



# The Cobbs Infant School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 111001  
**Local Authority** Warrington  
**Inspection number** 288824  
**Inspection dates** 27–28 September 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Jim Alexander

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Wood Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Appleton, Warrington
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–7		Cheshire WA4 3DB
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01925 264616
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	432	<b>Fax number</b>	01925 262504
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Heaton
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Yvette Blake
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 April 2002		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
5–7	27–28 September 2006	288824

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by 3 Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The Cobbs is a larger than average infant school set in a council estate surrounded by privately owned housing. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is also below average as is that from minority ethnic groups. Children's attainment on entry is above that expected of their age. The school has recently achieved the Artsmark Gold, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Investors in People.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This good school has many strengths and cares for its pupils outstandingly well. Parents rightly feel that it sets their children up very well for the future. It is a happy and lively place in which pupils' personal development thrives. They do well in their work and grow up as confident children. They learn to make right choices about living healthy and active lives. Pupils say that they enjoy school because, 'our lessons are fun and exciting' and they know to whom they can turn if they have a problem or a concern. They say that, 'our teachers get things sorted quickly' and this helps them feel secure.

From the time when children first join the Nursery they are helped to settle exceptionally quickly and soon feel at home and ready to learn. Good teaching across the Foundation Stage means that children make good progress and develop well as independent learners. Children that join the school at the start of the Reception year are also helped to settle quickly and this helps them achieve equally well. Activities in the Foundation Stage are tightly structured to meet children's needs. Older pupils play an important part in shaping the life of the school because they have opportunities to share their views and make a difference. The School Friends, for example, provide the opportunity for pupils to have their say about what should happen in their school.

The good curriculum is enhanced by effective links that are made between subjects. As a result pupils are able not only to gain knowledge and understanding in certain subjects, but also to apply these skills across a range of activities. The curriculum is enriched by plenty of clubs and activities outside normal lessons. These contribute significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school and their attitudes to learning and are eagerly attended. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) with increasing confidence to support their teaching. However, ICT is not yet playing a consistent and regular part in children's learning, especially for the older children.

Good teaching ensures that all groups of pupils achieve well. The vast majority of children exceed the expected goals, in all areas of learning, by the time they start in Year 1. Good teaching leads to pupils achieving significantly above average standards by the age of seven. The strong relationships that develop between all staff and pupils ensure that behaviour is good and that attitudes to learning are positive. Some lessons positively buzz with excitement. Teachers are highly committed to getting the best from their pupils and this, coupled with the rigorous monitoring of planning, ensures children make good progress in lessons. Some teachers are using particularly effective strategies to engage pupils in assessing their own work and that of others. This helps to raise pupils' awareness of how to make the necessary improvements and is having a positive impact upon their progress.

Leadership and management are good. They are the driving force that ensures this good school continues to move forwards: there is no complacency here. The headteacher, who is well supported by an effective deputy and senior leadership team, works in a highly focused way. This school knows itself well, recognises its strengths and accurately identifies areas to further improve. The recent development of the curriculum teams only serves to strengthen the leadership and management of this

successful school. Governance is good and governors not only act as strong supporters of the school but also have no qualms about asking difficult and challenging questions when required. A new system for tracking pupils' progress, from when they first enter the Nursery to when they leave in Year 2, is still at a very early stage of development and so has not had a significant impact on performance.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure ICT plays a consistent and regular part in pupils' learning.
- Improve the tracking of pupils' progress so that their performance can be carefully monitored to ensure standards rise further.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children enter the Nursery with standards that are above average for their age. Good teaching across the Foundation Stage means that children make good progress and develop well as independent learners: the vast majority reach the goals set for children of their age. A small number of children join the school as they enter Reception class. These pupils are helped to settle quickly and hence they also make good progress. Good teaching and effective learning opportunities through Key Stage 1 ensure that by the end of Year 2 pupils reach standards that are significantly above average. This represents good achievement and good progress given their starting point in school. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress and work is well matched to their individual abilities.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils make good progress in developing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. This helps them develop into thoughtful and caring children. As they grow they take responsibility for others too, through the Friends of the School for example, who have recently been involved in helping the school move towards achieving the Healthy Schools Award. Pupils' self-esteem and confidence grow because they enjoy school and celebrate together their successes. Their attendance is good. Pupils respond well to the school's calm atmosphere and consequently behave well. Their cultural awareness, which is particularly strong, extends beyond their immediate experiences as they learn about different faiths and the range of experiences people have around the world. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of taking physical exercise and eating healthily. In a good Year 1 dance lesson, for example, pupils could clearly explain how, 'our hearts pumps air to our muscles to help us move quickly'. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education: so much so that one pupil said, 'We look forward to going to our junior school.'

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Very positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils underpin effective learning. Pupils respond well to the high expectations teachers have of them. They are helped to develop very positive attitudes to learning and this enables them to achieve successfully. Some teachers involve pupils in assessing their own work and that of others. This has a very positive effect on the progress made during lessons although this good practice is not yet consistent across the school. In most lessons general targets are given for groups of pupils with different abilities. These are not yet specifically focused to ensure individual pupils understand the next steps they need to make in order to reach an agreed learning goal.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school has worked hard to provide a curriculum that is rich and full of interest: pupils are captured and excited by much of what is offered. Effective links are made across the curriculum so pupils can use their skills and knowledge in a range of learning experiences. The recently developed curriculum teams are in a good position to take these innovations further. The use of ICT to support teaching is not yet consistent across all year groups to support learning in all subjects. The school is committed to enhancing the curriculum by providing a wide range of educational visits and visitors. They also enrich the curriculum by offering a wide range of clubs, Spanish for example, and these are well attended.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

The outstanding care, guidance and support offered to pupils contributes strongly to their good progress, enjoyment and sense of well-being. School practice meets the current regulations on safeguarding children. Child protection procedures are robust and known by all staff. Regular health and safety checks ensure this is a safe and secure learning environment. Very effective links with parents and a range of local agencies ensure good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In lessons teachers share clear expectations with their pupils and offer accurate guidance on how they can improve their work. Although pupils are sad to leave the school they have been well equipped to move on.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The newly appointed headteacher, who has been in post 12 months, has achieved much in this time. Supported by a strong senior leadership team she has an accurate view of the schools' overall effectiveness. This school clearly knows where it is going and what needs to be done to get there. The headteacher ensures the focus of the school's work is kept firmly on developing opportunities to further raise standards. Its capacity to improve is good because it examines its performance carefully and takes action to make things better. Governors, who act as good critical friends, have ensured that good improvements have been made since the last inspection. Governors manage the budget wisely and to good effect. Consequently the school provides good value for money.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

As you know, Mrs Proffitt, Miss Kenna and I visited your school recently and we would like to thank you for helping us and making us so welcome.

You'll be pleased to know that we judged The Cobbs to be a good school that cares for you outstandingly well. All of you play a very important part in making it that way. We particularly enjoyed our conversations with you in meetings and around the school. Your wonderful behaviour and attitudes help you to make the good progress that we saw.

These are some of the other things that particularly impressed us.

- You have a good headteacher. Mrs Blake knows every one of you very well. She and the other teachers set a great example to everyone in the school to make sure that each of you is able to achieve as much as you can.
- Teaching is also good. Your teachers and other adults work together well to make sure that you are well looked after and have lots of exciting and interesting things to do and learn.
- You are keen to take on responsibilities and help to make decisions about your school, as well as caring very much about one another.
- You are very good at getting on with your own work and you encourage one another to do the best they can, this really helps everyone do well.

These are the things we have asked teachers to do to help you to do even better.

- Make sure you do even better by keeping a careful eye on your progress.
- Give you more regular opportunities to use computers in your work.

We are sure that you will play your part in helping to make your school even better - especially by using computers more! Thank you again for being so polite and friendly.