

Comberton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135047
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	329012
Inspection dates	29–30 April 2009
Reporting inspector	David Mankelow

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	361
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	8
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anna Sutherland
Headteacher	Veronica Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Borrington Road Kidderminster DY10 3ED
Telephone number	01562 754 704
Fax number	01562 753 907

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	29–30 April 2009
Inspection number	329012

© Crown copyright 2009

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

Comberton Primary School is larger than average. It opened in September 2007 on the site of the former Comberton First School, as a result of local authority reorganisation. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mainly related to speech and language, is above average. The school makes Early Years Foundation Stage provision in Nursery and Reception classes. There is a breakfast and an after-school club for children aged three to 11. The school has received a number of national awards, including the Activemark, FA Chartermark and Healthy School.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Comberton Primary is a good school. Pupils enter the Nursery with skill levels that are below those expected for their age. They make good progress as they move through the school and reach standards that are above average by the time they leave. This is because the teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. Safeguarding procedures meet current guidelines and providing excellent pastoral care is at the heart of the school's work. As a result, most children develop into mature, polite young people before they move to their secondary schools. Most parents are supportive of the school, particularly appreciating the care that the staff provide. One parent typically wrote, 'My son has formed excellent relationships with staff and children at school through the school's vision and its caring and trusting environment.'

Teaching is characterised by excellent relationships so most pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and have an excellent attitude towards their work. A parent simply summed up the views of many in writing, 'My child loves going to school every day.' Attendance is above the average found in similar schools. The behaviour of almost all pupils is excellent and, on the rare occasions when it slips, it is extremely well managed. Teachers generally make accurate day-to-day assessments and use these to plan future work that is well matched to pupils' prior attainment. As they grow older, pupils become very good at assessing their own work and that of others. They have helpful discussions with their teachers about their work and, as a result, have an excellent understanding of their immediate targets for improvement. Longer-term assessment is particularly effective in mathematics where new, nationally recommended procedures are being used. However, teachers' half-termly assessments of writing in Years 1 to 6 are too narrowly focused and do not always give an accurate picture of how well pupils are doing across the full range of writing skills. As a result, a small minority of pupils are not challenged as much as they could be.

The good curriculum is enriched by an excellent range of after-school clubs, especially sport related, that make a significant contribution to pupils' adoption of excellent healthy lifestyles. For those who attend, the breakfast and after-school clubs make a considerable contribution to pupils' social and moral development. Pupils were seen very happily playing together and engaging in conversation with others from outside their own age group.

Leadership and management are good. The school's senior leaders have done an excellent job in bringing together staff from the closing first school and newly appointed staff, to form a cohesive, highly-motivated team with a shared commitment to continuous improvement. Subject leaders are well involved in the school's self-evaluation procedures and make an effective contribution to the school's good capacity for further improvement. Since the school opened, teachers have used a variety of procedures to track pupils' progress from Nursery to Year 6 but these have been unwieldy and have not enabled senior staff and governors to monitor achievement as effectively as they could.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Overall provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The Nursery and Reception staff provide excellent pastoral care and have consistent, high expectations of children's behaviour. As a result, children's personal development is outstanding. Even the youngest are willing to take turns and listen attentively to one another. There are excellent links between parents and

staff on a day-to-day basis so children settle quickly into school routines. Children make good progress from their starting points because they are interested by the activities that the staff provide for them. An example is the deep interest children showed when discussing the characteristics of elephants. They knew that Indian and African elephants can be distinguished by the size of their ears. Teaching is effective and the outdoor area is used well to provide activities covering all areas of learning. Leadership and management are good and ensure that accurate assessments are made by observing how well children tackle the activities that they are undertaking. This information is used well to plan the next day's activities that are well matched to children's individual skill levels. However, the results of the assessments are not recorded numerically and this hinders the effective long-term monitoring of children's progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve assessment procedures in writing in Years 1 to 6.
- Improve tracking procedures across the school to enable closer monitoring of pupils' progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress from their starting points but nonetheless, many enter Year 1 a little below average. Most pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 to 6. The first set of results for the school from national tests in 2008 were broadly average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6 where science was a particular strength. This pattern is on track to be repeated in 2009. The high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are extremely well supported by a talented team of well-trained teaching assistants. As a result, they make the same good progress as their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their spiritual, moral and social development is excellent. Assemblies and hymn practices provide an outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual development because they are sensitively led and include opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they do well and what they could do better. Pupils have a highly developed sense of what is right and what is wrong and demonstrate high levels of concern for each other, for example, at playtimes. Cultural development is good and is well promoted through the school's excellent art, music, dance and drama curriculum. However, pupils' understanding of Britain as a diverse society is less well developed. Pupils feel safe in school and happily go to a friend or a member of staff if they are worried. A typical comment was, 'It doesn't matter which teacher you go to, they all help us out.' Pupils also told inspectors that they did not think there was much bullying at school. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and local communities, for example by inviting the school's neighbours to class assemblies. Pupils work extremely well together collaboratively and older pupils develop an excellent understanding of the world of work and business through numerous visitors to school. As a result, pupils are extremely well prepared for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is extremely effective in boosting pupils' self-esteem. Pupils told inspectors that they were very happy to be in the lower sets for English or mathematics because they got the help they needed. Teachers have good subject knowledge so their explanations are clear. Lessons are well planned and take account of pupils' different learning styles. They usually move at a brisk pace so pupils concentrate well for lengthy periods of time. Teachers use a wide range of assessment techniques to tell them what they need to teach next. However, formal assessments of writing are based on just one piece of work each half term, rather than a broad range of writing activities. The results sometimes suggest that pupils are doing better than they actually are.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced and well matched to pupils' differing abilities. It provides many opportunities for pupils to contribute to the wider community. For example, a very large group of pupils from Years 5 and 6 have recently taken part in the local Youth Makes Music Festival. Another group have been selected to perform their excellent dance routine based on the musical 'Oliver' at the County Showcase, Voices and Visions. The curriculum is less successful in promoting pupils' understanding of other cultures. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards, for example to stimulate pupils' enjoyment in estimating angles in an outstanding mathematics lesson in Year 5.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Exemplary pastoral care is matched by excellent academic guidance. Work is marked regularly and conscientiously and gives pupils a clear understanding of how well they are doing. Regular discussions between teachers and pupils and the highlighting of targets achieved in the front of their exercise books result in pupils knowing precisely what the next small step in their learning needs to be. A pupil in Year 3 commented, 'My writing is at 2b at the moment and if I join it up a bit more it will be 2a or even level 3.' The excellent pastoral care includes the support given by the pupil mentor to a wide range of pupils and families, particularly those who find themselves in challenging circumstances. This makes a considerable contribution to those pupils' good achievement and excellent personal development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school makes a strong contribution to promoting community cohesion. Pupils have a good understanding of the faiths and needs of families from the broad range of backgrounds that make up the school population. Senior staff have evaluated the school's contribution to community cohesion and have appointed a teacher to promote a better understanding of the global community. Governors make a good contribution to the leadership of the school. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through receiving reports

from the headteacher and subject leaders, and they effectively hold the school to account. However, they are not sufficiently involved in evaluating the work of the school for themselves. They are hampered in this because the school's tracking procedures do not give a sufficiently clear picture of pupils' progress. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and it is to the school's credit that the senior management team have already identified the main issues for improvement found by inspectors, and they have plans in place to overcome them.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

1 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Comberton Primary School, Kidderminster, DY10 3ED

You may remember that I visited your school a couple of weeks ago with two other inspectors. Thank you very much for telling us all about your school and for making us feel so welcome. I am writing now to tell you what we found.

You and your parents and carers believe that you go to a good school and we agree with you. You make good progress as you move through the school and many of you reach standards that are higher than most 11-year-olds by the time you move to your high schools. This is because the teaching is good and some of your lessons are outstanding.

We were particularly impressed by how well most of you behave and look after each other. Most of you obviously love coming to school because the staff look after you so well. You also enjoy all the clubs that are provided for you and the excellent music, dance and drama that you do. Your dance routine from Oliver and your singing were the best that I have ever seen, and I have been working in primary schools for nearly 34 years!

There are just a couple of things that we have asked your teachers to do to make your school even better. It would be helpful if they looked at lots of different aspects of your writing when they are assessing how well you are doing. It would also be good if they recorded your progress in reading, writing and mathematics more clearly.

You can help your teachers a lot by continuing to work hard and behave well.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Mankelow

Lead inspector