

Offley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133418
Local Authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	360508
Inspection dates	30–31 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Shirley Herring

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	329
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Danielle Doubleday
Headteacher	Mrs Jenny Davies
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 12 teachers in 21 lessons, held meetings with staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and pupils, and spoke to parents and carers informally before school. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, all documentation regarding the safeguarding of pupils, assessments and tracking of pupils' progress, the analysis of progress of different groups of pupils, the school development plan and reports from the School Improvement Partner. They scrutinised 57 questionnaires completed by parents and carers as well as those completed by pupils and staff.

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

- The extent of the achievement of more-able pupils in reading in Key Stage 1.
- The extent of the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The extent of the effectiveness of management actions in bringing about improvements.
- The extent to which outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are a strength.

Information about the school

Most of the pupils in this larger-than-average-sized school are of White British heritage and the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Fewer pupils than is average speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who join the school other than at the usual time is below average but increasing. Two of the 12 classes contain more than one age group and older pupils are taught mathematics in sets according to their ability. There have been several staffing changes since the last inspection and a new deputy headteacher has joined the school. He has deputised for the headteacher during a short period of absence, which included the inspection. Extensive building work is nearing completion, linking the infant and junior schools which were amalgamated in 2007.

The independent before- and after-school club and the pre-school provision on site are inspected separately and the report is available 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

This is a good school. It has outstanding strengths in its curriculum which has contributed extensively to pupils' impressive personal development. Attendance is consistently high, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school and contributing to their excellent preparation for the future. Strong leadership, including use of examples of outstanding practice, have resulted in significant improvements in teaching and in pupils' learning and progress.

After considerable variations attainment has been above average at the end of Key Stage 1 for the past two years. In the 2010 assessments more-able pupils did not do quite so well in reading as in other subjects but the school took prompt action, particularly in emphasising reading for enjoyment, and the number reading at a more advanced level has improved. In 2008 standards fell sharply in Key Stage 2 to below average. The school took effective action to improve teaching, including extensive training and support. Exceptional improvements in the curriculum included an emphasis on pupils using their skills, for example in solving problems and applying their skills in other subjects. Rigorous procedures to monitor pupils' progress were introduced and have been used effectively to identify and address any slowing of progress at an early stage. This has resulted in an improvement in attainment for the past two years to above average. The school's records and the work of pupils currently in Year 6 indicate that this improvement has been maintained. Most of the teaching observed during the inspection was good and some was outstanding, and the school is ambitious to improve this further. There are several examples of high-quality marking within the school to guide pupils on what they need to do to improve. However, this is not yet uniform throughout the school.

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good overall and children achieve well. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are taught systematically and well in both Reception classes so children make good progress. However, the clarity of the focus on learning in those activities that children choose for themselves varies between classes.

The school has a good capacity to improve. The school's rigorous evaluation of its work is largely accurate and used effectively to plan improvements. There have been good improvements in teaching since the last inspection, increasing the challenge in lessons to enhance learning. Consequently, standards and achievement have risen. The school has made extensive efforts to engage parents and carers and these continue.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the examples of high-quality marking are shared and applied consistently across the school to guide pupils on how to improve.

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- Extend the good practice seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage to both classes, so that those activities children choose for themselves always have a clear focus on children's learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils say they enjoy school because of interesting topics such as Narnia, school trips and the wide range of activities after school. Learning is most effective when lessons move at a fast pace and teachers ask challenging questions that encourage pupils to think and develop their own ideas. This was seen when older pupils were asked to predict the probability of producing different number combinations when throwing two dice and testing their ideas. Learning opportunities are reduced when occasionally a teacher's explanation is too long and pupils become restless as they wait to get on with independent tasks. Behaviour is good and this makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

Pupils enter the school with a range of skills that, overall, are typical for their age and they make good progress and achieve well. Attainment has improved significantly since 2008 and standards were above average in both English and mathematics in 2010. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well because of the good support they receive. The very small minority of pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well because of the good support they receive from adults and also from other pupils.

Pupils say they feel extremely safe and are particularly knowledgeable about internet safety because of the emphasis placed on this aspect by teachers. They took great notice of the safety briefing given by builders during the current construction work. They have an excellent understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet and have extensive opportunities for vigorous exercise in school. Pupils willingly take on a wide range of responsibilities in school, including running the school shop. They make an excellent contribution to the wider community as they discuss local issues with civic leaders. Older pupils created and sold products to raise funds for the benefit of the school and also of an overseas project. Consistently high attendance, good basic skills and the opportunities to work with others provide an excellent preparation for pupils' future well-being. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and their knowledge of different faiths and cultures is developing.

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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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
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 is good overall and some outstanding practice was observed. This is characterised by high expectations of pupils who rise to the challenge. This was seen in a literacy lesson where pupils checked their own and their partner's work to ensure that the instructions they had devised for making Chinese tea were precise in every detail. Lessons are generally well planned to meet the needs of different groups and teaching assistants are well-informed and make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Occasionally lessons lack pace and so pupils become distracted. In some classes marking is used very effectively to help pupils to improve, though this is not yet consistent throughout the school.

The school's rich and creative curriculum provides pupils with memorable and enjoyable learning experiences. There is a strong emphasis on using and developing literacy and numeracy skills in specific lessons and in other subjects so that pupils achieve good standards. This is evident in the high quality of pupils' topic books that are displayed with pride and chronicle the wide range of activities undertaken, for example about Victorians. These are considered as examples of outstanding practice by the local authority and shared with other schools. The strong programme for personal, social and health education makes a significant contribution to pupils' impressive personal development. There is an extensive range of additional activities outside the classroom which are well

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attended. An extensive range of visits and visitors, such as the African drummers, enhance the curriculum.

Parents, carers and pupils agree that the school has good arrangements for taking care of all its pupils, including the most vulnerable. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified at an early stage. They receive good support in the classroom, in small groups or individually, so that they make good progress and achieve well. The school has good access to a range of other professionals to secure specialist support and advice where needed. There are good systems for introducing pupils to school and when they change classes, minimising any interruption in learning. The school is developing good procedures to identify and address the needs of the increasing number of pupils who join the school after the usual time. Consequently, they settle quickly and make good progress. The school's policy is used consistently to guide pupils' behaviour but guidance on the next steps in learning are not so uniform.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school is led and managed well. Leaders monitor and evaluate the school's work effectively and use the information well to bring about improvements. There is a good sense of staff, including many new to the school, working together to move the school forward. Senior leaders are looking to build on this so that all staff cooperate closely with each other to monitor and improve learning further.

Strong actions by the leadership team, including providing examples of excellent practice, have resulted in considerable improvements in teaching. Extensive training and discussions have prepared staff well for planning and implementing a more creative curriculum, leading to improvements in pupils' enjoyment and personal development as well as in English and mathematics. Teaching is now good overall and sometimes outstanding and so learning is moving at a good rate. The school is providing well-targeted support to improve the quality of teaching even further. Senior leaders have been involved extensively in planning the new building extensions and are now examining ways to ensure the most effective use of these to enhance provision.

The school's engagement with parents and carers is good. The school provides many opportunities to inform parents and carers about the curriculum and their children's progress and occasions such as class assemblies are very well attended. The school has good links with other schools locally to share good practice and staff training. Links with other organisations such as the Wider Opportunities for Music, the Let's Get Cooking project and the Bikeability Scheme enhance learning opportunities.

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Governors are a regular presence in school. They have a good understanding of its strengths and needs through examining data and through links with subject leaders. The governing body supports the school well, for example during the work linking the Key Stage 1 and 2 buildings. The governing body is well aware of its responsibilities regarding safeguarding. The recommended systems for safeguarding pupils are in place and are closely interwoven into the school's work. For example, there are good displays and timely reminders to pupils about the safe use of the internet.

The school is committed to equal opportunities and pupils are clear that discrimination is not to be tolerated. The school analyses the progress of different groups carefully and provides good support to narrow any gaps in achievement.

Community cohesion is good. There are good links with the local church, and recycling and road safety officers are involved in local projects. The school has links with schools in Africa, Spain and China and is seeking to develop more regional and national links.

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	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the school with a range of skills that are typical for their age. They have strengths in aspects of personal and creative development. They make good progress and attainment is above what is usual for their age by the time they enter Year 1, particularly in personal development and counting. The school has taken effective steps to address an identified weakness in boys' writing; for example, boys are being motivated to write using clipboards to note what is happening outside in the construction area. Letter sounds and counting skills are taught systematically and well throughout the Reception Year so children are making good progress in these aspects. There are good examples of a wide range of purposeful, practical activities that show a clear understanding of how young children learn. However, this is not consistent between the classes. In some instances

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activities that children choose for themselves are not clearly focused on what children need to learn.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. The manager monitors teaching and learning and provides and leads by example in supporting staff to further their expertise. There are good procedures for assessing and tracking children's work and these are used well to bring about improvements. The school has good procedures for introducing children to school, including links with the pre-school settings that children have attended. There are good links with parents and carers, who enjoy contributing to their children's Learning Journeys by recording their progress. Recommended procedures for the welfare and safeguarding of children are in place.

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

Just fewer than 20% of questionnaires were returned by parents and carers, which is below what is usual. Most of the parents and carers who returned a questionnaire were happy with their children's experiences at school. Inspection evidence confirms that children enjoy school and that the school keeps them safe. Inspectors found that the school is led and managed well and that there is a good level of support and challenge for individuals according to their needs. The school sends out questionnaires to parents and carers to seek their views. As a result, the school arranged a further opportunity for parents and carers to meet their child's teacher in the autumn term and also changed the timing of talks about the curriculum so that more could attend. Governors are available at parents' evenings to talk to parents and carers and hear their views. Nevertheless, a very small minority of parents and carers feel that more could be done to take account of their views and keep them better informed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Offley 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 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 342 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	68	15	26	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	38	67	18	32	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	31	54	20	35	6	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	53	21	37	5	9	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	34	60	18	32	3	5	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	56	18	32	6	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	51	25	44	1	2	1	2
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)	21	37	23	40	4	7	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	44	25	44	5	9	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	32	32	56	4	7	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	39	21	37	9	16	2	4
The school is led and managed effectively	24	42	23	40	7	12	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	58	17	30	4	7	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.



4 April 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Offley Primary School, Sandbach CW11 1GY

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and in groups and hearing how much you enjoy school. You said you particularly liked the interesting topics and the wide range of activities after school. I could see when I was in a Year 6 literacy lesson how many of the exciting events in Narnia helped pupils to improve their own writing. We were impressed by your excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and safe and by your high attendance. Well done! You willingly take on a tremendous number of responsibilities, for example as school councillors, and this really helps other pupils and the school.

We found out that Offley is a good school and we know that you and your parents and carers think so too. In fact we think the curriculum is outstanding, which is the highest grade we can give. You make good progress and you attain standards that are above the level expected for your age by the time you leave Year 6. Lessons are interesting and there is always someone to give you extra help when you need it or to provide you with a further challenge if you have found something easy.

It is part of our job to suggest ways in which even a good school could be better. Adults are going to make sure that:

- they let you know exactly what you need to do to improve when they mark your work
- they make sure that those activities that reception children choose for themselves always help them to learn.

I hope you enjoy the lovely new extension when it is completed. The new furniture for the library looked very attractive.

Yours sincerely

Shirley Herring

Lead inspector

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