

Combe Pafford School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113640
Local Authority	Torbay
Inspection number	357383
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Denise Morris

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	8–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	156
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Griffiths
Headteacher	Mike Lock
Date of previous school inspection	9 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 23 lessons and saw 16 teachers. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, the school development plan, minutes of recent meetings of the governing body and lesson plans. They looked at questionnaires returned by 64 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How data is used to plan the next steps of learning for each pupil.
- Whether teaching helps pupils to achieve their next steps.
- The impact of specialist status.

Information about the school

Combe Pafford is a large special school that caters for pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All of the pupils have moderate learning difficulties and a minority have additional physical or speech and language difficulties. A few have autistic spectrum disorders. Most pupils are of White British background and there are far more boys than girls. The school supports a high number of pupils in mainstream schools and provides facilities for them to develop their vocational skills. The school has specialist status for business and enterprise.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Combe Pafford is an outstanding school. As a result of inspirational leadership and management, the school has continued improving since the last inspection and now provides exceptionally well for all its pupils. The quality of vocational provision, including excellent accommodation and resources, ensures that pupils are extremely well prepared for their futures. Pupils value their time at the school and really enjoy every single day, as shown by their good and rising attendance. They are extremely well cared for and show outstanding awareness of how to keep themselves safe. Their understanding of the importance of leading healthy lives is demonstrated in their active lifestyles and the way that they regularly choose fruit for their snacks and grow their own vegetables. Pupils value the breakfast club and highlighted its healthy nature.

Pupils achieve well during their time at the school. They make good progress from their individual starting points so that by the time they leave the school in Year 11 many achieve national accreditations such as GCSEs or vocational qualifications that will contribute well to their future careers. Those with additional special educational needs and/or disabilities such as physical disabilities, speech and language difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders achieve as well as their peers. Throughout the school pupils benefit from good and often excellent teaching. In a few lessons, learning objectives are unclear and are not focused well enough on what pupils are expected to achieve. This results in a dip in learning in these lessons. The exciting and rich curriculum provides a very wide range of activities that inspires and engages pupils. For example, effective links with two schools in Beijing led to over 30 of the older pupils visiting China recently and working with the Chinese students and sharing their lessons. Younger pupils talk excitedly about when they might have a turn to do the same. Vocational education is a particular strength. Leaders have worked extremely hard to provide high quality workshops, including a garage with three ramps, a working hairdressing salon, a construction centre with facilities for plumbing, bricklaying and decorating and a working cafe in the town. As well as enabling their own pupils to gain experience of these jobs, the school supports over 150 students from other local schools, enabling all the pupils to develop excellent work-related skills and providing them with realistic opportunities to become productive citizens.

Excellent leadership and management have resulted in very positive outcomes for all groups of pupils. Leaders have worked diligently to improve all aspects of the school. Exceptional partnerships with local businesses and schools have resulted in greatly improved facilities and exciting opportunities for all the pupils. Governors are supportive and many are regular visitors to the school. They offer challenge and help. School self-evaluation is very accurate and leaders know what is working well and what needs improving. As a result, the school has an excellent capacity to continue improving.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of pupils' progress by monitoring the quality of teaching to ensure that all lesson plans clearly identify what pupils are expected to achieve.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils achieve well in their lessons and make good progress from their starting points in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. They make the best progress in reading because of some rigorous and regular provision and practice. In a Year 11 English lesson, for example, a group of GCSE pupils exhibited excellent understanding of descriptive techniques as they read the poetry of the war poet Wilfred Owen. The teacher's expertise in providing visual images enabled pupils to use similes very well to create their own mental images. The very good focus on vocabulary extended pupils' language and they were able to use powerful sentences to express their ideas.

Pupils make exceptionally good progress in vocational activities because of the excellent provision and expertise in subjects such as car mechanics, building, hairdressing, cooking and gardening. As a result, they achieve excellent work-place skills. This was evident in a car maintenance lesson in Years 10 and 11, where excellent provision and clear learning objectives resulted in students knowing exactly how to undertake an oil change on two cars. The lesson was firmly supporting the school's business and enterprise specialism and pupils' good gains in learning were the result of real resources and carefully focused questions that extended their knowledge. In a small minority of lessons, pupils' progress is limited by the lack of clear expectations of what they will achieve. Pupils with additional special educational needs make similar progress to their peers because of high quality intervention programmes and individual targets that are carefully focused on their abilities.

Pupils say that they feel safe and secure at school. Their understanding of healthy eating is excellent and was evident during lunchtimes when pupils made real choices from a variety of healthy foods. Many keep fit by attending after-school sports clubs and joining in with sports activities with other local schools. For example, many pupils take part in the annual 'Ten Tors' challenge across Dartmoor. Pupils regularly work within the community, running a cafe in the town on two days every week. They have a very clear awareness of different cultures because of the high quality themed activities that enable them to study different countries in depth. They show very good awareness of the different faiths that make up modern Britain as a result of a wide range of celebrations and visits to places of worship, such as to the synagogue in Exeter. They get on very well with each other and older ones regularly help younger pupils. They play very well together in the playground. From their earliest years, pupils develop good attitudes to learning because of the very effective support systems in each class. Despite many pupils having a history of poor attendance in their previous placements, they quickly settle at Combe Pafford, behaviour improves, and they soon start attending regularly.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The rich and varied curriculum is having a very good impact on pupils' enjoyment and on their achievement. The business and enterprise specialism has ensured that the school is fully involved with local businesses and that it provides pupils with the skills to become good citizens. The very strong community cohesion strategy is having a major impact on pupils' enjoyment and awareness of the world around them. For example, their understanding of other cultures has been enhanced through two recent visits to China by pupils and staff and through indepth studies of countries such as India and Africa. Enrichment through visits, sports activities and visitors is exceptional and helps to keep pupils engaged in learning. For example, a group of pupils went to London to watch the England football match against Montenegro during the inspection. They said that they had a wonderful time.

Lessons generally have clear learning objectives, which shows that teachers have high expectations of pupils' successes. However, in a few lessons the aims are unclear and do not state what is expected of pupils. At such times the quality of pupils' learning dips and some do not do enough work in the time allowed. Nevertheless, assessment information is mainly used well to plan tasks and data show a clear view of pupils' individual successes. Questioning is a strength in many lessons, helping to extend pupils' understanding and ensuring that pupils of different abilities can access learning. In mathematics in Year 6, for example, a focused questioning session extended pupils' understanding of Venn diagrams.

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A very good practical session ensured that pupils themselves were able to solve problems and develop very good understanding of how to interpret data. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and additional special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported in lessons and tasks are tailored carefully to meet their needs. For example, one pupil, working individually with an adult, was able to succeed in working out mathematics problems because the teacher knew him well and made learning accessible by explaining each step carefully.

Parents believe their children enjoy school and rightly believe that they are very well cared for and safe at school. Very effective links with a wide range of other professionals ensure that pupils' personal needs are extremely well met. Induction and transition procedures are excellent so that new pupils quickly find their way around, and older pupils transfer smoothly to college. Strategies to support pupils with autistic spectrum disorders or with additional sensory or physical impairments are excellent, resulting in full inclusion and enjoyment by these groups.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Inspirational leadership is a key feature of the school. Leaders are driving improvement in all areas of the school and beyond. As a result, the school is very effective and provides exceptional facilities that meet pupils' needs very well. The headteacher has an excellent vision for the future of the school. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and the senior leadership team. Leaders are rigorous in promoting equality and eliminating discrimination. All pupils at the school have equal access to all the opportunities. Accurate self-evaluation ensures that leaders know what is working well and what needs improving. They have already identified the need to monitor lesson plans to ensure that they are consistent in providing focused learning outcomes for all groups of pupils. The senior management team has embedded its ambition for the school by working closely with local businesses to create an environment in which pupils thrive and which serves them very well. The governing body is fully involved in the school's management, although it is not fully involved in evaluating outcomes. It has ensured that the school's strategy for community cohesion is excellent. Innovative links with schools in China and India have extended pupils' understanding of other cultures. Very close local links promote effective working relationships with many other schools. Partnership activities are outstanding and have a very positive impact on learning for all pupils. Regular and robust links with parents contribute very well to pupils' attendance. Safeguarding procedures, including those for child protection, are excellent and fully meet current government guidelines. They are rigorously monitored and the site is exceptionally safe and secure.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

All of the parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaires said that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps them safe. The school provides many opportunities for them to be engaged in their children's learning. Parents and carers value these and are very supportive of the school and very pleased with their children's education. 'I am and have always been very impressed with everyone at this school. They work very hard to give my child the best education and preparation for his future,' is a typical comment from parents. 'Since my son has been at Combe Pafford I have not struggled to get him to school. If I have any worries about anything I can just call. Also, learning is fun now, he says,' wrote another.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Combe Pafford Business and Enterprise School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 64 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 156 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	77	14	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	83	11	17	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	51	80	12	19	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	72	14	22	4	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	54	84	10	16	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	55	86	8	13	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	66	21	33	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	43	67	18	28	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	86	7	11	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	72	17	27	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	69	19	30	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	54	84	10	16	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	86	8	13	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



15 October 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Combe Pafford Business and Enterprise School, Torquay TQ2 8 NL

Thank you for your help in our recent visit to your school. We enjoyed meeting you very much. This letter is to tell you about our findings.

- Combe Pafford is an outstanding school and it provides you with an excellent education.
- You make good progress in your lessons because of good teaching and support.
- Your behaviour in and around the school is excellent.
- You told us how much you enjoy school and you are showing this by attending regularly.
- Your school prepares you extremely well for your futures. It helps you to develop skills that will improve your chances in life.
- You have lots of exciting activities and told us how much you enjoyed the recent trip to London to watch the England football game against Montenegro.
- The leaders of your school make sure you are safe and secure.
- You have an excellent awareness of how to keep fit and you lead healthy lives.

We are asking your school to do one thing to help it become even better.

- To check that all teachers plan clear aims for their lessons so that you all know what is expected of you.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Denise Morris
Lead inspector

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