

Cobden Primary School and Community Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120097
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	313515
Inspection dates	18–19 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Chris Kessell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	330
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bob Bailey
Headteacher	Mike Stevens
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2004
School address	Hume Street Loughborough LE11 1AF
Telephone number	01509 263485
Fax number	01509 238964

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	18–19 September 2007
Inspection number	313515

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Cobden Primary School is above average in size. The majority of pupils come from either Bangladeshi or White British backgrounds, although a number of other ethnic groups are represented. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Children join the Reception classes from the Children's Centre nursery and pre-school provision with attainment that is well below the level expected for their age. Their communication, language and literacy skills and personal and social development are particularly low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The number of pupils who either leave or join the school during the academic year is high. There have been many staff changes over the last two years, including some at a senior level.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school where the quality of education is improving. The headteacher and other leaders have ensured that pupils' achievement is now satisfactory. This is an improvement on recent years, when not all pupils were doing as well as they should have. Although pupils are catching up to nationally expected levels, standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 remain below average, especially in writing. Pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities to develop their writing skills across the curriculum.

To bring about this recent improvement, realistic and challenging literacy and numeracy targets for pupils in Years 1 to 6 have been successfully introduced. These targets have raised the school's expectations of the standards pupils should reach. Teachers are now much better at tracking pupils' progress and identifying those who need additional help and support. No one 'slips through the net' having not made sufficient progress. The quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 has improved and all unsatisfactory teaching has been eradicated. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with the number of good lessons steadily improving. There are still areas for improvement. Not all lessons have sufficient pace to ensure that pupils learn quickly and teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. The marking of pupils' books is good in many classes but is still an area for improvement in others. Not all pupils are provided with good quality guidance on how to improve their work and reach their targets. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory, with strengths in the attention to pupils' personal welfare.

The Foundation Stage is inadequate. Improvement in the Reception classes has not kept pace with the rest of the school. This was identified in the school's accurate self-evaluation of provision. The school has brought in good external support to drive improvement in this area. This is already having a positive impact.

The school is popular with the parents and valued in the community. 'My child enjoys going to school and looks forward to it every day' and 'All staff are very friendly and caring' are typical comments. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and are well behaved. Year 6 pupils, for example, speak positively about their literacy work on the characters of famous detectives. Though the majority of pupils come to school regularly, a very small minority take too much time off school for extended visits abroad and this reduces the progress that they make over time. The school is a happy place where pupils of different ethnic backgrounds co-operate well and enjoy working together. The pupils' personal development and well-being are good. A strength in the overall satisfactory curriculum is the promotion of pupils' personal and social development. Visitors to school and visits out enhance the school's activities well.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Much of the leadership team is new but is already having an impact on school improvement. Pupils' improved achievement and higher standards are an indication that the school has the necessary capacity to make the further developments now required.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 4

Provision in the Foundation Stage is inadequate. As a result, children do not achieve as well as they should. By the time they transfer to Year 1, they do not reach expected levels and have not moved on sufficiently from their starting points. Teachers' expectations of what children

can do are too low. Their assessments of children's capabilities are not accurate enough to help them to plan the most important next steps in children's learning. There are signs of improvement, and in partnership with the local advisory teachers, the new Reception team is becoming increasingly aware of how to develop and improve their practice. Induction procedures for children are satisfactory, enabling a smooth transfer for them into Reception as a result of the strong links with the Children's Centre nursery and pre-school provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage, particularly expectations of what children can achieve and the match of teaching to children's needs.
- Raise standards in Years 1 to 6 so that more pupils reach at least the levels expected for their ages, particularly in writing.
- Improve teaching in Years 1 to 6 and, in particular, ensure that all lessons have a good pace and that teachers have high enough expectations of pupils.
- Make sure that marking provides all pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work and reach their targets.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Although children's start in the Foundation Stage is too slow, pupils' achievement during their time in the school is satisfactory. Improved teaching, assessment and the successful use of targets in literacy and numeracy have resulted in faster rates of learning than in the past throughout Years 1 to 6. Results of the 2007 teacher assessments and national tests for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 show an improvement on the previous year, with more pupils reaching the standards expected for their age. School records and pupils' work indicate rising standards in all year groups and the school's targets for 2008 indicate that standards should continue to rise. More pupils are now attaining above expected levels because the school is in a better position to identify the more capable pupils and ensure that they make sufficient progress. However, overall standards are still below average, particularly in writing, and there are still too few pupils reaching the expected levels. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same satisfactory progress as their classmates because their individual needs are identified quickly and effective support is provided.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are proud of their achievements and enjoy learning. Relationships between pupils are good throughout the school, with very few instances of disagreements or racial disharmony. Pupils are attentive to teachers. Instances of bullying are rare and pupils are confident that they are dealt with effectively and fairly. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are respectful and have a good understanding of different beliefs. Care and consideration towards others is a very strong feature of the school. Pupils are keen to volunteer for jobs around the school but are less proactive in initiating activities or ideas to improve the school or to help in the wider community. Pupils are enthusiastic about eating healthily and taking exercise. They have a good understanding of safe behaviour; for example, they take to

heart the importance of road safety. Pupils' preparation for the next stage of their education and the world of work is satisfactory. They have good interpersonal skills but not all pupils have the expected levels in literacy and numeracy.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching in Years 1 to 6 has improved over the last year and this has resulted in pupils making better progress than previously. It is helping most pupils to compensate for previous underachievement and pupils are now beginning to achieve more in line with their potential. Assessment information has been used effectively to identify pupils who need specific support or more challenge. The use of the pupils' targets for literacy and numeracy has led to more focused and effective lesson planning. School and external monitoring indicates that the quality of teachers' marking has improved. Pupils are getting far more information on how to improve their work and move to the next stages of learning. However, in a minority of classes there is still scope for improvement. Although satisfactory, there are still lessons where the pace of learning is too slow and the teachers' expectations of what their pupils could achieve are not high enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

A strength of the satisfactory curriculum is the contribution it makes to pupils' personal development. This is evident, for example, in the successful promotion of healthy and safe lifestyles. Road safety is given a special focus because the majority of pupils walk to school. Visits out to places of interest and visitors to school successfully enrich the pupils' experiences. A sound range of extra-curricular activities broadens the pupils' opportunities to participate in sport or other activities. Information and communication technology resources have improved since the school was last inspected but the subject is not used sufficiently to support learning in other areas of the curriculum. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills through subjects other than English. The Foundation Stage provision is not good enough to provide a good enough start for the children's work in their later years. The curriculum for the Year 1 pupils has not been adjusted sufficiently, to meet the needs of the pupils who join the year group with attainment that is much lower than expected. This is a current priority for the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral care given to pupils is good. Adults in the school know the pupils well, listen to their worries and always have their best interests at heart. The home-school liaison officer provides an excellent link between the parents and the school so that concerns can be easily shared and addressed. New arrivals are quickly welcomed and receive good support to cope with the unfamiliar routines and language. Rigorous attention is given to ensuring that the school is a safe and secure environment and that pupils with particular physical or medical needs can play their full part in all aspects of school life. The school is now giving much more attention than in the past to checking pupils' academic achievement and guiding their learning.

While this is improving pupils' progress, not all pupils are given clear enough advice on how to improve their work, and this is still an area for development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Over the last year, the newly formed management team has concentrated effectively on raising standards. The headteacher in particular, has been responsible for driving improvement. As a result, pupils are now making better progress than before. There is still work to be done, particularly with regards to improving the Foundation Stage, but there are signs that the right action is starting to take effect. Regular and accurate monitoring and evaluation of teaching and pupils' work and the use of realistic and challenging targets has helped to improve provision and raise standards. The school recognises that there is also scope to improve the classroom teachers' use of the school's pupil tracking information. Improvement since the previous inspection has been uneven although satisfactory overall and the school's successful work over the last year indicates a satisfactory capacity to improve further. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are particularly effective at developing and promoting links with the local community but are less actively involved in the school's self-evaluation of its work.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ 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.

Annex A**Leadership and management**

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to see how well your school is doing. We enjoyed talking with you and your teachers, and watching you learn. Your school is giving you a satisfactory education and most of you are making satisfactory progress. Standards in the school are improving and you work hard to try and achieve your targets in literacy and numeracy. We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to improve standards further, particularly in writing. Standards in writing are not as strong as in reading and mathematics.

There are many good lessons at the school in which you learn quickly. We have asked the school to increase the number of these lessons so that more of you make good progress. We have also asked the school to make sure that all of you know how to improve your work for yourselves and how to reach your targets. New children settle into your school happily but could make better progress in the Reception classes. We have also asked the school to help the youngest children learn more quickly.

We are impressed that you understand about the importance of eating the right food and keeping active so you stay fit and healthy. It was good to see your headteacher showing you a good example by running a half marathon. You behave well in lessons and around school. You are polite, friendly and welcoming to visitors. You confidently ask questions and commented sensibly to us about how you feel about school. We are pleased that most of you attend school regularly but a few of you have too many days off.

The staff and governors are keen to make the school even better. You can help them by continuing to work hard and behaving well.

20 September 2007



Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Cobden Primary School and Community Centre,
Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 1AF**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to see how well your school is doing. We enjoyed talking with you and your teachers, and watching you learn. Your school is giving you a satisfactory education and most of you are making satisfactory progress. Standards in the school are improving and you work hard to try and achieve your targets in literacy and numeracy. We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to improve standards further, particularly in writing. Standards in writing are not as strong as in reading and mathematics.

There are many good lessons at the school in which you learn quickly. We have asked the school to increase the number of these lessons so that more of you make good progress. We have also asked the school to make sure that all of you know how to improve your work for yourselves and how to reach your targets. New children settle into your school happily but could make better progress in the Reception classes. We have also asked the school to help the youngest children learn more quickly.

We are impressed that you understand about the importance of eating the right food and keeping active so you stay fit and healthy. It was good to see your headteacher showing you a good example by running a half marathon. You behave well in lessons and around school. You are polite, friendly and welcoming to visitors. You confidently ask questions and commented sensibly to us about how you feel about school. We are pleased that most of you attend school regularly but a few of you have too many days off.

The staff and governors are keen to make the school even better. You can help them by continuing to work hard and behaving well.

Best wishes for the future.

Chris Kessell
Lead Inspector