



# Oliver Tomkins C of E VA Junior School

Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number 126440  
LEA Swindon

Inspection number 275904  
Inspection dates 20 - 21 June 2005  
Reporting inspector Tim Boyce

Inspection deemed to have been carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 according to section 12(3) of the same act.

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Type of School	Junior	School address	Beaumaris Road
School category	Voluntary Aided		Toothill
Age range of pupils	7 - 11		Swindon
			Wiltshire
			SN5 8LW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01793 872100
Number on roll	235	Fax number	01793 872100
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr R Green
Date of previous inspection	9-13 November 1998	Headteacher	Mrs E Wood

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Age group	Published	Reference no.
7 - 11	July 2005	275904

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of Oliver Tomkins C of E VA Junior School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This is an average-sized junior school working in challenging circumstances in West Swindon. Most of the pupils are of white British descent and there are small numbers of Asian, Black African and mixed-heritage pupils. A small number of pupils have English as an additional language and are at an early stage of English language acquisition. In addition, there are several refugees and asylum seekers plus two Traveller children. The number of pupils with special educational needs is below average. These pupils have either moderate learning difficulties, problems with speech and communication or social and behavioural needs.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

This is an improving school that provides pupils with a satisfactory education and which works very hard to develop the personal well-being of its pupils with success. The school views itself as satisfactory and the inspection team agrees. Parents and pupils think the school is doing a good job and, as a result, the school's popularity in the community is growing. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory; the school has tackled successfully all the issues from the last report. The value for money is satisfactory.

Most pupils achieve satisfactorily and standards are average for English and below average for mathematics and science. Below-average standards are due mainly to the limited progress made by higher-attaining pupils, particularly in the application of key skills in solving problems across the curriculum. Teaching is most often satisfactory and teachers provide a suitable range of activities for most pupils. However, the tasks set do not always provide higher-attaining pupils with sufficient challenge.

The atmosphere in the school is inclusive and very positive and all staff work very hard to make every child feel valued. The views of staff, pupils and parents are sought and everyone is positive that their views are listened to and acted upon.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, although the leadership of the headteacher is particularly effective. The school works effectively with other local schools and organisations, and the scope for further improvement is good.

**Grade: 3**

### What the school should do to improve further

#### Focus on:

- improving the achievement of higher-attaining pupils
- develop further and apply problem-solving skills in mathematics and science and across the curriculum
- increase the amount of taught time to at least the recommended minimum and make better use of the time available, particularly in the morning sessions.

## Achievement and standards

Pupils reach satisfactory standards in English but below-average standards in mathematics and science. In 2004, standards were similar when compared to all schools but were well below average when compared to similar schools. However, the analysis of assessment data for 2005 indicates that most pupils in the current Year 6 have made satisfactory progress since Year 2.

Standards are rising steadily in English, particularly in writing, but improvement has stalled in mathematics and science because too few opportunities are available for using and applying skills across the curriculum. This is not enabling higher-attaining pupils to gain the higher levels. The limited time available for teaching is also having a negative impact on standards in science.

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils start the school with broadly average skills, knowledge and understanding, and whilst the progress they have made during the time they have been in school has not always been good enough in the past, it is now satisfactory because the teaching is consistently satisfactory or better. Despite the best efforts of the school to raise confidence and self-esteem, occasionally a few girls give up too easily when set work that is challenging or more open ended.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make satisfactory progress. Pupils with English as an additional language are effectively provided for, as are the small number of Traveller children.

### **Grade: 3**

## Personal development and well-being

Despite the very best efforts of the staff, who work very hard to support pupils and to provide positive role models, the personal development and well-being of most pupils are no better than satisfactory because many pupils have low self esteem and have negative views about education. Behaviour is satisfactory overall, although interviews with staff and pupils provide compelling evidence of continuing improvement. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and attitudes are satisfactory.

Pupils respond positively to the increased range of opportunities for them to have a say in the running of the school. When opportunities for independent learning are planned, pupils develop confidence and, as a result, make good progress. The school is working hard to increase this aspect of its provision. Pupils learn to be safe, economically aware and healthy and, particularly

through the development of the school council, develop a good awareness of the community and of the contribution they can make. Although attendance rates are satisfactory overall a small number of families persist in taking holidays during term time which has a negative impact on the learning of these pupils.

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is good; pupils are helped very effectively to gain a balanced view of society. The school has placed considerable emphasis on the moral and social development of its pupils, and pupils have a growing understanding of justice and self-respect. These aspects are taught well and have had a considerable impact on improving behaviour throughout the school. Spiritual development is well promoted in assemblies and, with cultural development, is appropriately emphasised through lessons and across all subjects of the curriculum.

**Grade: 3**

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching across the school is satisfactory. There are examples of good practice and no teaching is ineffective. In the best lessons, teachers use questioning and discussion well to make pupils think carefully. They set targets that help pupils to understand the standards that are expected and, in marking and discussion, ensure that pupils know what they need to do in order to improve.

Teachers consistently use a wide range of behaviour-management strategies to good effect. This ensures that the pupils with potentially challenging behaviour are engaged in their work and do not interrupt others. As a result, pupils generally make satisfactory progress in their learning. Teachers' planning is appropriately matched to the needs of lower and average-attaining pupils, and those with SEN. However, activities are not always planned to challenge higher-attaining pupils; as a result, they frequently do not make sufficient progress. In a similar way, although the school is working to develop its curriculum further, there are too few examples of investigative or open-ended activities, particularly in mathematics and science. These features slow the progress that is made and hamper the school in its drive to raise standards in these subjects.

**Grade: 3**

### **Curriculum and other activities**

The curriculum is effectively planned in relation to national requirements but, although the work planned covers a wide range, the time allocated for learning is less than that recommended for pupils of this age. This is having a negative impact on the standards achieved.

The school has made a good start in reviewing its curriculum, particularly in relation to the use of English and mathematics to support learning in other subjects, and in the development of investigative activities to develop learning further. However, the fact that so much time is allocated to English and mathematics means that the time available for other subjects is limited. This is having a negative impact on the standards achieved in science and some other subjects.

Through its lessons in citizenship and personal, social and health education, the school is successful in developing pupils' awareness of safe and healthy living and, particularly, their understanding of living in and contributing to the community. The curriculum is enriched well by a wide range of well-attended, extra-curricular activities.

**Grade: 3**

### **Care, guidance and support**

The care of pupils is good but, because of the challenging circumstances and the range of social difficulties that many children experience, the outcomes, whilst improving, are satisfactory. Parents recognise the quality of information that they are given about how well their children are doing and where they need to improve. Regular opportunities are planned for parents and teachers to meet, and reports are clearly written and helpful. Parents of pupils with SEN are kept well informed about their progress.

Child protection and health and safety procedures are clear and well understood by all staff. Teachers and other adults have a good understanding of their pupils' pastoral needs and development, and so are able to respond positively should difficulties arise. The majority of pupils feel that the school provides a safe environment for them.

The school has been successful in developing pupils' awareness of and care for each other. Pupils readily praise others' success, and the "playground buddies" and other systems ensure that pupils look after each other well. The school council is active in seeking to further develop playground and other activities because, as one observed, "Happy children learn well."

### **Grade 3**

## **Leadership and management**

Leadership and management are generally satisfactory. Key staff are developing their roles to satisfactory effect and are having a positive impact on their areas of responsibility. The leadership of the head teacher is good because, in addition to raising the standards and status of the school, she has provided it with a clear sense of purpose and has created a school environment in which everyone feels cared for and appreciated. The capacity for further improvement is good.

The school has satisfactory systems for checking how well it is doing and for identifying what it could do even better. It has produced a particularly useful school evaluation form that is remarkable for its candour and its concentration on the impact of its actions. The views of all members of the school community are welcomed and all are becoming aware of the need to raise standards further and are working hard together to provide the pupils with the best possible opportunities. The school works well in partnership with local schools and with support agencies to ensure that all pupils are given equal opportunities and are well supported in school.

Governance is satisfactory: governors are kept well informed and are fully involved in helping the school to maintain its hard-won improvement. Financial management is effective and suitable care is taken to ensure that the money available is allocated to the areas identified as priorities. Value for money is satisfactory.

The headteacher has appointed an enthusiastic and hard-working members of staff all of whom operate well as a team and who work hard to make the school an interesting and stimulating learning environment for the pupils.

### **Grade: 3**



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## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.</b>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	<b>3</b>	
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	<b>2</b>	
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	<b>n/a</b>	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	<b>3</b>	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	<b>Yes</b>	
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	<b>Yes</b>	

**ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	<b>3</b>	
The <i>standards</i> reached by learners	<b>3</b>	
How well learners' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	<b>3</b>	
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	<b>3</b>	

**PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING**

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	<b>3</b>	
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<b>3</b>	
The behaviour of learners	<b>3</b>	
How well learners enjoy their education	<b>3</b>	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	<b>3</b>	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	<b>3</b>	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community.	<b>2</b>	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	<b>3</b>	

**THE QUALITY OF PROVISION**

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	<b>3</b>	

**LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	<b>3</b>	
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	<b>3</b>	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	<b>3</b>	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	<b>3</b>	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	<b>3</b>	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	<b>3</b>	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	<b>Yes</b>	

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	<b>Delete as appropriate</b>
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are educated about sexual health.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe.</b>	<b>Delete as appropriate</b>
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements.	<b>Yes</b>
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place.	<b>Yes</b>
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	<b>Delete as appropriate</b>
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	<b>Yes</b>
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	<b>Delete as appropriate</b>
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams.	<b>Yes</b>
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in Key Stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form.	<b>NA</b>
Education for all learners aged 14-19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy.	<b>NA</b>

Alexandra House      T 0207 421 6800  
33 Kingsway          F 0207 421 6707  
London WC2B 6SE      [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



**Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.**

The School Council  
Oliver Tomkins C of E VA Junior School  
Beaumaris Road  
Toothill  
Swindon  
Wiltshire  
SN5 8LW

June 2005

Dear Children

Following our visit to your school we would like to thank you for making us so welcome and for sharing your thoughts with us and we would like to tell you what we found out about your school.

We think you go to a caring school where your headteacher and all the staff look after you so well. All the staff are really kind and they are working very hard to help you to learn. Your teachers prepare interesting lessons and are making really good use of interactive white boards to help you to enjoy your work, although sometimes the lessons are a bit too easy for the cleverest children.

You are all doing pretty well at English and we think that some of the writing that you do is good. Some of you are not doing so well at mathematics and science and we think that you need to get more chances to practice your mental arithmetic and your problem solving skills when you do work in other subjects.

Since you enjoy school so much we think you will be pleased to know that we have asked the school to find ways of making the school day a bit longer and to try and work out a way of fitting more for you to do each day.

We wish you well for the future and feel sure that your school will continue to improve.

Tim Boyce  
Lead inspector