

Overchurch Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105043
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	355689
Inspection dates	9–10 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Judith Tolley

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	317
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andre Baird
Headteacher	Mrs Miriam Chambers
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 13 lessons; 12 teachers were seen; meetings were held with parents, groups of pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's analysis of pupils' progress, the school improvement plan, examples of curriculum planning, pupils' work and 107 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- The progress pupils make in writing and mathematics to determine whether different groups are appropriately challenged.
- The personal development of pupils to ascertain the impact of the curriculum and care, guidance and support.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels to determine the capacity the school has to improve further in the light of recent changes to the leadership and management structure.

Information about the school

Overchurch Infant School is a larger than average-sized infant school. It has a Nursery class and also takes pupils from a large number of other pre-school settings. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is low, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Since the last inspection there have been significant changes in staff. The school has a variety of awards, including Healthy Schools status, Artsmark, Activemark and Eco Award. Little Robins Day Nursery shares the same site but is not managed by the school's governing body. It was inspected separately and the report is on the Ofsted website.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Overchurch is a good school. It provides outstanding care, guidance and support. Parents and carers greatly value the excellent partnerships the school has with them that support their children's learning so well. Pupils make good progress, especially so in reading, as a result of good teaching and a thoughtfully constructed curriculum that meets their needs and interests well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good progress as their classmates as a result of the very effective support they and their families receive. Pupils' behaviour and their personal development are good. They willingly take on responsibility in helping the school to make decisions through the school council and the 'Planet Patrollers' or as Play Leaders. Frequent opportunities to work together to solve problems and to explain their ideas prepare them well for the next stage in their education, increase their confidence and develop their respect for one another's views. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their above average attendance and in their enthusiastic response to learning through themes which engage their interest.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress from their broadly average starting points. They respond enthusiastically to adult-led activities and make good progress in these sessions. Enthusiasm wanes and progress slows when both follow-up and play activities lack excitement or do not build directly on preceding learning activities.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, provide very clear direction, based on regular monitoring of the school's work. Curricular developments have pupils' enjoyment and achievement at their heart. Governors are very supportive and act effectively to challenge the school. Recent staff changes have led to amendments in the leadership and management structure. The ensuing closer teamwork is leading to greater consistency in teaching in Key Stage 1. Monitoring the quality of learning across the Early Years Foundation Stage has been less effective and some inconsistencies in learning and the quality of improvement planning remain. In this area, leadership roles and responsibilities are not clear enough and improvement planning is not as sharp as the rest of the school.

Since the last inspection high standards in reading have been maintained. Attainment in writing and mathematics has improved to above average, as has attendance. Better use of assessment has led to more effective challenge for higher attainers. These improvements provide clear indications of the school's good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage from satisfactory to good by:

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- – providing more exciting and stimulating child-led activities that build more effectively on the enthusiasm and interest children display in adult-led activities
- – using assessment information more effectively to support progress and learning in child-led activities.
- Improve the effectiveness with which leaders and managers of the Early Years Foundation Stage monitor learning and drive improvement by:
 - – reviewing leadership roles and responsibilities and clarifying lines of accountability
 - – ensuring the sharing of good practice between teachers
 - – sharpening the quality of improvement planning by developing measurable success criteria and clear timelines.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The pupils' positive attitudes towards learning and their good behaviour impact positively on their achievement and good progress. In lessons they respond enthusiastically to opportunities to work together to solve problems and are confident in explaining their ideas to others. Year 1 pupils enthusiastically suggested ways to help a clown on a see-saw reach a balloon and explained how to test the accuracy of their estimations about the heavier objects they could use to achieve this. They display high levels of concentration which only occasional lapses when they are not directly involved in whole-class activities. Pupils begin Year 1 with attainment which is broadly average. By the end of Year 2 they achieve high standards in reading and above average standards in mathematics. Their attainment in writing is above average and improving strongly as a result of the opportunities to write in different contexts.

Pupils enjoy school; they talk enthusiastically about their lessons and are proud of their achievements. Pupils were keen to tell inspectors how safe they were at school. They say that they are confident that the school deals with any rare instances of poor behaviour effectively and know who they can talk to if they have any problems. In addition, they have a clear understanding of how to stay healthy. Pupils demonstrate their own commitment to the promotion of healthy lifestyles through good participation rates in extra-curricular activity and their healthy choices of food at lunchtime and break. Pupils clearly enjoy the opportunities they have to help and take their responsibilities seriously. The impact of their efforts is strongly felt whether through whole-school fundraising for a range of charitable causes, or in helping younger children in the playground. Pupils display respect for one another and their teachers and have a good sense of right and wrong. They take time to reflect on their own actions and regularly help one another in class and around the school. They have a good understanding of their own culture but are less sure about the diversity of cultures beyond their own community.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teachers usually present new ideas clearly and use a variety of resources and themes to engage pupils' interest. They use questioning to good effect to support and challenge pupils well, both in whole-class discussions and during class work. When pupils have an opportunity to discuss ideas with a partner or solve problems in small groups, they grow in confidence and are keen to share their ideas with a wider audience. The pace of learning slows when teacher-led activities are too lengthy or when pupils spend too long revisiting previous learning.

Assessment information is used effectively in planning to meet the varying needs of pupils, and teaching assistants are skilful in supporting individuals and small groups in lessons. Marking is regular and encouraging and usually gives clear guidance. Good opportunities for pupils to evaluate their work help them to have a good understanding of how to improve.

The curriculum meets pupils' needs and interests well. Pupils regularly practise their reading, writing and mathematics in a variety of contexts and through exciting activities designed to engage their interest, such as the circus. Opportunities to use information and communication technology are not as well developed. The impact of the curriculum is evaluated well and adapted effectively to meet individual needs and interests in weekly planning meetings. Transition into Year 1 is effectively managed through the provision of pupil-led activities similar to those provided in the Early Years Foundation Stage. These

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enable pupils to continue to learn through their play. Pupils' experience is enriched by a variety of visitors and visits and extra-curricular activities, such as gardening club, music and a variety of sports.

The school's focus on children as individuals is reflected in the extremely effective support provided for those with particular needs and the excellent partnership it has with parents and carers. The care, guidance and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are of high quality. Focused support enables these pupils to participate fully in activities alongside their classmates. Well-thought-out induction procedures ensure that children settle quickly when they join the school and when they make the transition to the junior school. The school works extremely effectively with a range of external agencies as well as parents and carers, to remove barriers to learning for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's thorough analysis of the school's performance and the very clear direction for development that she and the senior leadership team have set are very effective in raising standards. The school provides an atmosphere where achievement is valued and celebrated. Close and accurate tracking of pupils' progress informs school improvement planning well. The headteacher's innovative approach to staff development means all teachers play a full and effective part in evaluating the school's performance and in school improvement planning. Recent staff changes mean many teachers are adjusting to their new roles but they receive good support in this process. The senior leadership team has acted swiftly to eliminate relative weaknesses in writing and mathematics. Its success in ensuring that all pupils are appropriately challenged and supported indicates the effective commitment to promoting equality of opportunity. The school is aware of the relative weaknesses in the Early Years Foundation Stage and has plans in place to improve the provision. Governors challenge the school effectively and are very supportive. The school works closely with other institutions such as the junior school, other schools in the area and with colleges to enhance pupils' experiences in technology and sport. Safeguarding procedures are rigorously applied and are kept under constant review. The school's work with parents and carers, partner institutions and the local community is promoting community cohesion well. Pupils increase their understanding of the wider community through, for instance, the celebration of religious festivals, and a variety of visits and visitors. The school is developing links with different communities at home and abroad. Workshop meetings and facilities such as the valued digital newsletter

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'Life Channel' exemplify the exceptionally close partnerships with parents and carers. The school provides good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter Nursery and Reception classes with skills, knowledge and understanding broadly in line with those expected for their age. All, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress overall. Children make particularly good progress in their personal development and their communication and language skills but their knowledge and understanding of the world is less secure. Behaviour is good and children respond positively to adults and play well with their classmates and enjoy learning in a safe environment. Relationships with parents and carers are strong. Sessions where parents and carers play alongside their children and talk to staff are very well attended. Good liaison with other feeder nurseries and settings ensure children settle quickly. There is a smooth transition to the Reception classes and Year 1. Whole-group activities are planned well to engage children's interest and to meet their needs, for instance in enabling them to develop their language skills in telling stories together, but opportunities are missed to engage children's enthusiasm and promote their learning through play. The outdoor area is not always used to good effect to promote children's learning. Child-led activities sometimes fail to capture the interest and enthusiasm that children display in whole-class activities. Individual progress is closely tracked and next steps are planned. Nonetheless, assessment information is not always used effectively, especially in providing support in child-initiated activities, so that children are sometimes left to their own devices to explore the world around them and the pace of their learning slows. Although teachers meet on a regular basis to plan together, roles and responsibilities are unclear. As a result, success criteria and timelines for tackling

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weaknesses are not well enough defined and this undermines the effectiveness of longer term improvement planning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A higher than average proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Almost all have positive views of the school. They are pleased with the progress their children make and say their children enjoy school. In written comments were many testimonials from parents about the high levels of support given both to parents and to their children. On the whole parents' and carers' views matched those of the inspectors.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Overchurch Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 107 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 317 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	81	76	25	23	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	79	74	27	25	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	59	55	42	39	4	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	62	58	41	38	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	71	66	35	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	72	67	34	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	61	41	38	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	61	57	28	26	4	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	63	59	39	36	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	58	54	40	37	5	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	55	51	41	38	2	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	73	68	30	28	3	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	80	75	22	21	2	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



11 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Overchurch Infant School, Wirral, CH49 4NS

I would like to thank you, on behalf of all the inspectors, for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. The inspection team really enjoyed talking to you all and listened very carefully to what you had to say. You told us how much you enjoy your learning and how proud you are of your school. We agree with you. You go to a good school. Teachers make lessons exciting through topics like the circus and this helps you to make good progress in your reading, writing and mathematics. We enjoyed listening to you talk about the good work done by the 'Planet Patrollers and the school council, and the way you look after younger children in the playground. Your behaviour is good. We think that you all make a really important contribution to your school. You told us that the staff look after you very well indeed and we agree.

Younger children in the Nursery and Reception classes make satisfactory progress but we think they can do better. We have asked the school to make sure they make the play activities more exciting so that children can make good progress in their learning when they play as well as when they are listening to the teachers. We have also asked them to make sure teachers work together to plan how they are going to improve things in the Nursery and Reception classes.

The headteacher and staff are working very hard to make your school even better. We wish you every success for the future and hope that you continue to enjoy your learning.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Judith Tolley

Lead inspector

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