

Sir John Offley CofE (VC) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124289
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	359627
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Derek Aitken

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	151
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Baines
Headteacher	Sally-Anne Ward-Scott
Date of previous school inspection	29 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twelve lessons were observed and seven teachers were seen. Scrutinies of pupils' work in writing and in mathematics were carried out. Inspectors held discussions with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils, and with a very few parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documents, including policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of pupils, self-evaluation records and assessment information. The inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires from 62 parents and carers, 82 pupils and nine staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Inspectors looked at how well pupils are developing their writing skills.
- They considered how well more-able pupils were supported in their learning.
- They explored the degree of success the school has had in removing inconsistencies in teaching since the last inspection.
- They evaluated the impact of recent changes in the senior leadership team on provision and pupils' attainment.
- They considered whether recent changes in provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage had bedded in sufficiently to support the school's view of good outcomes for children.

Information about the school

Sir John Offley is smaller than most primary schools. A very large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a mixed-age Nursery/Reception class. There are six further classes. These are four mixed-age classes for pupils in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2. Upper Key Stage 2 pupils are taught in two single-age classes.

Some changes in the senior leadership team took place in May 2010. Since September 2010, the school has been taking part in a local authority programme to raise attainment. The school has national Healthy Schools status and its other awards include the Activemark.

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

Sir John Offley is a satisfactory school. Pupils are cared for well by the staff and they enjoy coming to school, as reflected in their attendance which is above average. Attainment in English and mathematics in Year 6 dipped significantly in 2009 and 2010. Leaders and managers have worked effectively to tackle this decline. Attainment is now broadly average again in Year 6 and the rate of pupils' progress has improved in Key Stage 2. Pupils' achievement and outcomes are satisfactory and this means that Sir John Offley prepares pupils satisfactorily for the next stages of their lives.

Children get off to a satisfactory start in the Nursery and Reception Year. The new Early Years Foundation Stage leader has already implemented changes to address previous weaknesses in provision. Children's progress is improving, but the full impact of this good work is not yet evident and the outdoor area does not provide a full range of stimulating experiences for children. School leaders demonstrate a firm commitment to raising pupils' attainment. They have implemented more regular tracking and assessment procedures. As a result of this closer link between lesson planning and assessment, teaching has improved and, although satisfactory overall, the proportion of good lessons has increased. Some inconsistencies remain. In some lessons, the pace drops, which restricts the time pupils have to learn independently. The curriculum has strengths, particularly in ensuring pupils' sense of security in school. This is reflected in the quality of pupils' personal development and well-being, which is good. However, best use is not made of curricular opportunities to consolidate and extend pupils' writing skills.

The capacity of the school to improve further is satisfactory. The leadership is focused firmly on raising attainment through better teaching. School self-evaluation is broadly accurate, but stronger on pastoral aspects of provision than academic ones. Teamwork has been enhanced as the school has successfully increased the range of opportunities for leaders other than the headteacher to monitor provision. Currently, some of these systems, such as the arrangements for assuring the quality of teaching, lack sufficient rigour to ensure rapid improvement.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good throughout the school by:
 - ensuring all lessons move at a brisk pace to maximise opportunities for pupils' independent learning

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- improving the rigour of systems for monitoring, evaluating and developing teaching and learning
- Raise pupils' attainment in writing by making better use of opportunities for pupils to develop their extended writing skills
- Enhance the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring recent improvements are embedded fully
 - developing further the outside area to provide children with exciting experiences to develop their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils achieve satisfactorily. Their skills when they join Year 1 are, in most years, average. Currently, the attainment of pupils in Year 6 in English and mathematics is a little below average, which represents satisfactory progress for these pupils from their starting points at the beginning of Key Stage 2. Observations of pupils' learning and progress in lessons and work scrutinies showed a notable increase in the proportions of pupils working at age-related expectations, especially in Key Stage 2. More-able pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 can justify their calculations in mathematics, while middle-attaining pupils are able to draw inferences from bar-charts, work out simple fractions and convert them to correct percentages. When teaching is good, lower-attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This was demonstrated in a Key Stage 1 literacy lesson when these pupils showed good understanding of complex terminology, such as dialogue and alliteration. Pupils' enthusiasm for and skills in extended writing show some variation, with girls generally outperforming boys in this respect.

Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to their learning. They relate well to each other and the staff and most are responsive in lessons. They say that thoughtless actions are potentially harmful to others and know that they would alert the staff if they were to see an unfamiliar adult on site. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, as reflected in the school's awards. The vast majority of pupils behave well and act responsibly both in the classroom and outside at play. Pupils' good sense of community is demonstrated by their eager participation in assemblies, both as singers and in 'hands-on' roles. They make very effective use of opportunities to help others and to contribute to their own well-being in school as school councillors and in other leadership roles. Pupil leaders carry out their roles with pride, conscious of their responsibilities as role-models for their fellows. Pupils' workplace skills are satisfactory due to their broadly average standards in literacy and numeracy.

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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	3
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	3
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?

Teaching includes some strengths. Teachers manage pupils well and build good relationships between pupils by providing them with useful opportunities to discuss ideas with each other. Teachers' questioning is sensitive, allowing pupils time to express their ideas fully. Planning for literacy and numeracy lessons, usually, reflects good use of assessment information to match work to the differing age ranges and levels of attainment in their classes. The pace of some lessons drops when pupils spend too long on the carpet and this holds back the learning of the older pupils in the mixed-age classes and the more-able pupils. Opportunities are sometimes missed to challenge pupils and move them on in their learning through precisely targeted verbal feedback. While the quality of support provided by additional adults is good in some lessons, in others it is too variable to secure good progress for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Marking is largely constructive and is structured effectively to engage pupils in dialogue about the quality of their work, but it does not always make clear whether pupils have reached their targets.

The curriculum is being modified usefully to enable pupils to acquire a wider range of skills through topic-based learning. This has had a good impact on pupils' motivation as they are able to choose themes which interest them and select resources independently for research purposes. Extra-curricular activities, some of which are targeted at specific groups, are popular with pupils and there is some enrichment for more -able pupils

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through local partnerships. The school does not make best use of existing opportunities to enable all groups of pupils to consolidate and apply their literacy skills, especially in writing, across the curriculum.

The school works successfully to nurture the personal and social skills of its pupils. Records indicate that leaders have identified pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable at an early stage. Appropriate actions are undertaken, following careful deliberation. Most support programmes, including those which involve liaison with external agencies, are monitored well so that their impact on pupils' well-being can be evaluated clearly. Individual education plans are reviewed regularly and adjusted following discussions with parents and carers and in the light of the most recent assessments. Pupils are counselled skilfully during 'thinking and talking' sessions in the 'nurture room' to enable them to resolve conflicts and to work out next steps for themselves. The school's effective procedures for promoting attendance have ensured that attendance rates have remained above average for some years.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders, including the governing body, have good aspirations for raising standards and accelerating pupils' progress. Participation in a local authority programme is providing a useful steer for further improvement. Leaders have drawn logical conclusions from the first term of involvement, which has enabled clear priorities to be identified and pursued this term. Although leaders have not shied away from tackling identified areas for improvement, some shortfalls exist in the analysis and rigour of systems for monitoring pupils' progress and teaching and learning across the school. These shortfalls have prevented the school from making a significant step-change to the quality of provision since the last inspection and are reflected in moderately challenging expectations for pupils' progress. The governing body has clear oversight of the school's good arrangements for safeguarding pupils. The arrangements include regularly documented discussions at staff meetings on potentially vulnerable pupils. The school's systems for promoting community cohesion are well established. Audits and appropriate plans have been drawn up and evaluated. The school promotes equalities and tackles discrimination satisfactorily, as reflected in satisfactory outcomes for all groups of pupils.

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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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children start in the Nursery, their skills and knowledge levels are below those expected for their age. Several children did not make sufficient progress last year, for example, in aspects of personal and social development, and literacy. The new leader is tackling these weaknesses determinedly. Teachers' planning and the regularity and rigour of assessments have improved with the result that the staff are now better equipped to plan for the next steps in children's learning. Various links are being established with parents and carers to enable them to contribute more usefully to their children's learning, for example, through the 'achievement tree'. These initiatives are already having a clear impact on the rate of children's progress. The curriculum is well balanced and children have easy access to the outdoors in clement weather to pursue their interests. While there are good elements in teaching, best practice is not yet established across the setting. Improvements have been made to the outside area, but it does not yet have sufficient quality to fire children's enthusiasm, curiosity or imagination. Good safeguarding arrangements ensure that children's welfare needs are met fully. Children, in turn, behave well. They know that one way of keeping themselves safe and healthy is by washing their hands after play before eating and they are keen to carry out little jobs of responsibility for the staff.

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

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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

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire is slightly above average. The statistical responses, as reflected in the table below, and the tone of comments received indicate that the large majority of parents and carers have a positive view of the school's work.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sir John Offley CofE (VC) 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 62 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 151 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	60	24	39	0	0	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	25	40	31	50	2	3	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	26	42	33	53	0	0	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	42	32	52	1	2	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	27	44	31	50	0	0	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	37	35	56	1	2	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	32	38	61	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)	18	29	29	47	5	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	40	27	44	0	0	3	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	26	32	52	2	3	4	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	27	37	60	3	5	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	21	34	28	45	5	8	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	44	29	47	0	0	1	2

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



14 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sir John Offley CofE (VC) Primary School, Crewe, CW3 9PJ

I would like to thank you for your help when the inspection team visited your school recently. This is what the inspectors found.

Yours is a satisfactory school, but there are some good things about it. The following are particularly important:

You feel safe in school because the staff look after you well.

You enjoy coming to school and behave well.

You are keen to support each other and play a full part in school life, such as assemblies, which make these occasions really enjoyable for everyone.

You get off to a satisfactory start in the Nursery and Reception Year. From Year 1 onwards, you make satisfactory progress. When you leave school at the end of Year 6, your attainment is broadly average. I have asked the headteacher and the staff to do some things to help you improve your attainment and learn better.

Make sure that all lessons move at a brisk pace so that you have more time for learning independently.

Check on your progress and learning very carefully, for example, when senior leaders observe your lessons.

Make best use of curriculum time to develop your writing skills.

Make sure that the positive changes senior leaders are making for the Nursery and Reception Year children bed in fully.

Provide really exciting experiences for the Nursery and Reception Year children in the outside area.

You can help by keeping up your above average attendance levels and by trying your best at all times, especially in your writing tasks.

Yours sincerely

Derek Aitken

Lead inspector

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