happy at this school.

Teachers know each pupil well. Parents and carers value the fact that teachers will often speak to them in the morning or at the end of the day to let them know how their child is doing.

On average, pupils from this school perform as well as all pupils in national tests. However, the quality of education they receive in subjects that are not tested nationally is too variable. In several subjects, they are not learning as much as they could.

Teachers have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils know the four school rules and what happens if they break them. They know that teachers deal with poor behaviour so that they can continue to learn.

Pupils benefit from local trips organised by teachers. Many pupils talk fondly about their trip to Dovedale. More recently, pupils have been to Beacon Hill to make sculptures. Younger pupils are looking forward to the trip to Bradgate Park to learn more about human and physical geography.

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

Leaders recognise that the curriculum needs further refinement in several subjects. They have ensured that the curriculum is broad and covers the scope of the national curriculum. Topics that pupils learn often cover several subject areas. Teachers plan a

sequence of lessons to help pupils learn the topic. However, leaders have not clearly identified the key knowledge and skills that pupils should know in all subjects. Teachers do not have clear guidance on the essential knowledge that pupils need. As a result, pupils do not learn this knowledge effectively.

Teachers generally have good subject knowledge. They present information well to help pupils know and remember more. However, there are some occasions when teachers use resources which do not help pupils and distract from the intended learning. This prevents pupils from achieving as well as they could.

In subjects such as reading and mathematics, teachers use assessment well. This helps them to check what pupils remember and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, this is not the case in many other subjects. Often, teachers deliver the curriculum but do not check precisely enough what pupils have remembered. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge.

Leaders have prioritised reading. They encourage all pupils to develop a love of reading. Pupils talk positively about how they read for pleasure. The early reading curriculum is effective. Teachers start to teach phonics straight away in the early years. Pupils learn to read words accurately by using their knowledge of pure sounds. The books pupils read are well matched to the sounds they know. Pupils become fluent and confident readers.

The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a strength of the school. Leaders ensure that they identify pupils' learning needs quickly and accurately. They produce small-step targets, which they then share with teachers. Teachers use these targets and effective strategies to help pupils with SEND achieve across the full curriculum.

Children in the early years benefit from a well-planned curriculum. Teachers help children to develop a good level of concentration so that they are well prepared for the next steps in their education. Staff have created a learning environment that helps pupils to develop knowledge and skills across all areas of learning. Staff interact well with children, through play, to promote their language and communication.

The well-being team is well known by pupils. They know these adults will help them if they feel anxious. The team offers support for pupils who may struggle in lessons. There is effective pastoral support to help pupils' wider development.

Pupils learn through the wider curriculum offer about healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe. Leaders have recently introduced more opportunities for older pupils to contribute to the broader life of the school. Examples include play leaders and friendship monitors. There is an active school council. However, the wider development offer is not of a consistently high quality across all aspects. Pupils do not develop a strong enough understanding of British values. There are not enough opportunities to develop pupils' strength of character.

Staff are proud to work at this school. They have the best interests of pupils and the community at heart. Leaders now consider staff workload and well-being as they seek to improve the quality of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff at this school are vigilant. They know the signs that a pupil might be at risk of harm. Leaders have trained staff to report safeguarding concerns swiftly and in a consistent format. This helps leaders to evaluate the risk and act immediately to safeguard pupils.

Leaders do not work in isolation to safeguard pupils. They meet and discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe to see if more can be done. They hold detailed chronologies of concerns and actions taken.

Those responsible for governance fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. They assure themselves that policies are effective and followed precisely.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In several subjects, leaders have not identified the essential knowledge that pupils need to know and remember. As a result, teachers do not implement the curriculum with sufficient precision, and pupils do not always follow it well. Leaders should ensure that they identify the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember in all subjects.
- Teachers do not always use the most effective activities and resources to support pupils in lessons. There are times when some of the resources used distract pupils and overload their working memory. When this happens, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders must ensure that teachers use the most effective resources and activities to help pupils achieve across the curriculum.
- Leaders have not ensured that assessment is used effectively. In several subjects, teachers do not consistently check what pupils know and remember. They move learning on too quickly, leaving pupils with gaps in their knowledge which are not addressed. Leaders must ensure that assessment is used well to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- The school's personal development offer is not of a consistently high quality in all aspects. Pupils do not yet have a secure understanding of British values. The curriculum does not support pupils well enough to develop strength of character. Leaders should ensure that the personal development offer is of a consistently high quality in all areas.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2018.

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.

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 | 139366 |
| Local authority | Leicestershire |
| Inspection number | 10298498 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 2 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 372 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Sarah Delphine Murray |
| Interim Headteacher | Andrew Kitchen |
| Website | www.cobden.leics.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 16 and 17 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- At the time of this inspection, the school had an interim headteacher, who has been in post since February 2023.
- The school has a new nursery provision for children aged two to four years.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to a sample of pupils in key stages 1 and 2 reading to a familiar adult.

- The inspector scrutinised curriculum plans and work pupils had produced in a range of other subjects.
- The inspector met with leaders responsible for behaviour, personal development, the early years foundation stage and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- The inspector met with the safeguarding leader to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. He reviewed a range of documents related to safeguarding, including the school's single central record. The inspector spoke with pupils and staff to evaluate the school's culture of safeguarding.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- The inspector met with trustees, including the chair of the trust board.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the results of the Ofsted staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Rakesh Patel, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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