

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Comberbach Nursery and Primary School

Mather Drive, Comberbach, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 6BG

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 October 2024

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The head of school is Holly Young. This school is part of Weaver Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Annette Williams, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Julian Cobley. There is also an executive headteacher, Annette Williams, who is responsible for this school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of this exceptional school. The school has established an influential culture built around respect, curiosity and 'trying our best'. Pupils are inspired to live out these values and this is reflected in their exemplary conduct, interactions and work. Pupils see themselves as leaders in their school. They know that their contribution matters. Comberbach Nursery and Primary School is a vibrant and happy place to learn.

The school places no limits on pupils' academic and personal development. The school and the trust have established a curriculum that enables a deep study of each subject. Pupils rise to this ambition. The school brings this curriculum to life for pupils by providing carefully planned visits. These visits inspire pupils' thirst for knowledge. Pupils link the wide experiences that they are given to their new learning. They find this learning irresistible.

The school applies its high expectations of behaviour and routines consistently well. This supports pupils to manage and regulate their own behaviour. If pupils struggle to manage

their own behaviour, adults provide effective support to help them to get back on track. Pupils recognise the importance of their learning. This helps to ensure that lessons are calm and focused. All pupils understand that what they learn now will support their ambitions for the future.

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

Working together, the school and the trust have created an ambitious curriculum. This curriculum supports pupils to successfully remember their learning. Pupils quickly become confident and resilient learners. Teachers skilfully use this curriculum to create interesting lessons. Pupils find this learning captivating. They talk confidently about what they know.

The school quickly identifies the additional needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Skilled staff provide carefully targeted support so that pupils with SEND can master new knowledge and use this independently. The school ensures that these pupils are supported to learn the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

The way that the school's curriculum and teaching enable pupils to connect their knowledge together is exemplary. Across the curriculum, staff design activities that allow pupils to demonstrate their learning and answer important questions. For example, in mathematics, teachers build in frequent opportunities for pupils to practise the knowledge that they have gained so that they become fluent. In the early years, children quickly master number, including through carefully designed opportunities to learn through everyday play. By the time that children begin Year 1, they are confident mathematicians.

Adults check routinely that pupils have remembered their learning. If pupils struggle, adults provide precise support to help them to keep up. To this end, pupils successfully develop their knowledge across the curriculum. For instance, pupils explained in detail how Neil Armstrong was a pioneer, inspiring future exploration. They explained how they knead their dough to remove air bubbles and allow their biscuits to rise evenly.

Children in the early years get off to a flying start with phonics. From the beginning of their time in the Nursery provision, staff help even the youngest children to develop and confidently use a wide vocabulary. They expertly teach Reception-aged children to read. Children master phonics quickly and become fluent readers. Older pupils receive an exceptional reading curriculum. They read widely and often. The school invests in carefully chosen literature. Skilled staff share this literature with pupils daily. This inspires pupils to read with expression and bring stories to life.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils develop an impressive understanding of how to look after their health and well-being, and how to stay safe online. They talk about diversity with considerable maturity. Pupils learn how to hold differing views and offer contrary opinions. This informs the deep respect with which pupils treat everyone around them. The school makes sure that pupils learn about enterprise, finances and future careers. This work contributes significantly to pupils' ambitions for their own futures. The school has established a leadership pathway for pupils. This inspires pupils to contribute as leaders in all aspects of school life. There are

numerous roles for pupils to enjoy. Some pupils work as elected members of the pupil leadership team, while others become librarians and digital leaders. Pupils link their leadership to democracy. They take their campaigns for elected office very seriously. Pupils know that their voice matters and that it makes a difference.

Those responsible for governance are extremely knowledgeable about the school. They use their experience well to challenge and support the school in equal measure. They check carefully that the school is taking the right actions in the best interests of pupils. The school and trust deliver highly effective support and professional development for staff at all levels. This support has a very positive impact on workload and well-being for all staff. Staff are very proud to work at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Comberbach Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in June 2016.

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 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	147809
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10348372
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julian Cobley
CEO of the trust	Annette Williams
Head of school	Holly Young
Website	www.comberbach.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Comberbach Nursery and Primary School converted to become an academy school in May 2020. When its predecessor school, Comberbach Primary School was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good for overall effectiveness.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- The school has a nursery provision for two- and three-year-old children.
- The school runs a breakfast club and after-school clubs for pupils in the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in this evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers.
- The inspector held a meeting with the chair of the local education committee and the chair of trustees. The inspector also held a meeting with the CEO of the trust and director of learning.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of other documentation, including governor meeting minutes and leaders' evaluation of the school.
- The inspector took account of the pupil survey and spoke informally to pupils to gather their views on school life.
- To gather the views of parents and carers, the inspector took account of the responses from Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspector took account of the staff survey and met formally with staff to gather their views.

Inspection team

Jen Sloan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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