Local Authority School Improvement Partner Report 2024 – 2025

Cambo First School			
Headteacher	Paula Cummings		
Chair of Governors	Pam Walker		
School Improvement Partner	Alan Johnston		
Dates of meetings	**Autumn:** 9th December 2024	**Spring:** 3rd April 2025	**Summer: 16th July 2025**

Focus of the Visits

Autumn Term:

- Review the new school development plan.
- Review outcomes for 2023-24.
- Review of the school's curriculum for all foundation subjects to agree strengths and areas for development.
- Discuss how the school intend to develop their curriculum so that pupils know more and remember more over time.

Spring Term:

- Review the work to ensure the curriculum is fully developed for technology and discuss the plans to review the computing curriculum.
- Look at the work done to develop the 'teacher assessment in primary science' and evidence that it is a tool to providing a supportive structure to evaluate and develop assessment processes.
- Discuss progress within the alliance – how is it helping curriculum development?
- Spend time in both classrooms, observing and talking to staff about their mental health and well-being.

Summer Term:

Last Inspection: December 2023

Overall Effectiveness	Good	**Quality of Education**	Good	**Behaviours and Attitudes**	Good	**Personal Development**	Good	**Leadership and Management**	Good	**Early Years**	Good

Inspection AFIs

- The school's curriculum is not fully developed for all foundation subjects. Sometimes, learning activities do not secure pupils' understanding of key knowledge. This means that occasionally, pupils do not build on prior learning or make connections between concepts taught. The school should continue to develop their curriculum so that pupils know more and remember more over time.
- The school does not routinely keep written records of low-level concerns that have been identified by staff in relation to safeguarding This means that sometimes there is not a clear chronology of the actions taken by the school. The school should ensure that low level concerns are recorded in writing as well as being reported verbally.

Link to the school's Ofsted page: Cambo First School

The school currently regards its strengths to be:

- The school provides children with an excellent education through creative, broad and balanced learning opportunities. The shared aspiration of all is to help all pupils to perform to their maximum potential, progressing academically, physically and socially in an atmosphere where they can grow and acquire appropriate knowledge, skills, values and attitudes.
- The school provides an exemplary curriculum, which reflects the school's setting in its community, and exceptional care, guidance and support.
- Cambo is an inclusive school, where everyone has equal opportunities to develop their talents and demonstrate their accomplishments.
- There is a strong love of reading across the school and early reading is a strength.
- Attendance is exceptionally good and is consistently over 97%.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school.

The school currently regards the areas for development to be:

- The ongoing curriculum reviews, which are ensuring that, particularly across foundation subjects, curriculum intent, planning and implementation are fit for purpose. Previous reviews completed in science, RE/PSHE, history and geography have ensured that the curriculum planning in these areas are fully developed. Reviews of technology and computing are to be completed by the end of the school year 2024-25.
- The headteacher and governors are preparing an agreed succession plan for the school.
- The headteacher and governors continue to prioritise the mental health and well-being of the staff.

	National 23- 24 (source: here)			Autumn	Spring	Summer
	Primary	Secondary	Special			
Current number on roll	275	1063	149	43	46	47

Overall attendance	94.5%	90.9%	87.0%	97.3%	97.2%	97%
% Persistent absentees	15.2%	26.7%	37.6%	2.3%	0%	0%
PP attendance	91.9%	85.4%	84.9%	97.3%	97%	97%
EHCP attendance	89.7%	83.0%	87.4%	97%	100%	100%
SEN Support attendance	92.5%	85.8%	68.9%	97%	98%	98%
% and number of EHCPs	3.0%	2.7%	99.2%	2.3%	2.2%	2.2% (number)
% and number of SEND Support	14.1%	12.9%	0.7%	2.3%	4.4%	4.4% (number)
% and number of FSM pupils	24.3%	24.1%	47.4%	0%	10.9%	13% (number)

Length of the school week	32 hours 30 minutes	Guidance: Length of the school week - non-statutory guidance

Reminders for the headteacher

The SIP reminded the headteacher of the following statutory duties and recommendations:

- Have governors read Keeping Children Safe in Education *(updated September 2024)?*
- Have all staff (including volunteers) have read at least part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education *(updated September 2024)?*
- Are your objectives within the school accessibility plan challenging and reflective of the main accessibility challenges your school faces?
- Are current equality objectives SMART?
- Can all staff and governors articulate what the current equality objectives are and how close the school is to achieving them?
- Is the school website compliant with the most recent statutory guidance? (maintained schools) (academies/free schools)
- Has Parent view feedback been reviewed?
- Are Ofsted 'requested' documents (*paragraph 109*) in place?

Autumn Term

- The recording of low-level concerns had already been addressed. The school has bought into theCPOMS software package to manage and monitor child protection, safeguarding, and other welfare issues.
- Previous reviews have been completed in science, RE/PSHE, history and geography which, in the views of the headteacher, SIP and governors have ensured that the curriculum planning in these areas are fully developed. Reviews of technology and ICT are in the current School Improvement Plan and will be completed by the end of the school year 2024-5.
- In the school year 2025-26, music, art & design and RE will be reviewed and in 2026-7 history will be reviewed, completing actions relating to the Ofsted AFIs. All of this is specifically planned and detailed, including timescales, responsibilities, costs, and success criteria in the new School Improvement Plan 2024-2027.
- The overwhelming view of the governors was that they liked the current website and saw no need to change.
- Outcomes at the end of the last school year, and compared these to both local authority (LA) and national averages (where available), which were as follows:
  - At the end of reception, 100% of pupils achieved a good level of development (GLD). (LA average – 69.2%, National average 69.5%).
  - At the end of Y1, 89% of pupils achieved the required standard in Phonics. (LA average – 80.4%, National average 74.7%).
  - There were no phonic re-sits in year 2.
  - At the end of KS1, 100% of pupils were at expected or above in reading, writing, maths and science.
  - At the end of KS1, pupils achieving at depth were - 50% in reading, 37.5% writing, and 25% in maths.
  - By the end of school in year 4, 89% of pupils were at expected or above in reading, writing, maths.
  - By the end of year 4 in 2024, the outcomes achieved for the cohort of 9 pupils were as follows:
  - In reading, one pupil was below expected, with 6 pupils achieving at depth.
  - In writing, one pupil was below expected, with 2 pupils achieving at depth.
  - In mathematics, one pupil was below expected, with 3 pupils achieving at depth.
  - In science, one pupil was below expected, with 8 pupils meeting the expected standard.

These are excellent results. They are also not dissimilar to Cambo outcomes year-on-year, which are consistently well above LA and national averages.

- The new School Improvement Plan was reviewed. As usual, this document covers a three-year period up to the end of August 2027. The school continues to believe that a skills-based approach to learning is right for pupils.
- This year, the technology and ICT curricula will be completely reviewed (i.e. reviews of the curriculum statements, the teaching and learning policy and planning). This will ensure that effective learning objectives and desired outcomes are in place across the school in each subject area, to make certain the Ofsted key issue is addressed. The work on technology began this term (although a staff absence delayed progress for a while) - this will be completed during next term, when provision in ICT will then be the focus.

- Staff have also undertaken training specifically around handling low-level concerns. In addition to this, the school has also entered into the LA's service level agreement for Safeguarding to further ensure they are, and remain, fully compliant.
- The school is also currently working to further develop the 'teacher assessment in primary science' tool to provide a supportive structure to evaluate and develop assessment processes. They are developing whole school assessment so that pupils identify their existing ideas, learning needs and interests, and consider those of their peers. As part of this, teachers involve pupils in discussing learning objectives and success criteria, and are gathering evidence through questioning, discussion and observation as well as the products of activities and tasks. The aim of this work is to ensure that teachers use assessment effectively to advance pupils learning by adapting pace, challenge and content, and provide effective feedback to pupils.
- One of the new projects this academic year is the development of a whole-school, positive, intergenerational and cohesive ethos through the school's British Council links with Germany. Working with Gill Finch at the LA, the school managed to secure a fully funded place for a member of staff to attend a seminar in Mainz in Sept 2024. At this, the partners attending were supported to develop a rationale for working together on an inter-school project and use virtual meetings and chat rooms to plan joint aims and objectives. The school has been liked with partner schools as follows:
  - Reinke-Fuchs Grunschule, (a musical elementary school in the north of Berlin)
  - Katholische Grunschule Schleiden (a catholic Primary School in Westphalia, a region of northwestern Germany)
  - Doune Primary in Stirlingshire, Scotland.
- The schools have agreed activities and a time frame. Links and progress will be shared via newsletters, website, homework, and community assembly. The plan is also for year 4 Cambo pupils to visit Germany as part of the project. This is typical of the scope and opportunities the school offers to its pupils.
- A review of the history and geography rolling programme devised by the school, geography progression documents for both KS1 and KS2, and the termly 'planning wheels' which inform classroom teaching was undertaken. All of these are understood and used by staff to deliver the geography curriculum and complement the overall aims and objectives of teaching and learning at the school.
- The work with Morpeth Partnership colleagues to audit curriculum coverage has now ceased. Instead, the school is part of a developmental alliance with 6 other schools, who will work closely together to support not only their own pupils and staff, but those in other alliance schools.
- The schools involved in the Font Alliance are:

1. Longhorsley CE First
2. Morpeth First
3. Ponteland Community Primary
4. Rothbury First
5. Stannington First
6. Tritlington First
7. Whalton CE Primary

- These partners will form the basis of shared evidence-based approaches, shared high quality professional development, curriculum development, assessments and moderation, shared book scrutiny's etc., all of which will improve outcomes for children. There may also be opportunities to achieve economies of scale, sharing resources and functions to build resilience.

Emerging questions

- Is the curriculum review of technology completed? How has this improved the school's provision?
- Is the school on track to complete the review of its ICT curriculum by the end of the school year?
- How is the school supporting the mental health and well-being of staff?
- What progress is being been made with the British Council partnership project?
- How are assessment processes developing? Is this positively impacting on the quality of learning?
- How is the school dealing with the likelihood that, in the next school year (2025/6) there will be no reception-aged children?

Spring Term

- The scheduled subject review of technology has been completed as planned. As well as completing a curriculum review and update, this has also included specific lesson observations and a focused governors visit. Speaking to staff at this visit, they are clear about how this subject is now delivered. The programmes and planning available to them ensure that curriculum delivery is both well-planned and progressive.

- The review of computing in the current School Improvement Plan is now well under way. The current plan is to adopt a 2-year rolling programme which is largely based on the National Centre for Computing Education's Primary Teachers Toolkit, a repository of teaching resources for computing through its website. This provides comprehensive subject plans as well as detailed lesson plans for staff to follow. The school also intends to include provision for careers education within this subject area. This work will be finished before the end of this school year.

- In terms of the work to address the Ofsted AFI to ensure that the school's curriculum is fully developed for all foundation subjects, this leaves music, art, PSHE and RE to be reviewed in the next school year. As outlined in the autumn SIP visit, leaders are developing the use of the 'teacher assessment in primary science' tool to provide a supportive structure to evaluate and develop assessment processes. They are continuing to develop whole school assessments in foundation subjects so that pupils identify their existing ideas, learning needs and interests, and consider those of their peers. The aim of this work is to ensure that teachers use assessment effectively to advance pupils learning by adapting pace, challenge and content, and provide effective feedback to pupils. This approach will also be applied to all the reviews carried out next year.

- The headteacher and governors have maintained regular and open discussions about succession planning. The intention of the headteacher is to retire at the end of the 2025-26 school year.

- Progress made with the British Council partnership project was discussed (further detail outlined in the autumn term visit). The first linked activity is currently underway – each school prepared a 'shoebox' to send to the others to help them understand 'my area, my people and our school'. This will be a focus area for the SIP summer term visit.

Observing teaching and learning

- The school's provision of learning activities is a real strength. Although there are two main teaching groups, 4 separate activities were observed. The first of these was in the hall, where the year 2 pupils from class 2 were working with a TA and with Bee Bots. Using a grid pattern, pupils were problem-solving, planning and using sequential thinking in a spatial environment to program the Bots to move to a variety of different targets. The quality and depth of language development was clear – with excellent adult guidance helping pupils to succeed with quite long and complicated algorithms. There was a great deal of enjoyment too, as well as excellent peer-to-peer support, all of which meant that the pace of learning was brisk.

  In the class 2 classroom, the year 3 and year 4 pupils were working with the teacher on aspects of data logging. The school uses Data Loggers to unlock a world of scientific exploration and discovery for pupils. These gadgets can measure various environmental factors such as temperature, sound and light, and their ability to continuously record information provides pupils with a wealth of data for analysis and interpretation. Pupils could explain how they had been sampling information from around the school to find out the loudest and quietest places, best and worst lit areas and compare the quality of artificial and natural light. Another group, who had previously done this task, were working with the teacher to collect, analyse and interpret the information gathered. A third group were working at computers, learning how to use tools to record and arrange information in ways that helped them to make inferences and draw conclusions.
  One of the strengths of teaching at Cambo is that they resist the urge to 'compartmentalise' their curriculum and allow learning to span different areas which occur as a natural part of such explorations. This is most noticeable in the quality of the discussions taking place during such a lesson; peer to peer discussion is extremely productive, with pupils able to both listen and respond to each other with genuine interest and sincerity and in such a positive way that groupwork flourishes. Equally, adult/pupil interactions are similarly productive, with skilful questioning ensuring that pupils develop their thinking and relate their learning to what they already know to build even greater levels of knowledge and understanding of a topic.

  In Class 1 there were 2 teaching groups taking place. Reception aged children were making Easter cards using algorithms to follow instructions to create an 'Easter egg and detachable chick' card. These were beautiful, and the children loved showing them to me.
  The year 1 pupils were doing an art activity in two groups. All the pupils had been looking at specific kinds of stylised artwork – they had explored and could talk about Kandinsky, Mondrian and Matisse (especially about ill health preventing him from painting in his later years so he turned to producing collage works made from brightly coloured paper cut-outs). They had been particularly impressed by the painting 'The Snail'. Both groups were to produce 'circular' based artwork. One group's task was to work independently, using a Mondrian type grid to make different secondary colours and create a gradient of these by mixing two primary colours in varying proportions, presented as increasing sized concentric circles. They had clearly listened well, as they worked together without adult support. Pupils had excellent fine motor skills and there were high quality peer-to-peer conversations and support. The work they produced was attractive and varied, as they encouraged each other to explore and try new combinations. The other group worked at computers with the teacher using an art programme to produce similar circles, but of contrasting circular colours. Using a mouse, they were learning how to use the various tools available within the software – over the course of my observation, pupils demonstrated how

to use the line, fill, shape, paint, spray, pencil, save and print tools. This was a demanding task, requiring extended observational and concentration skills. It was interesting to discuss with the teacher the issues around teaching pupils to use a mouse as they are more used to touch screens.

- The school achieves excellent outcomes for pupils, through a vibrant and effective curriculum, which reflects the school's stated aims of providing a first-class education by being challenging, inclusive, creative and supportive. These 4 words are from the Cambo overarching curriculum intent document, which also talks of the need for sharing, respect, independence and happiness. All of these whilst observing for just part of one day – illustrating how effective this school is at nurturing and developing all pupils, supporting them to thrive and achieve the best they can be.

- Leaders, teachers and support staff are highly skilled practitioners, whose focus on excellence permeates everything they do. Everyone at the school brings care and creativity to the work they do. Together, they create an exceptionally inclusive school where everyone has equal opportunities to develop their talents and demonstrate their accomplishments. Thorough and systematic arrangements are very effectively used to support high-attaining pupils and those with special needs or disabilities who, in turn, achieve well.

- As Ofsted recognised at their last inspection, this is a caring and nurturing school at the heart of its rural community. The school has a strong sense of family and inclusion. Pupils are safe and well cared for. They say that bullying is not a problem. Pupils know that if bullying did happen, adults deal with it quickly.

Discussion

- At this meeting, the progress within the Font Alliance was discussed. The first thing to note is that the work the school did within its previous alliance with the Morpeth schools has not been abandoned. There was much of use in the development work done and it has often informed and been included within the curriculum reviews since the last Ofsted inspection. Now, Cambo is working more closely within this new alliance to support not only their own pupils and staff, but those in other alliance schools. The Headteacher has enjoyed the opportunity to welcome new visitors from the alliance and is forming closer working relationships which generates capacity and improvement in all the schools. For example, there is now a Head of SEN across the alliance which is bringing much needed encouragement and support at a difficult time nationally for SEND provision. This work in shared endeavours is building new networks across schools which help to reduce pressures on individual staff. Within the alliance, teachers get the opportunity to share evidence-based approaches and can benefit from shared high quality professional development to improve outcomes for children.

- Mental health and well-being of staff is much improved. Talking to staff, they say they feel 'more like themselves' again, and that the Ofsted inspection is behind them, in their words 'well and truly done and dusted'. Staff are very appreciative of the support given to them by the school and from governors. They value the time that leaders give them to deal with issues, whether professional or personal. There is real pride in their work at Cambo First School.

- Finally, we had lengthy discussions about the future, not only in terms of succession planning, but also about core things like projected pupil numbers, budgets and staffing, some of which I have already detailed above. If the school gained around 5 more children, this might all change. Leaders have asked colleagues within the Font alliance if they have any scope to offer support.
  Looking at pupil numbers, there are two main concerns

- Firstly, currently there is only 1 child scheduled to come into reception in September 2025. This is largely due to the drop in births during the pandemic. There are already plans in place for some preschool children to come up to Class 1 during the school day to enable effective group working. The school also knows that the one reception child will cope well within a year 1 heavy class. Fortunately, the long-standing development of preschool facilities provides much hope for the future amongst leaders and governors. Preschool takes place on-site every weekday during term time, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Being on-site and using the school building has an added benefit as it helps the children become familiar with the whole school environment. Currently, there are likely to be up to 8 children coming into reception in September 2027.
- The projected total school number for 2025-6 is 39 and for 2026-7 is 38, which is a significant drop from that of recent years, and this will need to be closely monitored over the next year or so.

Emerging questions

- Is the curriculum review of computing complete? How has this improved the school's provision?
- Is the school on track to complete all the remaining curriculum reviews within the 2025-6 school year?
- Is the position of succession planning and a likely future staffing structure clear to leaders and governors? Has this in turn been shared with staff?
- How is the linked activity within the British Council partnership project progressing? What do the pupils know about the other schools?
- How are assessment processes developing? Is this positively impacting on the quality of learning?

Summer Term

- The ICT review has been completed, including a focused governor visit and lesson observations. This has ensured that the school has extensive coverage of the curriculum across age ranges and key stages. During this review, leaders ensured that the policy was being followed in practice and that skills knowledge and understanding are built upon. This review updated the subject to include current ideology and practice. CPD has also been incorporated to ensure all skills covered, for example in creative animation.
- The school remains on track to complete the final subjects (RE/PE) as outlined in their development plan – they will also revisit English in the next school year.
- Leaders have recently worked with parents to share and discuss the school website. Overall, parents were happy with the site, but there has been some amendments suggested. These updates make it easier to navigate and will go live from this September.
- Succession planning has been discussed and shared with both the governing board and staff. The expectation is that she will retire on 31st August 2026, and from this September, she will work 4 days a week.
- The Class 2 teacher is hosting one of the teachers from the German link (detailed above) this summer with a view to developing the relationship further. The school plans to apply for a grant to further develop this friendship and links between schools. The children have shared information about schools in the UK and Germany.
- Assessment processes remain sound – staff have regular discussions as they cover each subject area, and when they review each policy. There have also been robust meetings to discuss assessments and consistency at the Font Alliance.
- Work to develop careers education has begun, this remains an area for improvement in the development plan. There is a new policy in place, supported by a new webpage (shared with parents) and CPD. The school is currently developing links within topic areas regarding specialisms – for example in ICT, how to become an animator. Leaders have gathered the skills and careers within the local community and linked these to long-term planning. They recently held a careers week with parents coming in and talking to pupils about their career/specialism. We Books have also been

purchased to support careers education. Discussions with Class 2 were undertaken, they spoke about a wide range of different careers and were very aware of the knowledge and skills they would need to secure to be successful.

- Outcomes

  - ✓ 100% of children achieved a Good level of Development (GLD) in EYFS
  - ✓ 100% of pupils passed the Y1 assessment.
  - ✓ 1 child in Y2, who did not reach the standard last year, met the threshold this year.

In the Y2 SATs -

  - ✓ 100% at expected or above in Mathematics (9% at depth)
  - ✓ 91% at expected or above in Reading (9% depth]
  - ✓ 91% at expected or above in Writing (9% depth]

In Y4, -

  - ✓ 100% of pupils were at expected or above in all areas.
  - ✓ 50% were at depth in reading 50%, 25% in writing and 12.5% in Maths.

- The school currently has 8 pupil premium children – all of them are at expected or above in all areas.
- There are 2 Post Cared for children, both at expected or above in all areas
- There are 2 SEND pupils (both in Y2) with one having an EHCP Band 5 because of global delay. 50% of SEND are working at expected or above in all areas and 100% are working at expected in Maths
- 5% of pupils are working below age related expectations and PIPS are in place for these pupils.

Emerging questions

- Governors have agreed that they wish to recruit a new Headteacher. When will they start the recruitment process for this, and who will they look to support them through this?
- What will the impact of this recruitment process be on the school's staffing structure?
- The current School Development Plan runs until the end of the 2026 school year. What plans are in place to support the new Headteacher to create the next plan, and over what timescale?
- Has the post-Ofsted curriculum review been completed for all subject areas?
- How are the linked activities within the British Council partnership project progressing? What do the pupils know about the other schools?

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEADTEACHER

Other information to note/feedback

"Thank you Alan, I concur with all elements.
Requests to the LA for further support
• None at this time