

Cobourg Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100782
Local Authority	Southwark
Inspection number	307479
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Sue Vale

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	297
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Fred Sharrock
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Evans
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2006
School address	Cobourg Road London SE5 0JD
Telephone number	020 7703 2583
Fax number	020 7708 0756

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Cobourg Primary School is located in an area of Southwark that has pockets of significant economic deprivation. Two years ago the school was inspected and was judged to have improved significantly and came out of special measures. The proportion of families, currently almost two thirds, joining the school who are new to learning English is increasing each year. There are 32 different languages spoken. There is a higher than average number of pupils identified with learning difficulties and disabilities, many of whom have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Around a third of the pupils are entitled to free school meals.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Cobourg Primary is a good school. Pupils achieve well and there is a rising trend in standards throughout the school. The highly effective headteacher is very well supported by the deputy head and senior management team; they continue to lead the school from strength to strength. It is the headteacher's drive and determination to move the school forward that is paramount to its rapid success. Consequently, the school has good capacity to improve.

Pastoral support is very good and underpins the pupils' good personal development and well-being. This is recognised by parents, who are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. As one wrote, 'I find Cobourg Primary school to be a very warm and welcoming place, one that is very conducive to children's learning and development.'

Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage. Results have also improved in the last two years in the national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6. In 2007, results show that standards were above average by the end of Year 6 and this reflects good achievement overall. Whilst there was a dip in standards achieved in Year 2 last year the current standards in Year 2 show that pupils are reaching higher standards that are in line with those expected for their age. Pupils' progress through the school has not been consistent because of variations in the quality of teaching in the past. It is now on a more even keel although there is still scope for some teaching to be of consistently better quality. Its impact has been strengthened by rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.

The school has been extremely successful in ensuring that the great majority of pupils, a higher proportion than in most schools, attain the expected level for eleven year-olds by the time they leave. The school recognises that the proportion of pupils attaining the highest level by the end of Year 6 is below average in English and mathematics but that many more pupils achieve the higher levels in science.

There is a good curriculum and it is enriched by a wide range of activities. However, the transition from the Foundation Stage to the Year 1 curriculum is not as smooth as it should be.

Nevertheless it supports those children who are new to learning English particularly well so that their spoken language develops quickly. This is much appreciated by the parents. The school's link with a school in Germany gives a wonderful opportunity for pupils in Year 5 to visit and experience life there. This contributes to the pupils' considerable enjoyment of school. Staff know their pupils well and relationships are good, both between pupils and between adults and pupils. They provide a good quality of care, support and consequently pupils feel safe, and the majority respond by behaving well. Learning mentors and the 'place2be' support those pupils who face more challenging behaviour. This results in pupils feeling that they belong and in developing a more positive self-esteem. The school gives appropriate time to the healthy eating agenda and in developing physical exercise and awareness amongst pupils, so that they develop a good understanding of healthy living.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children receive a good start to their education in the well-organised Foundation Stage. The majority of children enter the Nursery with very low communication and language skills, and personal, social and emotional development. The staff rightly focus on supporting children in these aspects. This results in children making good progress across all the areas of learning, so

that an increasing number of children leave the Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with skills and understanding that are broadly in line with what is expected for their age. There has been a significant improvement in children's ability to link sounds and letters. Writing remains a relatively weaker skill. The environment inside and outside is used well to provide children with interesting experiences. Communications with parents are satisfactory although there is limited involvement with some parents when their children first start school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good.
- Ensure the smooth transition from Foundation Stage to Year 1 through a curriculum that fully meets the needs of all children.
- Try to involve parents more when their children first start school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils do well irrespective of their background and ability because of the strong leadership and management team driving up standards. When they start in the Nursery, children have much weaker language skills and personal and emotional skills than might be expected for their age. They make good progress to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 2 in reading and mathematics. Despite some very good work being undertaken in activities such as 'big write', this remains an area where standards can be raised further. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and those who are new to learning English make equally as good progress as their peers. This, together with good teaching, good support from teaching assistants, along with counselling support in the Place2be and learning mentors is why pupils achieve well. Effective classroom management and teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is enabling pupils to maintain a good rate of progress in Years 3 to 6. As a result, by the end of Year 6, standards are above average, with many pupils achieving at the higher levels of the national curriculum in science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. As one parent commented, 'the school is somewhere my child feels proud to be a part of'. Pupils speak warmly of their time in school and feel safe. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. Most pupils behave well and enjoy their lessons; those who manifest behaviour that is more challenging are dealt with well by the staff. Their increasingly good basic skills equip them well for the next stage of their education. Attendance has improved and is now satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are increasingly reflective learners who become confident to express ideas clearly in many situations. This was seen in an outstanding literacy lesson in Year 6 where pupils were vociferous in expressing their feelings and emotions very well. Pupils say that there is no bullying and that any disputes are quickly settled. Pupils enjoy representing others as members of school council.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. This is reflected in the good progress and achievement made by pupils. High expectations of what pupils can achieve, and good behaviour management enhance the good attitudes, which pupils show to learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and their detailed planning leads to the majority of lessons being stimulating and challenging for pupils. However, this good teaching is not yet consistent across the school. In the few satisfactory lessons seen, although well planned, the work provided for the pupils was not always matched well enough to their individual needs. In addition, in some lessons, the pace is too slow so that pupils do not make as much progress as they should in their learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and those new to learning English, are well supported through a good range of provision, including very good support from teaching assistants which is well matched to the pupils' needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. The school has responded to the need to raise attainment in the core subjects with a high focus on literacy, numeracy and science. This has been effective in ensuring that all pupils make good progress in these areas. Provision for music is good and enables some younger pupils to learn to play a recorder, older pupils to participate in the gospel choir and be involved in a range of musical experiences including the Samba band. The curriculum is enhanced by enrichment activities such as visits to places of worship, the local theatre and museums. In addition, visitors bring in different cultural and sporting experiences. All of this supports pupils' achievements well. However, the curriculum in Year 1 is not linked closely enough to the well-constructed programme in Reception to ensure a smooth transition for the pupils from the Foundation Stage to Year 1.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The staff and governors ensure a good level of care for all pupils. Appropriate steps are taken to ensure pupils' well-being. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are rigorous, as are health and safety procedures, including risk assessments. There are good opportunities to support those pupils with emotional and behavioural needs and to help them to realise their emotions and to share their feelings with an adult. This is helping to raise pupils' self-esteem. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils are aware of their targets through the big writing programme and in some cases given very clear feedback through the marking system as to how to improve their work. This is not the case in other subjects such as mathematics and reading.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

High quality teamwork and effective leadership provided by the headteacher and her deputy underpin the rapid progress made since the last inspection. This has contributed very well to

the rising standards that have been achieved in a short space of time. The motivated and stable staff, expect pupils to give of their best, and is another reason why standards have risen rapidly in the last three years, and why pupils are achieving as well as they do. A clear vision by the leadership team ensures that the school is rightly focused on the way forward for the best interests of the pupils. The school successfully promotes cohesion within its community and there is a strong commitment to ensuring that all its pupils' needs are met. Governance is good and governors effectively support the school. They have a good understanding of the issues facing it, and are increasingly adept at holding it to account.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	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 disabilities make progress	2

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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the 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?	2

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?	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 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

24 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cobourg Primary School, London, SE5 0JD

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome when we came to visit your school. Yours is a good school and it has improved very well since its last inspection. This is what we found out.

- You work hard and are starting to make quicker progress in your learning.
- Your headteacher and all the other staff look after you very well.
- The standards, which you reach, are improving each year.
- Your teachers teach you well and many of your lessons are fun and interesting.
- You learn about lots of different things.
- Most of you behave well.
- The school is very well led and managed by your headteacher and the senior management team.

In order to make the school even better; I have asked you headteacher, governors and staff to:

- ensure that teaching is consistently good
- ensure the smooth transition from Foundation Stage to Year 1 through a curriculum that fully meets the needs of all the children
- try to involve parents more when their children first start school.

Thank you once again and we wish you good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sue Vale

Lead Inspector