

Cobham Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	118257
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312858
Inspection date	1 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Eira Gill

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	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Ramsey
Headteacher	Gerald Sperling
Date of previous school inspection	29 March 2004
School address	The Street Cobham Gravesend DA12 3BN
Telephone number	01474 814373
Fax number	01474 814373

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Amended Report Addendum

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: • provision and achievement in the Foundation Stage • achievement in writing • opportunities for pupils to develop recording skills • the quality of teachers' marking • how effectively leaders and managers bring about improvement by setting and using targets. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons and a scrutiny of pupils' work. Discussions took place with pupils, staff, governors and parents. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in such detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Children's attainment on entry is above average. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average and a very small minority of pupils have a statement of special educational need.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Cobham is a good school. It has made good improvement and has a strong sense of community. All pupils are valued equally. Links with parents are effective and they are very appreciative of the efforts made by all staff; one typical written comment was, 'The headteacher and staff give 120 per cent commitment to the school. We are more than satisfied with our children's progress and well-being'. Good leadership and management as well as effective strategic direction from the governing body ensure that pupils' academic achievement is good and that standards reached by Year 6 are well above average.

Children make a positive start in the Reception class, where they make good progress because teaching and learning are good. Provision and achievement have improved well since the last inspection and children are happy and well cared for. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. Standards in Year 2 and pupils' achievement are good. Standards are well above average in writing and mathematics, and above average in reading. In mathematics, standards noticeably improved in 2007 from previous years.

For the past two years in Year 6, attainment has been very high in English, mathematics and science, reflecting good overall achievement. In 2007, pupils' achievement in reading was outstanding. In writing, achievement was satisfactory. Better assessment and tracking procedures are now in place to ensure that pupils whose progress gives cause for concern are identified. Recent assessment shows that the number of pupils working at the higher levels in writing has increased this year.

The quality of teaching and learning is now good and sometimes outstanding. Very high expectations of the pupils result in good behaviour and a high output of work. Even young pupils in Year 2 are encouraged to evaluate their own and other pupils' work. The school's success in promoting pupils' personal qualities as effectively as their academic skills shows in the way pupils sustain concentration, enjoy lessons and work with others effectively. As one girl said, 'I like working hard and playing hard'. Imaginative planning and a significant challenge were evident in some classes and the sense of enjoyment was very high. Although teachers refer to pupils' targets during lessons, they rarely refer to them when marking pupils' work. Marking is very thorough but pupils are not given enough time to respond to marking by correcting and improving their work.

The school provides a good curriculum, with improvement in the links between subjects. Pupils' understanding of Egyptian history as well as their speaking and listening skills improved noticeably through drama during the 'Egyptian Day'. There is good evidence of above-average skills and keen enjoyment in learning in art and design, and design and technology. There is good provision for younger pupils to write at length in different subjects but the planning for this aspect in Years 3 to 6 is not coordinated well enough, and sometimes undemanding worksheets limit pupils' experience of drafting and improving their work. Enrichment of the curriculum is outstanding, with opportunities for pupils from Year 1 upwards to participate in many after-school sporting and other activities organised by teachers and other providers. Annual visits and a range of visitors, as well as residential weeks for older pupils, contribute very well to their good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy.

In response to good care, support and guidance, the pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils behave well and enjoy good relationships, and the high level of their basic skills means that they are very well prepared for the future. Pupils express their views confidently

and contribute well to their community. Members of the school council take their responsibilities very seriously and comment favourably; for example, 'I enjoy absolutely everything about this school'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is generally good but is reduced on occasion, despite the school's efforts, by too many holidays taken during term time. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is effective and supported well by good links with parents and outside agencies.

The headteacher promotes a strong team ethic. He receives very effective support from his deputy and good support from other senior managers, staff and governors. The action plan in place to bring about improvement is based on good self-assessment. Leaders have a good understanding of what needs to be put into place to bring about further improvement, and their capacity is developing well. All pupils have challenging long-term and short-term targets to guide their progress and there are indications that these are having a positive effect on raising standards in writing, in particular. An important improvement has been to implement a more efficient system for tracking pupils' progress. The information gathered from this process is being used effectively to ensure that work set matches pupils' learning needs.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage both in and out of doors is good and much improved. Because of the strong care provided for them, practically all children settle quickly. Good teaching and learning ensure that the children make good progress across all areas of learning. Almost all are likely to exceed the early learning goals set for their age. As one parent notes, 'My son has made an amazing amount of progress since he started school. He settled instantly!' Children are given a wide range of opportunities to initiate learning. There is now an appropriate balance between adult-led and child-initiated learning. The school is aware that the children's speaking and listening skills are relatively weaker on entry to Year 1. Structured learning programmes now focus more closely on improving language, although they have been introduced too recently for their effect to be measured.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing in Years 3 to 6 by ensuring that all pupils are given more opportunities to improve their skills in all subjects of the curriculum so that they make as much progress as possible.
- Give pupils more time in lessons to improve their work in line with the marking comments made by teachers.

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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	1
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	2
The behaviour of learners	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	1

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

6 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cobham Primary School, Cobham, Kent DA12 3BN

This letter is to tell you what I found out during the recent inspection. I really enjoyed coming in to the school to meet you and I would like to thank those of you who took the time to talk to me and show me what you do, especially the school council. I was very interested to hear what you had to say about your school. I found your school to be good and could sense that you and your parents quite rightly feel the same.

Here are the things that I found to be best about your school:

- You make good progress and the standards you reach in Year 6 are much higher than in most schools.
- Your good achievement, relationships and behaviour reflect your hard work and the good teaching and care provided by the adults.
- You work hard in lessons and you are encouraged to think about how well you are doing and how you could do even better.
- You clearly know how to live healthy, safe lives and you show that you are learning to do this well. It made me very happy to see how much you enjoy your lessons.
- Your headteacher and senior managers lead and manage the school successfully.

Here are the things that the school could do better:

- I have asked the headteacher to make sure your skills in writing improve in subjects like history, geography and science and that you are given more of a chance to write in your own style rather than just filling in worksheets.
- I noticed that your teachers always mark your work so that you know how well you have done. I have now asked if they would give you more time in lessons to do what they have suggested in the marking so that you can make better progress.

You can help by continuing to work hard and by making sure you are given more opportunities in lessons to improve your writing skills.

Very best wishes

Eira Gill ? Lead Inspector

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Eira Gill 😊

Lead Inspector