

Otford Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118279
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	379582
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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	314
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bryan Finn
Headteacher	Natasha Caisley
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2007
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons or part lessons, taught by 13 different teachers. The inspection team examined the school's policies, assessment information, pupils' work, teachers' plans and school improvement planning. Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, the staff, members of the governing body and parents and carers and pupils. The inspectors analysed 109 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, 63 from Key Stage 2 pupils and 25 from staff.

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

- How effectively the school has accelerated pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics.
- To what extent teachers convey high expectations and use assessment to match tasks to pupils' needs so that they are challenged and make good progress.
- How well leaders and managers evaluate performance and take effective action to bring about improvement.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. There are two Reception classes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The headteacher started at the school in September 2011.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Otford Primary is a satisfactory school. There are some good aspects to its work. After the previous inspection, the school's performance declined. Year 6 English attainment steadily fell from well above average to average levels by the summer of 2011. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 declined from good to inadequate. Past inconsistencies in teaching and assessment were factors contributing to this decline. The new headteacher, key leaders and most staff are showing considerable determination to improve the school by tackling past underachievement. Pupils now make satisfactory progress and there are positive indicators that pupils' attainment is likely to improve in next year's national tests.

Good care, guidance and support contribute well to pupils' personal development. They make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn and work together in a positive and safe learning environment. They are courteous, friendly and well behaved. They feel safe and show a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Pupils make valuable contributions to the school and to the wider community. Productive partnerships have been formed with other schools and agencies. Partnerships with parents and carers have been strengthened and are good. Many parents and carers commented on how the school has improved since the arrival of the new headteacher. Typical comments were, 'The new head has already made a good impression', 'The new head is introducing good opportunities for the children and showing good leadership' and 'The parent/carer-school communication has improved immeasurably.'

On her appointment, the headteacher quickly reviewed the school's performance and correctly identified the most pressing areas for improvement. She and key leaders have taken positive action to raise expectations and challenge in teaching, strengthen assessment and extend pupils' opportunities for writing and mental mathematics. These actions are having a positive impact on pupils' learning in the classroom but the changes are taking time to have a full impact on improving pupils' attainment and on their progress over time.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a sound start. Provision and children's progress in this setting are satisfactory and improving. Activities are not always well matched to children's needs however, which slows progress for some. Teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is an improving picture. There are examples of outstanding teaching which provide a model for others, but consistently good and better practice is not seen frequently across the school. Teachers' explanations and questioning promote learning well. In the most successful lessons, teachers convey high expectations, demonstrate considerable subject expertise, and provide challenging and exciting tasks for pupils. In too many lessons however, activities are not sufficiently well matched to pupils' different needs, particularly the most able.

Pupils' learning is sometimes over directed by the teacher and there are insufficient opportunities for them to plan and organise their own work. In some cases, the pace and flow of the lesson are too slow and learning declines.

The new headteacher has quickly gained the confidence and respect of pupils, parents, carers and most staff. She and key leaders have a clear overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses and positive action is taken to bring about improvements. The recent improvements are encouraging but have not been sustained over time as many initiatives are comparatively recent. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

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?

- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 to at least above average levels by increasing the proportion of good and outstanding teaching. Ensuring that in all lessons:
 - expectations of what pupils can do are consistently high
 - assessment is used effectively to match tasks to pupils' different abilities, especially the more-able
 - pupils are given opportunities to plan and organise their learning
 - learning and the lessons move on at a good pace.
- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and carefully match activities to children's needs so they make good progress in all areas of learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills a little above expected levels for their age. Across the school, pupils enjoy the activities provided and show positive attitudes to learning. They spoke enthusiastically to inspectors about their learning in lessons: 'I like the different subjects', 'We learn new things' and 'I like literacy and science'. Most pupils, including the most able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress. Attainment by the end of Year 6 has been average recently in English and mathematics and there are signs that this is improving. Taking pupils' attainment, progress and learning in lessons, their achievement is satisfactory.

In a number of lessons, pupils make good progress in applying speaking and listening skills, particularly when discussing their learning in pairs or small groups. In others, opportunities for discussion are missed. Pupils make satisfactory progress in reading and many enjoy the wide range of books available. There are positive indications that pupils' writing is improving, particularly in upper Key Stage 2. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils made exceptional progress in writing a piece of persuasive

text. After being inspired by illustrations and their teacher's very clear demonstrations they used rhetorical questions, emotive language and flattered the reader to great effect. Their writing was imaginative and well presented. Grammar, punctuation and spelling were mostly accurate. Pupils are beginning to apply their writing skills in other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 4 as part of their Victorian topic wrote interesting newspaper articles and letters after being motivated by Berlie Doherty's book, 'Street Child'. Pupils' progress in mathematics was satisfactory in most lessons. Teaching does not always build sufficiently on pupils' previous learning in order to stretch their thinking and learning further.

Pupils are friendly and demonstrate positive qualities, such as cooperation and consideration for others. They work well together in teams or small groups especially in the upper part of the school. Pupils feel well cared for at school and are confident that there are always grown-ups they can turn to if they need support. They choose healthy foods and participate enthusiastically in a range of physical activities. As several pupils said, 'Activities in PE are fun.' Pupils willingly take on additional responsibilities when provided. They support those less fortunate than themselves by raising funds for a range of appeals and charities. The school choir performs in the local community. Attendance levels are broadly average and improving. Their personal and social skills develop well and they make satisfactory progress in acquiring and applying literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their next stages of education.

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	3
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 improving. There are examples of good and even outstanding practice, but inconsistencies remain and teaching is typically satisfactory. Outstanding lessons were seen in information and communication technology in Year 5 and in English and mathematics in Year 6. In these lessons, pupils made exceptional progress because of the teachers' enthusiasm and strong subject knowledge. Expectations were high and pupils were challenged by exciting tasks which were well matched to their needs. In most lessons, pupils know what they are expected to learn because teachers effectively share the learning objectives with them. Specific indicators or success criteria are provided to guide pupils' learning and to help them assess their own progress. Teachers use questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding of new learning. Assessment has been strengthened. However, in too many lessons, activities and tasks are not sufficiently challenging, as assessment information is not used consistently well to plan teaching. Over-prescriptive worksheets requiring a limited written response from the pupils impede their skills in planning and organising their own work. Teaching assistants are usually well deployed and provide clear guidance and support for pupils who need it. The marking of pupils' work is consistent and increasingly helpful. In the best practice, good work is recognised and constructive comments guide improvement.

The curriculum contributes well to pupils' personal development. Its impact on pupils' academic progress is satisfactory and improving. A number of strategies have been implemented to accelerate pupils' progress in English and mathematics, such as extending writing opportunities and problem-solving approaches in mathematics. Popular clubs include choir, dance, gym and football. Visitors and trips enhance pupils' learning. A Year 6 residential trip to Isle of Wight will provide new exciting outdoor activities and develop pupils' social and problem-solving skills.

Care, guidance and support are clear strengths. Adults in the school know the pupils well and establish good relationships with them. Pupils, parents and carers appreciate the positive and safe environment created. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with the support they need to take up the opportunities the school offers. In partnership with other agencies, the school is successful in supporting pupils and their families who need additional help. The school works effectively to monitor and promote attendance which is average and steadily improving.

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?

The new headteacher quickly identified the need to improve provision and to tackle past underachievement. She is increasing the involvement of teachers and support staff in the analysis of data and self-evaluation so that all are clear about how well the school is performing. The monitoring of teaching is starting to help influence improvements in teaching and there are well-thought-out plans to further increase the sharing of the best practice among the teaching force.

Members of the governing body show a clear understanding of the school's performance. They are supportive and provide appropriate challenge in order to hold the school to account. The governors have taken positive action to help drive the needed school improvement. Procedures to protect and safeguard pupils have improved recently and meet requirements. There are clear and robust plans to further improve this area. Safe practices for pupils are promoted well through the school's teaching and curriculum.

The positive partnerships with other schools and agencies are having a good impact on the school's care and on the personal development for pupils. Equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily. Discrimination is not tolerated. However, improvements to pupils' progress have not been sustained over a significant period. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily as the school has a clear understanding of the community it serves and relationships are harmonious through the school. There is a productive link with a village in France. However, partnerships with other schools and projects to increase pupils' understanding of cultural diversity within the United Kingdom and across the globe are less well developed.

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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The new leader is enthusiastic and has built good partnerships with parents and carers. Good care, guidance and welfare mean that children feel safe, secure and grow in confidence. Children settle quickly and usually relate well to adults and to their peers. Children are keen and enjoy most of the activities provided. Teaching and the activities are satisfactory and improving. On occasions, children are over directed by the teacher and do not always have sufficient opportunities to explore, be creative or work independently. Systems to assess children's attainment are improving. However, activities are not always sufficiently inspiring and well matched to children's needs and learning can slow when this happens. Children make sound progress in speaking and listening. The teaching of letters and sounds receives appropriate attention and children make satisfactory progress in their early reading skills. There are increasing opportunities for children to acquire and practise early writing skills. Outdoor learning facilities and opportunities have been recently improved. There are further plans to include all areas of learning and to link outdoor to indoor learning.

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

There was an average response to the Ofsted questionnaire. Almost all the parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are happy with their children's experience at the school. They are especially pleased with their children's enjoyment and the leadership and approachability of the new headteacher. These positive views reflect the findings of the inspection. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concern about how well the school promotes healthy lifestyles, how well it takes account of their suggestions and concerns and the progress their children are making. The school is promoting healthy lifestyles well. The new headteacher has worked hard to form productive partnerships with parents and carers and is keen to take account of suggestions and concerns. Recent performance data indicate that pupils have not made sufficient progress through Key Stage 2. The headteacher and staff are taking positive steps to tackle this underachievement. Most pupils now make satisfactory progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Otford 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 109 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 314 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	75	69	33	30	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	49	45	55	50	4	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	45	41	58	53	3	3	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	37	61	56	8	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	40	37	66	61	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	39	61	56	4	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	35	60	55	9	8	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)	34	31	56	51	5	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	34	66	61	5	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	29	61	56	5	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	28	64	59	7	6	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	56	51	47	43	3	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	57	52	49	45	3	3	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



3 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Otford Primary School, Otford, Kent TN14 5PG

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school, giving us your views and showing us your work. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit. Yours is a satisfactory school which is making clear improvements.

These are the main strengths.

- You thoroughly enjoy school and the activities provided.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and fit.
- You feel safe at school because teachers and other adults take care of you and provide good guidance and support.
- You make valuable contributions to school life and to the wider community.
- There are good partnerships with other schools and agencies to support your learning.
- The school engages well with your parents and carers.
- The headteacher and key staff are taking steps to improve the school.

We have asked the headteacher and teachers to do the following things to improve areas of the school's work.

- Increase your progress so that you reach higher levels in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. We have asked teachers to match work more carefully to your abilities, to expect more from you and to ensure that your learning moves along at a quick pace. At times, you need more opportunity to plan and organise your work.
- Improve the Early Years Foundation Stage activities and ensure that these are not too easy or too hard so that children make good progress.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard, especially in English and mathematics. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts
Lead inspector

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