

Old Town Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107524
Local Authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	356171
Inspection dates	14–15 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Steven Hill

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Graham Codd
Headteacher	Mrs Janette Batty
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Ten lessons were observed, taught by four teachers. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils, a group of parents and carers and representatives of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at samples of pupils' books. They examined a range of documentation, particularly that relating to safeguarding, and data showing the tracking of pupils' progress. Questionnaires were analysed from pupils in Key Stage 2, from staff and from 44 parents and carers.

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

- The team investigated whether teachers were enabling pupils to make good progress in lessons, particularly by using assessment information to match work to pupils' varying needs.
- The records of pupils' progress over the course of last year were analysed to see to what extent learning has improved, and whether boys and girls make similar progress.
- The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage was checked to see whether weaknesses, identified at the last inspection, have been overcome.

Information about the school

This is a small primary school in a rural location. It has a dedicated class for children of Reception age, and three mixed-age classes for the rest of the pupils. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage and none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, but a large proportion of these pupils have high levels of need. About two-thirds of such pupils on the current roll started their primary education elsewhere. The current headteacher was appointed in October 2010, having been acting headteacher for the previous year.

The school has an out-of-school club that operates both breakfast and after-school sessions. It is managed by the governing body.

The school has recently attained national Healthy School status.

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

The school provides a good education for its pupils, following major improvements in teaching and assessment in the last year. After the previous inspection, progress declined to satisfactory and the school's own records show variable progress across the school in this time. Last year, however, boys and girls made similarly good progress across the school, although pupils did better in English than in mathematics. The key to the improvement is a more thorough tracking of pupils' attainment from term to term. Assessments have increased in frequency and quality. This helps teachers to match work much more accurately to the needs of individual pupils. It also enables the rapid identification of any pupils who start to fall behind, so that intervention programmes can be put in place to help them catch up. As a result, pupils make good progress, although attainment remains average at the end of Year 6. This is because the recent good progress has not had time to make a full impact on standards, which are judged over a three-year period. Pupils' progress in mathematics lags behind that in English, because the assessment systems in the subject are not as rigorous and consistent. Leaders have identified this and have plans to introduce a new system.

The good progress is verified by the good teaching and learning seen during the inspection. Teachers manage classes well and plan lessons that engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm. They use assessment information effectively to provide different work for different groups, and explain new ideas clearly. Teachers vary, however, in the extent to which they use different strategies to involve all pupils when they work together as a class.

Pupils' good academic achievement is matched by their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their enjoyment of learning is enhanced by a wide-ranging curriculum with extensive enrichment, particularly in sport. Behaviour is good and boys and girls from different backgrounds get on well together. Pupils are very accepting of difference and are welcoming to newcomers. They make a strong contribution to the school and to the local community. They enjoy learning about the variety of people around the world in geography or religious education lessons. Their lessons in personal, social, health and citizenship education extend their understanding and empathy for others, and they often raise money for people less fortunate than themselves. However, they have too few opportunities to interact directly with people from communities beyond the locality, either in this country or abroad.

Good care, guidance and support underpin the positive and harmonious ethos of the school. The school is particularly successful in supporting pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable, actively drawing in outside agencies to complement the good work done by staff.

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The provision in the Reception class, the weakest area at the last inspection, has improved and is now of good quality. The school's monitoring of both provision and outcomes gives leaders a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and has been very effective in driving improvements over the last year. The capacity for sustaining improvements is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and improve progress, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - – consolidating the improvements made in teaching, especially by consistently using strategies to fully involve pupils throughout the lesson
 - – improving assessment and its use in mathematics, through a more rigorous and reliable system.
- Extend the school's strong contribution to community cohesion locally by:
 - – giving pupils more opportunities to interact with the variety of contrasting communities in the United Kingdom beyond the immediate locality
 - – making better links with communities overseas.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children enter the Reception class with skills that vary within each cohort and from year to year, but are usually in line with expectations or a little below. Boys and girls from different backgrounds and of different abilities now all make similarly good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do well because teachers match work closely to their needs. Recently-arrived pupils are given good support to settle in and soon make the same good progress as their classmates. Pupils who struggle to concentrate or to conform to accepted standards of behaviour often succeed in learning because of well-judged support and firm guidance from classroom assistants, as well as the cheerful support and acceptance of their classmates.

Pupils behave well in lessons and try hard to succeed. Pupils from Year 2 responded enthusiastically to their teacher's high expectations when tackling problems involving place value. They shared their ideas together sensibly and were confident in asking for help when puzzled. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 made good progress in extending their understanding of key scientific concepts about hot and cold. They listened attentively to their teacher and contributed suggestions confidently and enthusiastically. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 developed their understanding of mathematical series well when they persevered with challenging questions. They successfully started to generalise their conclusions, and write them as algebraic formulae. Pupils' good collaborative skills and positive relationships, as well as their good progress in learning, prepare them well for the future.

Pupils feel safe in the school and are confident that adults will deal with any problems that arise. They know how they can contribute to their own safety. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and participate enthusiastically in exercise, including the very wide range of sporting opportunities that the school provides. They have good relationships with each other and with staff, and are friendly, polite and sensible. They contribute well to the community in school through a variety of responsibilities that they undertake conscientiously, and are fully involved in the life of the village. Older pupils are

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kind and considerate towards younger ones. This was observed during a skipping 'challenge' when the older pupils ensured that the Reception children were fully involved and enjoyed the exercise.

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	3
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?

Teaching and learning are good across the school. Good relationships and well-established routines ensure that lessons are orderly and purposeful. Pupils respect and like their teachers, so try to please them by working hard and behaving well. When pupils work independently or in groups, teachers monitor their ongoing progress well so that any misconceptions can be addressed at once. At other times, when the class works together, teachers sometimes get pupils to discuss their ideas in pairs to clarify their understanding, and keep them actively engaged. Similarly, pupils are sometimes encouraged to write their answers on small whiteboards, which maintains their interest and gives the teachers immediate feedback about their understanding. However, opportunities to use such strategies are not always taken. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given work that is closely adapted to their needs. They are often helped to make progress because skilled teaching assistants challenge them to be independent, whilst helping them to think through their ideas.

The curriculum covers a wide range of interesting topics that pupils enjoy. Information and communication technology is a strength and is used to support learning in a range of

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subjects. There is a very wide variety of enrichment. For example, outdoor education is greatly enhanced by the pupils' long-term commitment to acting as guardians of Hardcastle Crag, a local beauty spot. All pupils in Years 3 and 4 have the chance to learn a brass instrument, and everyone has two opportunities to take part in a residential visit during their time in Key Stage 2. Pupils enjoy the many and varied clubs they can take part in through the year, including a number that are organised by pupils themselves for their schoolmates.

Good care, guidance and support underpin pupils' good personal development. The consistent reinforcement of positive values by all staff ensures that pupils develop a good understanding of right and wrong, and follow rules sensibly. They are keen to help others. Pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable are supported by staff, but also by the acceptance and kindness of their classmates. Good use is made of outside agencies to support these pupils, and to target the right provision on pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The well-organised out of school club makes a good contribution to the enjoyment, progress and well-being of pupils who attend. A themed approach each week is used to prepare varied and interesting activities. At breakfast, a range of healthy options is enjoyed by all, and pupils of all ages enjoy the social, relaxed environment. The Reception children who attend are confident and settled in the club.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Very clear direction from the headteacher, with the backing of a high level of teamwork from staff, has driven significant improvements in teaching and learning over the last year. All leaders are fully involved in monitoring pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. This has led to clear feedback to colleagues to help them improve their practice. It has also enabled subject leaders to share their expertise, raising achievement further. Governance is good. The governing body gives strong support to staff, based on a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This means it can, and does, hold the school to account for its performance. Governors have a good grasp of safeguarding procedures and contribute to the effectiveness of these. Documentation is of good quality and the school takes full account of the views of parents and carers, and responds to their concerns. Any issues that arise are considered carefully and dealt with thoroughly but proportionately.

The school has very positive relationships with all groups of parents and carers, and keeps them well informed about their children's progress. Equal opportunities are promoted well,

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and a previous disparity between the progress of boys and girls has been eliminated. The school works very successfully to ensure that pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are enabled to take a full part in school life and succeed academically and socially. Partnerships with a range of agencies support this well. Similarly, partnerships with other organisations, including local schools, have promoted developments in the curriculum, with the Sports Partnership making a particularly strong contribution. The school promotes community cohesion very well locally, but its work further afield is very patchy.

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	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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Reception class is well led and managed. The two teachers have worked closely together with the headteacher to develop good provision. Major improvements have been made since the previous inspection. Teaching is good and children are given a wide variety of interesting activities that are tightly matched to their needs and interests, and which engage their enthusiasm. Children are happy and feel safe and relaxed in school. Staff provide a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities, and intervene well to develop children's thinking and to extend their vocabulary. Children show high levels of enjoyment and independence in the class. They chat to each other confidently about their play, handle equipment with competence and concentrate well when working with an adult. Children have good opportunities to undertake a wide range of activities outdoors, although direct access is not possible so there cannot be free-flow between indoor and outdoor activities. Children make good progress and achieve well from starting points that vary from year to year. Attainment when children go into Year 1 is broadly average. A concentration on developing children's understanding of how letters in words relate to sounds is proving very successful. Children tackle writing tasks well, and are confident in starting to get their thoughts onto paper.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
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 relatively high return of questionnaires. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and what it provides for their children. They particularly value that their children are happy and safe, that teaching is good, and that the school is well led and managed. A number of parents or carers whose children started late at the school commented very positively on the warm welcome they had received, their children's enjoyment of school, and the improvements in their learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Old Town 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 inspectors received 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 90 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	70	13	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	75	10	23	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	32	73	11	25	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	73	10	23	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	38	86	6	14	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	77	8	18	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	70	12	27	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)	27	61	15	34	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	73	11	25	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	70	11	25	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	73	9	20	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	36	82	6	14	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	86	6	14	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	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.



16 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Old Town Primary School, Hebden Bridge, HX7 8RY

Thank you for all your help and your warm welcome during the school's recent inspection. You told us that you enjoyed school and that you all got along well together. We were particularly pleased to see that your behaviour is good and that you work hard.

Your school is giving you a good education and has helped you to make better progress in the last year. The teachers are good at helping you learn, and they have been keeping a careful eye on how everyone is doing, so they can give extra help to anyone who needs it. This has not worked quite so well in mathematics as in English, so we have agreed that they are going to help you improve your progress in this subject. To do this, they are going to introduce a better system of checking your standards, and are going to use different ways to get you really involved in all your lessons.

You are becoming very thoughtful and sensible young people, and it was good to see how kind you are to younger children, and to learn how welcoming you are to pupils who move to the school from elsewhere. You told me that you enjoy learning about different people from around the world, and I have agreed with your headteacher that the school will try to give you more chances to get in touch with people from different communities around this country and abroad.

The adults are keen to make the school even better, and you can help by keeping up your hard work and good behaviour, and trying especially hard in mathematics. I hope you carry on enjoying life at Old Town Primary.

Yours sincerely

Steven Hill

Lead inspector

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