

Offley Endowed Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117445
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	358141
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2010
Reporting inspector	David Speakman

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	85
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ros Murray
Headteacher	Karen Slack
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed eight lessons or parts of lessons and saw seven teachers, including visiting specialist teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, groups of pupils, governors, and subject leaders. They observed the school's work, and looked at school assessment and tracking data, samples of pupils' work, records of monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and a wide range of records and policies linked to safeguarding. They also considered 67 questionnaires from parents and carers, 40 from pupils and 10 from staff.

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

- What is leading to the variation in outcomes at the end of both key stages, particularly in English [reading and writing] at Key Stage 1?
- How well is assessment used by teachers to assess individual capability and to ensure that each pupil in mixed age and ability classes is sufficiently challenged to fully achieve his/her potential?
- How effective is the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of teaching on learning and therefore progress and achievement?

Information about the school

This is a small primary school set in a rural community. Most pupils come from a White British background very few speak English as an additional language. None is at the early stages of learning English. The number of pupils known to be eligible to claim free school meals is similar to other schools. There is an average proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, mainly for moderate learning difficulties. None has a statement of special educational needs. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is in a Reception class and pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are taught in one of three mixed-age classes. This arrangement is flexible and depends upon the cohort numbers. Awards obtained by the school include the Healthy Schools Status, Activemark, Travel Scheme Award and Artsmark Silver award. There is pre-school provision on site, which is not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Offley Endowed Primary School provides a satisfactory education. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and progress well in their Reception Year. Thereafter, achievement is satisfactory and by the end of Year 6, standards in English and mathematics are broadly in line with the national average.

The strength of this school lies in the good care and support that all adults show for pupils, through internal arrangements and through good links with external support agencies. As a result, pupils' personal development is good. Pupils follow the example set by adults and as one parent commented 'The school has a very strong community feel and the children learn to care for one another.' Another added 'The school has a family atmosphere and all children know all adults well.' This was confirmed as being important in conversations with pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They make a good contribution to life within the local community and within school. Behaviour is good. Even when the pace of lessons is slow and pupils are not active in learning, they behave well. When they are challenged and motivated, pupils respond very well and their behaviour is often excellent. Pupils show a mature approach to being a member of the school community and as a matter of course try to solve any difficult situations for themselves. If they need to call on adult support, they are confident that it is readily available and consequently children feel safe in school. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what it means to stay healthy. They choose to eat healthy meals and snacks whilst in school and engage in lots of physical activity.

Satisfactory and good teaching was seen in equal measures during the inspection. Teachers do not always take enough account of the prior attainment of individual pupils and too often plan activities for the different year groups in each class rather than planning challenging activities for individual pupils. Too little reference to the actual levels pupils are working at was seen in planning so there is no clear idea of learning progression for individual pupils or of their next steps in learning. Sometimes not enough account is taken of pupils being ready to move on, and this has the effect of holding back their progress, particularly for middle and higher attaining pupils.

The monitoring and evaluation of teaching is satisfactory, but not rigorous enough to improve teaching so that it is consistently good in terms of its level of challenge to promote better learning and progress. Some monitoring of teaching is informal and not sufficiently focused on impact.

The headteacher and subject leaders have a planned programme for monitoring the impact of improvement initiatives. The headteacher is tracking each pupil's progress, but targets for the average and more able are not challenging enough. Subject leaders are playing an important role in the improvement strategy, but currently their work is not focused sharply enough on improving the pace at which pupils are learning and making

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progress in lessons. Self-evaluation is accurate and reflects the headteacher's clear evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress in English and mathematics so the attainment at the end of both key stages is consistently above the national average by:
 - ensuring that all teaching is of a good or better quality
 - using assessment data more effectively to make sure individual pupils, particularly those capable of average and higher attainment, are challenged fully and make the best possible progress
 - setting individual challenging targets using national curriculum levels and using these in planning individual learning programmes through the school so that all pupils make good progress as they pass from year to year.
- Be more rigorous in the monitoring of teaching and ensure that leaders and managers contribute significantly to pupils' progress by:
 - putting a greater emphasis on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress
 - providing formal feedback on observations and following up and acting on areas identified for development
 - using other sources of information, such as scrutiny of pupils' work and assessment data, to evaluate the effect of teaching on learning.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children enter the Reception Year with attainment that is typical for children of this age. Overall satisfactory achievement means that standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average. There has been some variation from year to year but this is linked to the different needs of small cohorts and the lack of planning against individual prior attainment. Consequently pupils make adequate progress and the quality of their learning is satisfactory. Early identification of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities means that effective support is soon provided and these pupils make good progress, narrowing the gap between them and other pupils. Differences in the achievement for groups of pupils mean that equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Those pupils in Year 4 whose attainment was low at the end of Year 2 are now doing well which represents good progress. In literacy, information and communication technology and music lessons these pupils showed good attitudes to learning. They were keen and enthusiastic learners, obviously enjoying their work and showing greater confidence.

Pupils enjoy being active participants in learning and show a lot of enthusiasm and enjoyment in practical activities. They have produced some very expressive artwork, which has resulted from high levels of collaboration in group work all of which adds significantly

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to their good spiritual, social and cultural development. Standards in music are good and pupils show good engagement and pride in their performance when either playing instruments or singing. They enjoy physical activity and have a good record in competitive sports, particularly for a small school. Pupils enjoy school a great deal and their attendance has improved this year; it is now above the national average. They are prepared well for the next steps in their education. Although attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average, they have good information and communication technology skills, are good at working together and show initiative and independence in planning different school activities.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
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	1
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?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory in terms of its impact on pupils learning and progress. However, teachers show some good teaching skills. Relationships with pupils are good and teachers are very supportive of pupils' personal development. Marking is good. It is appropriate to pupils' ages and clearly informs pupils of what they do well and what they need to do to improve. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' conduct and have established calm learning environments in classes. Teaching assistants work well with groups of pupils, but too often sit unoccupied whilst the teacher is introducing a lesson. Otherwise they contribute well to group work, including with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and help these pupils to make good progress.

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The curriculum is good. This has been a development focus and now offers a broad range of interesting learning experiences. Parents commented on the curriculum: 'We particularly like the breadth of education offered rather than rigidly following the curriculum.' Another added 'It is very strong at music and performing, which really benefits the children.' There are interesting links between subjects. Good provision through specialist teaching in music, physical education and French helps make learning stimulating in these subjects. There is an excellent range of visits, visitors and links with outside agencies and other schools which add richness to pupils' learning experience. As one pupil put it 'There's lots of stuff to do in this school.'

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Through her own assessments the headteacher has a realistic view on how well children are progressing and is keen to improve pupils' achievement, raise standards and hence ensure that all pupils are doing as well as they possibly can. However, there is a cautious view amongst some staff that it is safer to set comfortable targets that pupils will easily achieve rather than setting challenging ones that will raise the level of achievement above satisfactory.

Safeguarding is satisfactory. All requirements are in place and whilst pupils are safe some important procedures and documentation are generic and do not take into account the particular circumstances of the school. Consequently, governance is satisfactory. Governors are involved in supporting the school and often ask challenging questions but there is room to develop further their monitoring role.

The school has made strides in building its relationship with parents and carers, through involving them in initiatives such as the Reading Challenge during the summer break and involving them in pupils' learning logs. This has been effective and reflected in parents' involvement in supporting the school and their children's education.

The school's approach to establishing community cohesion is good. School leaders have evaluated the school's place within a range of communities and has devised an action plan to address any weaknesses. It has identified good provision within the school, at local and national levels but realises that the global dimension could be developed further.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in their Reception Year and their attainment when moving into Year 1 is as expected for their age with some strengths, particularly in personal, social and emotional development. This is where the basis of positive attitudes and enjoyment in learning is established.

The curriculum is interesting and engages children's interest and enthusiasm. There is an emphasis on core skills but there is good coverage of all areas of learning through topics. There is a well-considered balance between teacher directed learning and child initiated activities and between indoor and outside learning. Much of the learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is based on children experiencing for themselves, typified by a camera placed in a nesting box linked to the interactive white board so children can watch directly how birds look after their young, even before eggs have hatched. Children have kept an interesting journal. Adults often follow children's own ideas such as following up the 'dinosaur eggs' found in the garden.

Expectations of these children are high. They receive specialist music teaching and from an early age produce good quality music, including singing and voice training at an appropriate level. Children respond enthusiastically and their singing has a quality expected from older children. They hold a tune, sing well together and enjoy these activities. Each child clearly grows in confidence through activities such as these.

Adults work well as a team. There is good leadership within the setting. Adults are deployed effectively and engage fully with the children. Assessment of children's progress is on-going and adults report back regularly to the Early Years Foundation Stage leader. Children's progress and learning experiences are carefully recorded in individual 'Learning Journeys' which record each child's experiences through the year and which provide a

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lasting memory for parents and carers when the journals are passed to them at the end of the Reception Year.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

There was a very good response to the questionnaire, with over three-quarters of the children represented in their parents' or carers' responses. They express a high level of satisfaction with the work of the school and in no category was there any significant disagreement. The inspectors looked carefully at pupils' progress and safeguarding arrangements and found both of these aspects to be satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Offley Endowed Primary 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 67 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 85 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	76	15	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	41	61	24	36	2	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	43	64	23	34	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	55	25	37	4	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	43	64	23	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	55	28	42	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	61	26	39	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)	36	54	26	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	57	26	39	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	43	34	51	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	46	34	51	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	40	60	25	37	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	64	24	36	0	0	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.



13 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Offley Endowed Primary School, Hitchin, SG5 3AT

Thank you all very much for your friendliness and the way in which you so confidently spoke to us when we visited your school recently. We were impressed with the confidence and thoughtfulness of the pupils we spoke to and the mature attitudes you showed to school life. We were pleased that you enjoy school and behave well, even when you are not fully occupied in some lessons. You all seem to get on well together, are kind to each other and value the smallness of your school that enables you all to get to know each other well. Well done. Your school takes good care of you and you have lots of interesting things to learn about.

Your school provides a satisfactory education and you make satisfactory progress. We feel that some of you are capable of doing harder work than you are sometimes asked to do, particularly in English and mathematics. However we were impressed by your artwork, your musical skills and your ability in using computers. We were also pleased by how well you work together and support each other's' learning.

We have asked your teachers to help you make better progress by:

Making sure that all teaching is good or better.

Providing harder work for those of you that are capable of doing it.

Planning long term learning paths so that you all make steadily good progress from year to year.

We have also asked school leaders to carefully monitor how effective teaching is to help you learn well.

We wish you all the best for the future and are confident that you will all be able to play an important part in helping the school get better.

Yours sincerely

David Speakman

Lead inspector

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