

Cobham Primary School

Inspection dates

14–15 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The drive, enthusiasm and vision of the headteacher have transformed the school from a good, high-achieving school into an outstanding one. As a result, leaders, staff, pupils and parents and carers are rightly proud of the school and fully committed to its motto of, 'Caring, Proud, Successful'.
- The outstanding quality of teaching and learning in the Reception class means that Cobham children get off to an excellent start. This is built on so that, in each key stage, pupils make very good progress and become excellent readers, writers and mathematicians.
- The strong emphasis on developing a wide range of interests and talents means that pupils also achieve very well in other subjects such as science, music, physical education, humanities and the arts. Overall, therefore, pupils' achievement is outstanding.
- Over time and across the school, the quality of teaching is outstanding. The great majority of lessons are carefully planned to build on earlier learning, spark pupils' interest and challenge them to push themselves that little bit further every day. Teachers and teaching assistants use good questioning to check how well pupils are learning, help them understand, make connections between different ideas and use what they already know to make leaps in their learning.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are outstanding. Excellent personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of the school's success and underpins all of the school's strengths.
- Each member of the relatively new senior team is an outstanding teacher and this means that consistently excellent practice is distributed throughout the school. Careful planning for leaders' professional development means that they are well prepared and are making an increasingly strong contribution to leadership and management.
- Under the very skilful direction of the headteacher, including rigorous monitoring, high expectations and sharp focus on pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and education as a whole have improved significantly since the last inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons. Most of these were observed jointly with the headteacher. They also made a number of short visits to lessons. They listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of early reading, letters and sounds in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. They discussed writing with a group of Year 6 pupils and checked the quality of writing in different subjects across the school.
- They observed the school's work and analysed a number of documents, including the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, and leaders' monitoring of teaching. They scrutinised the school's own data on pupils' current progress including the progress of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium.
- The inspectors had meetings with staff, groups of pupils, five members of the governing body and with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed information from 63 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) and met some parents and carers informally at the start of the school day.
- They took into account the views that staff expressed in the questionnaires they completed and pupils' views in the school's own surveys.

Inspection team

Sheena MacDonald, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Bill James

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average sized primary school. The pupils are taught in seven classes.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs is well below average.
- The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average and very few pupils are eligible for the additional pupil premium funding.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of consistently outstanding teaching even further through coaching and mentoring between staff.
- Build on the strong start already made in developing the impact of leaders new to the senior leadership team so they extend their influence and impact.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- When children arrive in Reception they generally have above average levels of skills. They build very successfully on this and make consistently high rates of progress throughout the school so that, by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are significantly above average and continuing to improve. Impressive numbers of pupils exceed the standards expected for their ages in all subjects. Pupils use their skills in English, communication and mathematics to enhance their learning across the curriculum so that they also enjoy and achieve very well in other subjects.
- In the past, the very small number of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those eligible for free school meals have not made the same rate of progress as other pupils. The school's increasingly careful checking of these pupils' progress has led to much better support, both in class and in additional individual support paid for by the pupil premium funding. This means that this group are now making similar progress to other pupils.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are outstanding and continually developed through well-planned opportunities to discuss and explore their ideas. For example, in the forest school and other outdoor learning activities, adults skilfully interacted with the reception children so their play became increasingly imaginative.
- Pupils are confident readers and younger pupils use their knowledge of letters and sounds very well to read unfamiliar words. Their achievement in mathematics is also impressive, particularly using what they already know to solve unfamiliar problems. For example, in two outstanding mathematics lessons, pupils showed excellent recall of important mathematical facts. They used their understanding of rounding up and decimals to make sensible estimates and check if their calculations about areas of triangles and rectangles were likely to be correct.
- The quality of pupils' work and their progress in lessons and over time are consistently high. Pupils are keen to learn and are proud of their achievements. They use various strategies to think about what they have done well, and how to do better. For example, Year 6 pupils skilfully identified features such as metaphor and simile which they had used to enhance the quality of their writing.
- All of the parents and carers who responded to the Parent View questionnaire and those who wrote to inspectors are rightly confident that their children make good progress in school.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Parents and carers, pupils and inspectors agree that outstanding achievement is the result of consistently good and often outstanding teaching.
- There is a strong focus on getting the learning right in every lesson with imaginative activities which promote independent learning, challenge and enthusiasm. This, along with very positive relationships and an ethos where success is celebrated and pupils are confident to have a go even if they make mistakes, means that pupils love learning and relish challenges.
- Teachers have very good understanding of how to build series of lessons to deepen pupils' understanding and skills. Teachers and teaching assistants set out clear objectives and steps for success. They then check the learning and adapt the activities throughout the lesson to make sure pupils have the right level of support and challenge.
- Activities are well planned to match the pupils' abilities. For example, in the very lively and interesting Reception and Year 1 early reading sessions, the activities really extended the pupils' understanding and use of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). In a Year 2

phonics session, the teaching assistant gave a small group of pupils high-quality support and this helped them to achieve well.

- The adults' effective questioning and outstanding teaching in subjects such as personal, social and health education promote the development of pupils' thinking and communication skills. For example, in an outstanding philosophy lesson, activities were carefully and imaginatively planned to provoke pupils' mature reflection and high levels of reasoning.
- Teachers act on the points for improvement which come out of leaders' monitoring of their work. As a result, changes they make to their teaching lead to impressive improvements such as in the use of assessment for learning and the teaching of writing.
- In the very few lessons seen during the inspection when teaching was not quite as effective as the rest, it was because the adults were doing too much and this was getting in the way of letting pupils get on with working and learning independently.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Parents and carers, staff and pupils all agree that pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are exemplary and make an important contribution to the success of the school. Pupils are polite and caring while still being lively and independent thinkers.
- They understand very well the link between good behaviour and success in learning. In other words, they know how to be naughty but choose not to be because they like getting on well together and they want to achieve well in their learning.
- They understand the importance of being part of a team and that everyone contributes to the success of the team. They fully recognise their own contribution and, at the same time, they understand the importance of listening carefully and encouraging and valuing the views and opinions of others.
- Pupils of all ages have confidence in themselves and take responsibility for their own actions. They have a very good understanding of how to stay safe, from older pupils' good understanding of e-safety to reception children immediately following the safety routine when dogs came into the forest.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to take on, and in some cases train for, important roles and responsibilities. Their contributions as school councillors, peer mediators, lunchtime helpers and gamesters in the playground make a valuable contribution to improving the school and everyone's well-being.
- Behaviour is sensitively managed and pupils respond to the rewards system and high expectations so that poor behaviour and bullying are very rare indeed. Pupils are confident that if there is something they cannot sort out themselves then an adult will be on hand to help. Pupils who find behaving well more difficult are skilfully supported and their behaviour improves.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school can be seen in their consistently, and improving, above average attendance. They come to school on time, every day ready to learn.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is the main driving force behind the school's improvement and her clear vision for excellent education is backed up by a very 'hands on' approach. Indeed she gives the impression of being everywhere at once, including meeting pupils and parents and carers at the start of every day as the 'lollypop lady'!
- She has fostered an exceptionally strong team spirit. As one child said, 'We are a team and the headteacher is the leader of the gang!' As a result, senior leaders, staff, governors and pupils pull together and there is a strong belief that everyone shares the responsibility for ensuring the school's success.

- Clearly a school is not just about one person and the headteacher is building a very strong team of leaders. For example, strong leadership means that excellent Early Years Foundation Stage practice has an influence beyond the Reception class. This is particularly noticeable in the teaching of early reading and also in the good practice seen in Year 1 where skilful adult interventions capitalise on the children's interests to drive the learning forward.
 - Opportunities such as joint monitoring and professional training are enabling relatively inexperienced senior staff to develop excellent skills. Although their roles and influence are still developing, these new leaders are already making a strong contribution, particularly as role models for excellent teaching.
 - The performance management of staff is built on rigorous and accurate checking of their lessons, their planning and pupils' progress. Staff have specific targets which rightly focus on pupils' achievement and which also build on staff interests. For example, one member of staff has gained expertise in philosophy for children. Staff pay levels are increasingly well matched to their expertise and responsibilities.
 - The curriculum is vibrant, very well planned and meets the needs and interests of all pupils exceptionally well. Pupils relish the many opportunities to develop a wide variety of skills and talents. For example, during the inspection, Year 6 pupils very enthusiastically took part in a violin session on one day and a cycling challenge event on the next.
 - The excellent personal, social and health education curriculum includes opportunities to explore ideas, think about differences between people, their points of view and cultures and this contributes to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's commitment to ensuring equality is evident in its targeting of additional support to ensure that all pupils now make equally outstanding progress.
 - Accurate self-evaluation means that school improvement plans tackle the right areas for further improvement and success is evaluated through measurable targets related to how well pupils achieve both academically and personally.
 - **The governance of the school:**

Governors carry out their duties rigorously. For example, the systems and routines to make sure pupils are safe in school are exemplary. This is supported by the parents and carers who believe very strongly that their children are safe, happy and well looked after in school. Governors are very well informed and trained, have regular access to, and understand, external and internal assessment information and they come into school regularly to events and lessons. As a result, they have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths, the improvements that have taken place and the areas where further improvement is needed. They influence the direction of the school by asking insightful questions, being involved in recruitment of staff and improvement planning, and supporting performance management systems. They have a good understanding, and are involved in making decisions about how funding, including the pupil premium, is directed in order to achieve improvement.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	118257
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	403343

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 of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Cresswell
Headteacher	Jacqui Saunders
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2007
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