

# Cambo First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122232
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	314242
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Scott

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	35
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Pamela Walker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Paula Cummings
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 October 2003
<b>School address</b>	Cambo Morpeth Northumberland NE61 4BE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01670 774210
<b>Fax number</b>	01670 774210

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<b>Age group</b>	4–9
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a small school that serves the village of Cambo and surrounding countryside. All pupils are from White British families and fewer pupils than average receive free school meals. There is a higher than average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including a number with speech problems. The school is part of a federation with two other first schools.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Cambo First School is a good school. Several aspects of its work are outstanding. It has an excellent atmosphere in which every pupil and, indeed, every adult, matters. Aply supported by governors and wholeheartedly endorsed by parents, the school provides a happy and exciting learning environment, an excellent mantle of care and a whole raft of exciting activities that motivate pupils. Under the shrewd and very effective leadership of the headteacher, the school has made good progress since the previous inspection and is well poised to develop further.

It is clear why parents are unanimous in their praise for the school's ethos. Their children love their school and become very caring and sociable individuals. They look after one another instinctively and develop a high level of social responsibility, whether influencing school decisions or mingling very fruitfully with the local community. They live very healthy lifestyles and behave well. They acquire an excellent attitude to learning because of the inspiring surroundings and the good expectations of staff.

Pupils make good progress throughout the school and achieve well by the end of Year 4. Standards tend to vary, reflecting the differences between each of the small year groups. By the end of the Reception year, children exceed the goals expected of five year olds. Standards by Years 2 and 4 are usually above average, although mathematics sometimes veers closer to average in Year 4. All pupils achieve equally well, helped by the low pupil to staff ratio, which ensures close personal attention, whatever the pupils' needs. School records show that pupils are likely to maintain good standards in the current year.

A particular strength of the school is the imaginative enrichment of the curriculum. Designing a garden with National Trust help, delving into archaeology and alfresco astronomy are just some activities that inspire pupils and broaden their experiences. Teaching is good. Lessons are well structured, well focused and, according to the pupils, fun. However, teachers do not routinely allow enough for the different ways in which pupils learn so that learning activities do not always match their needs, especially in mathematics. Teaching assistants are very skilled and help to give pupils good advice in lessons.

The enthusiasm and creativeness of the headteacher are infectious. Although she is the architect of change in the school, leadership is very much a team affair; as a result, whole-school development is consistent and effective. The partnerships with parents, governors, outside agencies and the newly federated schools accentuate the corporate approach. A typical comment, made by one parent is, 'All the staff have a "can do" attitude, which seems to rub off.' The school embraces change, not for its own sake, but to enhance provision for the pupils. The school is good at recognising its strengths, but not quite as precise in highlighting where it could improve and how this might affect the achievement of pupils. 'My child is thriving ..... in a nourishing environment,' said another parent, reflecting the views of many. 'He has a great educational start to life.'

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The provision in the Reception year is good. Children enter school with skills and abilities expected of children of their age. They work alongside older pupils and the high expectations of teachers produce good progress. This is helped by the right kind of facilities, inside and out, for them to develop skills in independent learning and in looking after themselves. Their

subsequent attainment is higher than is typical of five-year-olds. Parents are happy to support their children's learning because the school is so encouraging. The management of the Foundation Stage is linked tightly with whole-school management and so is equally good. The proximity of older pupils and the same staff ensure a seamless transfer into Year 1.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that pupils' work is more closely matched to their different learning needs, especially in mathematics.
- Ensure that self-evaluation is more precise in identifying shortcomings and how these may affect pupils' achievement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well at the school and standards are above average by Year 4. There are some variations in standards because of the very small year groups. All pupils achieve equally well because of excellent provision for including all pupils. Skills on entry to the Reception class has been gradually falling and is currently typical for four-year-olds.

Pupils make good progress throughout the school. By Year 2, standards have been above average in recent years, as they were in 2006. In 2007, pupils' performance dipped a little, although progress for these pupils was still good because they had had a lower starting point. Standards by Year 4 are usually above average, especially in reading and writing. Writing has improved markedly since the previous inspection. Mathematics standards have varied between average and above average in recent years. In 2006, they were above average but, in 2007, performance fell a little. The school's data show a stronger picture of standards and progress for both the current Years 2 and 4, and reflect the school's move towards more challenging targets.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is excellent. In their time at school, they become very well-balanced, reflective and extremely responsible individuals. They are very comfortable with themselves and have a high self-esteem. As the school governors said, 'Pupils know who they are.' They are very good at looking after themselves and other pupils. The busy playground traffic of wheeled toys is instinctively considerate. All pupils learn to swim, part of a very active lifestyle complemented by a sensible approach to diet. Lunchboxes, for example, are chocolate-free and wholesome.

Pupils love their school. Attendance has been rising and is now above average. They particularly relish the fun activities in lessons and have excellent attitudes to work. Behaviour is good. Pupils are highly responsible, not just through a pro-active school council but in routine activities such as helping to clear up after lunch. Even Reception children get stuck in. Their sense of community is outstanding. Pupils play a full part in the school's family atmosphere and benefit hugely from the local community. Lantern parades, village fete competitions and carol singing in the local cattle mart are but a few instances. A useful link with a Gambian school strengthens pupils' awareness of different cultures. With all these attributes, experience in Young Enterprise and good basic skills, pupils are well prepared to cope with life ahead.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching is good throughout the school. The strong rapport between all staff and pupils creates a purposeful learning environment in lessons, bolstered by the stimulating displays that festoon the classrooms. Space is the current theme and planets drip from the ceiling. Teachers ensure that pupils are clear about what they need to learn. They explain new work well, often adeptly using resources, such as puppets and the interactive whiteboards, so that pupils readily understand. Staff make learning fun so pupils are eager to learn. A phonics trail round school and the lively enactment of a French tale certainly energised the pupils during the inspection. The pace of learning is good, although it occasionally flags when teachers do not set sharp enough deadlines for pupils to complete tasks.

Pupils appreciate the good guidance from all staff in lessons. Marking in books highlights pupils' progress well but sometime remarks are designed more for teachers than pupils. As a result, there are occasions when pupils are not always clear about how they can improve. Teaching assistants are very capable and an integral part of all lessons; vulnerable and lower attaining pupils clearly benefit from their sensitive and skilled support. Teachers' expectations are generally high, especially in allowing for different year groups within one class, but they are well aware of the need to take more account of the different ways in which pupils learn to ensure that the level of challenge is consistently high, especially in mathematics.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It has a strong structure and makes careful allowance for the mixed year classes. The focus on developing key skills has been successful, notably in raising standards in writing, as well as in information and communication technology. The school is currently developing mathematical skills in the same way, with problem-solving as a current priority. The school's inclusiveness means that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from specialist support, especially in speech therapy.

The enrichment of the curriculum is outstanding. The sheer variety of activities offers pupils very valuable experiences. Clubs after school are impressively plentiful for a small school. Close ties with Wallington, a National Trust property close by, provide many exciting experiences, from inspecting a butcher's preparation room to farm visits. Pupils have visited the Farne Islands and helped to devise an orienteering course at nearby Kirkharle, the birthplace of Capability Brown. In the near future, pupils will be camping out overnight in order to stargaze, as part of their space topic.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

The school excels at caring for and supporting its pupils. The formal systems for safeguarding pupils are all firmly in place and meet government requirements. Parents fully appreciate the excellent pastoral care, taken by staff, of their children. Indeed, the open partnership between parents and staff means that pupils' needs are jointly and promptly dealt with as a natural part

of school life. Caring is just second nature. Links with outside agencies support particular needs well. All staff are trained in first aid.

The school has an efficient system for monitoring pupils' progress in their work. As a result, good targets linked to the National Curriculum levels are established to guide pupils. Pupils also have individual targets in literacy and numeracy that help them to know what to do to improve.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed. The very good leadership of the headteacher is evident in her energy, pragmatism and wise approach to education. These factors motivate and guide the school. Parents and governors understandably sing her praises. Although the headteacher is the driving force for the right kind of change, the staff are as one in making this happen. Any initiatives, such as in curriculum enrichment, are wholly agreed and communally developed. Governors too are fully involved. They provide very good support, monitor the school regularly and act as a valuable sounding board.

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The school has a broadly accurate view of itself. Its priorities for improvement are presented in a very well structured development plan. Self-evaluation is good and identifies strengths well. It does not always pinpoint precisely enough where improvements can be made, nor how these may affect pupils' achievement. Imaginative learning experiences, stimulating accommodation and a lively team spirit typify this successful school. These, together with continued good standards, mean that improvement in recent years has been good. Consequently, the school provides good value for money and is in a good position to develop even further.

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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 <sup>1</sup> 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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	1
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

11 October 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Cambo First School, Northumberland, NE61 4BE.

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the inspection of your school. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting you all, watching you work and listening to what you had to say. Your opinions matter and they helped me to get to know your school in a short time.

I can see why you really like your school. It is a good school with some excellent features. You develop extremely well as individuals because of the high level of care and support that all the staff give to you. You become very thoughtful and kind to one another; you behave well and your sense of responsibility in leading a safe and healthy life is admirable. I particularly liked all the excellent activities that you are involved in with the local community and also out of lessons. I am sure you won't forget quickly your exciting trip to the Farne Islands, for example.

The standards of your work are higher than many other pupils of your age and you achieve well. This is because you work hard and also because, as you told me, your teachers make learning fun and expect a lot from you. Your writing has improved recently, but your mathematics could be better and I have asked the school to find new ways of improving it. One way of doing this is for the staff to make sure that the work matches the way in which you learn best. I am sure you will rise to the challenge of problem-solving.

all the adults at school have your best interests at heart and so produce the delightful family atmosphere that your parents like so much. The school has developed well, and your headteacher and all the staff have lots of ideas to make school even better. It is important, though, that all the activities directly benefit your progress in literacy and numeracy, as well as your personal development.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Lead Inspector