

Inspection of Cobden Primary School

Cobden Road, Farnley, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS12 5LA

Inspection dates:	8 to 10 July 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Inadequate
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has not acted with sufficient urgency to address weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. This means that the overall educational offer to pupils is too variable. The school does not provide staff with the support they need to perform their roles effectively or bring about the improvements necessary to enhance pupils' learning and education.

Pupils enjoy attending Cobden Primary School. Most pupils behave well in lessons. However, there are occasions when some pupils disrupt learning. The school does not review pupils' behaviour sufficiently well. Consequently, in this area and others there is limited understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school does not evaluate sufficiently how well the school improvement measures that it puts in place work.

Pupils benefit from a range of additional trips and visits. For example, older pupils attend an overnight residential and many pupils learn the skills of skipping to present at a local festival. Pupils feel safe and learn how to stay safe through the school's personal, social and health education curriculum.

Teaching does not meet the needs of pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well enough. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well as they should and are not prepared well enough for their next steps.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Pupils have not developed sufficient knowledge and skills in writing. For example, pupils in the earlier stages of learning to write are asked to complete complex tasks before they have mastered the basic skills. This is because the writing curriculum does not clearly set out the sequence of learning. Often, statements about the learning aims of the curriculum are too broad. Consequently, teachers are not clear what skills and knowledge pupils need to practise. As a result, they do not achieve well in writing.

The curriculum in most subjects is coherently designed. The school has considered what pupils need to learn and how their knowledge will build over time. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge in most subjects. However, the school has not ensured that the activities that teachers assign to pupils build on what they already know. This means that some pupils, including those with SEND, do not achieve as well as they should.

The school's phonics programme is well established. Children learn to read as soon as they start school. This impacts positively on most pupils who are at the earlier stages of reading. Those pupils who need extra help receive effective support. Pupils now get off to a strong start in their reading. The school has recently introduced a reading programme which allows teachers to use a range of appropriate texts to develop pupils' vocabulary. They practise saying new words using strategies such as 'echo' reading. However, the school has not sufficiently developed its strategies to check on what pupils know and remember. Previous weaknesses in the school's phonics provision mean some pupils still

have gaps in their learning in key stage 2. The school is now addressing this. This means pupils are beginning to catch up.

There are effective processes in place to identify the needs of pupils with SEND, including training for staff. However, training does not support staff to adapt learning for pupils with SEND in an effective and consistent manner. In lessons, pupils with SEND do not get the support that they need to reach the same goals as other pupils. The school does not have appropriate oversight of the support provided and the achievement of pupils with SEND. The school has not recognised that these pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

The early years curriculum does not break down the knowledge that children should learn into appropriate steps. As a result, children do not build their learning well enough as they move through the year and are not prepared well enough for Year 1. The school has not acted quickly enough to address weaknesses in the early years provision. However, children in the early years do settle well into school life. There are positive relationships between staff and children. This means that pupils are happy and settled.

Many pupils do not attend school regularly. They miss out on vital learning and the wider aspects of school life. Until recently, the school did not have effective systems in place to spot patterns of absence. The school does not follow up on pupils' low attendance effectively enough. Recently, an external partner has been commissioned by the school to work with families to improve pupils' attendance. There is evidence of some improvement in pupils' attendance, but this is in the early stages.

Governors do not ensure that they have all the available information to evaluate the effectiveness of the school successfully. As a result, they have not held school leaders to account or ensured that pupils are provided with a high-quality education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There are some inconsistencies in the way that safeguarding procedures are implemented. The school does not routinely evaluate how well staff follow these. This means it is unsure whether the school's policies are followed in some aspects of the school's safeguarding procedures.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's efforts to improve the school lack clarity, urgency and effectiveness. As a result, improvements are either not sustained over time or happen too slowly to make a meaningful difference. This includes some aspects of safeguarding, such as reviewing procedures in a timely manner. The school should ensure that its plans for improvement are well designed and effective.

- Governors do not have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need improvement. As a result, they are not able to hold school leaders to account effectively. Governors should ensure they use robust and reliable evidence to check that leaders' actions have a positive impact on the quality of education that pupils receive.
- The school has not established an effective approach to the teaching of writing, including in the early years. As a result, some pupils do not develop the foundational skills of writing quickly enough. The school should continue to review its approach to the teaching of writing and ensure that all staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to support pupils in embedding this essential skill effectively and consistently.
- Across different subjects, including in the early years, the activities that teachers design often do not match what pupils already know or align well enough with the goals of the curriculum. This limits how well pupils learn. The school should ensure that curriculum implementation helps pupils learn and remember the knowledge they need to be successful in the next stage of their education.
- Teaching is not adapted successfully to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Consequently, pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they should. The school should ensure that staff have the expertise to adapt learning sufficiently well for pupils with SEND.
- Too many pupils, including those with SEND, do not attend school regularly enough. This negatively affects pupils' achievement and their wider personal development. The school should quickly identify and address barriers to high attendance and strengthen support for pupils who need it.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	107963
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10379334
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gill Knuttson
Headteacher	Paula Head
Website	www.cobden.leeds.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	30 November and 1 December 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection started on 8 July 2025. It was paused in line with Ofsted inspections and visits: Deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence policy. Inspectors returned on 10 July 2025 to complete the inspection.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the school business manager. They also met with the special educational needs coordinator and subject leaders.
- Inspectors also spoke with a local authority representative.
- Inspectors spoke to members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also reviewed other subjects by looking at books and talking to leaders. This included the provision for writing.
- Inspectors listened to a range of pupils from different year groups reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses made by parents and carers to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also spoke with some parents at the beginning and end of the school day.

Inspection team

Kate Hall, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Hannah Millett

His Majesty's Inspector

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