



Oldfield Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111230
LEA Cheshire
Inspection number 278630
Inspection dates 26 September 2005 to 27 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs Lesley Traves CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Green Lane
School category	Community		Vicars Cross
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Chester, Cheshire CH3 5LB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01244 341772
Number on roll	205	Fax number	01244 321919
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr M Spooner
Date of previous inspection	3 July 2000	Headteacher	Mr P Choi

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 26 September 2005 - 27 September 2005	Inspection number 278630
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Oldfield is an average sized primary school, which takes pupils from the mainly owner-occupied housing around the school. A small but growing number come from further afield. Although socio-economic circumstances are mixed, for the majority they are favourable. Most pupils are of white, British heritage. A small number are from other ethnic backgrounds and one or two speak another language in addition to English. On entering reception, the majority of pupils have skills, which are just above average, although this varies from year to year, with language skills sometimes being a weaker area for a significant minority. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, including statements of special educational needs, is broadly average. A below average number have free school meals. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. It is improving rapidly under the leadership and management of the new headteacher. However, there is still some way to go to raise standards for pupils in Key Stage 1. In a short time, the headteacher's dynamic leadership has led to improvements that have been warmly welcomed by the school community. Parents, staff, pupils and governors hold him in very high regard.

Pupils enjoy school very much indeed; their behaviour is outstanding and this, coupled with the care and support they receive, has a significant impact on their personal development and learning. They relate very positively to each other and to the adults who work with them. The youngest pupils make a steady start and leave reception with a secure base on which to build. However, standards at the end of Year 2 are not as high as they should be. Good quality teaching at Key Stage 2 ensures that pupils make up lost ground rapidly and by Year 6; they usually reach standards that are above average.

Until recently, progress in addressing the issues from the last inspection had stalled. However, since the beginning of this year, the leadership and management of the school have tackled these recommendations with vigour. Improvements in teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are already starting to be seen. For the most part, the school's own evaluation of its work is accurate. Senior managers, key staff and governors are working well together to drive up standards. There is very good capacity for further improvement. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

Focus on:

- Raising standards at Key Stage 1;
- Improving the procedures for assessing pupils' progress and ensuring that teachers make better use of assessments to plan what pupils should learn next;
- Developing the skills of middle managers in checking the work of the school to bring about improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The majority have skills that are just above average when they start school. In recent years, communication skills have been a weaker area for a small but significant number. In the reception class, pupils make steady progress and reach the goals set for pupils of this age. They make very good progress in their personal development. In Key Stage 1, progress dips. Pupils do not build on their firm start as well as they should and by the end of Year 2, standards are not high enough. Over the last two years, results of the national tests for 7 year olds show that whilst most pupils reach average levels in reading and writing, too many only just scrape over the crossbar and too few reach higher levels. In mathematics, although more pupils

reach average levels, again, too few do better than this. The school has now firmly grasped this issue and put a good range of measures in place to address the weaknesses. Early indications show that good teaching and a stronger curriculum are starting to have an impact.

In Key Stage 2, pupils catch up quickly. They achieve well and by the time they leave the school, their standards are usually above the national average. They meet the appropriately challenging targets set for them. There was a dip in the 2005 test results because the profile of the group was not as strong as in previous years. However, most pupils made significant progress in relation to their Key Stage 1 test results.

The school is beginning to track pupils' progress more effectively and this is a positive step forward. As yet, the new systems are not fully embedded and the impact cannot therefore be judged.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils really enjoy coming to school and have very positive attitudes towards learning. Behaviour is outstanding and contributes strongly to the overall progress pupils make. The very good relationships that exist between pupils and staff and amongst the pupils themselves ensure that they are happy and confident. As they get older, pupils develop a mature sense of responsibility and are keen to serve the community. For example, older pupils willingly carry out duties such as supporting younger pupils at lunchtimes as well as promoting environmental and safety issues. The school strongly encourages pupils to think carefully about healthy eating and exercise. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and most are able to make informed choices for example, about the food they eat.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Their self-esteem is nurtured effectively and they show respect and care for others. However, more could be done to teach pupils about life in a diverse multicultural society. Pupils' good attendance and punctuality and their ability to collaborate well with others are good starting points for future success in the workplace.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. This reflects the overall progress pupils make. In the past, teaching in Years 1 and 2 has not enabled all pupils to achieve as well as they should. Their progress has not always been assessed accurately nor has work been matched well enough to meet their needs and enable them to build effectively on previous learning. Improvements have been brought about very recently through changes in staffing arrangements and a stronger emphasis on the systematic teaching of the basic skills of reading and writing. Good quality teaching is now leading to rapid progress for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Staff work well as a team to share good practice.

Challenging work is set for the more able pupils, and those who find learning more difficult are well supported. Effective use is made of teaching assistants to support learning, particularly in literacy and for those with learning difficulties and disabilities. They have a good impact on pupils' progress throughout the school.

Pupils make the best progress through Years 3 to 6 because most teaching here is good. Lessons are well planned to ensure that pupils are appropriately stretched and supported. As a result, they develop as confident, independent learners who relish a challenge. Most teachers make lessons interesting and are skilled at drawing out what pupils already know and building on this, for example through asking probing questions to push them further. Throughout the school, teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Pupils respond by working hard and behaving very well indeed. As a result, lessons progress uninterrupted and learning time is maximised. Where teaching is less successful, the pace is slow and tasks lack interest.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, with some good features. It is planned appropriately to meet the needs and interests of all pupils. The curriculum for the youngest pupils provides adequate opportunities in all areas of learning, both indoor and outside. Deficiencies in the provision for reading and writing for pupils in Years 1 and 2 have recently been addressed so they are now able to develop these skills systematically. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well provided for; they are enabled to take full part in lessons and other activities. A good range of activities is on offer outside lessons. Pupils report that they thoroughly enjoy taking part in these. They also love the improved ICT provision and this is having a good impact on learning in many subjects. Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good and has a demonstrable impact on pupils' personal development, including their understanding of how to stay safe and healthy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils. Staff know them well and pay good attention to their health, safety and welfare. They ensure that pupils feel safe and secure. Pupils report that there is always someone to talk to if they have a problem. They feel valued because they are praised and rewarded for their achievements. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported. They have clearly defined, achievable targets that enable them to build effectively on what has gone before. Teaching and support staff are sensitive to their needs and meet them well. Child protection and health and safety procedures are firmly in place. The school strongly promotes the health and well-being of the pupils, by providing them with good opportunities for physical exercise, such as constructive playtime and lunchtime activities. Pupils are not supported as well as they could be in understanding their own learning needs, for example, targets for improvement are not always shared with them consistently and effectively.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The leadership of the new headteacher is very good. He has won the respect of the whole school community in a very short time and all share his vision for the future. The head and deputy have formed a strong and effective team who are working together skilfully to move the school forward. Parents and pupils say they are particularly pleased with the improved school environment and the range of learning opportunities on offer. Staff morale is high and governors say their enthusiasm for the task has been renewed.

The leadership and management recognise that there are still weaknesses to be addressed. Although many new systems and procedures for checking on the work of the school have been put into place, these are at the very early stages of development and consequently their impact is yet to be seen. For example, the recently introduced procedures for monitoring pupils' progress need further development. The school's evaluation of its own performance is a fair reflection and the right priorities for improvement have been identified. Much of the work of ensuring developments happen and practice improves is currently the responsibility of senior managers. The skills of middle managers need further development to enable them to play a more effective role in school improvement.

The governors are supportive and knowledgeable. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. Governors use their individual expertise to best effect, for example in managing a challenging budget. They are closely involved in shaping the direction of the school and are working effectively with senior managers in the drive towards improvement.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

N/A

As you know, two inspectors recently visited your school to find out how well your teachers are helping you to learn and to enjoy school. Thank you for being so polite and talking to the inspectors. It was really interesting to hear what you had to say about your school and what you like most about it.

The things we think are very good about your school are:

- Your outstanding behaviour and very good manners.
- How well you all get on with each other.
- The way that you work so hard and enjoy all the activities provided for you.
- The way you understand how important it is to be healthy and stay safe.
- The way all the adults in school take care of you.
- The improvements your headteacher and deputy head are making.

We have asked your teachers to improve some things:

- We would like teachers to help the pupils in Years 1 and 2 to make better progress.
- We would like teachers to keep a better check on how well you are learning.
- We would like other staff to share some of the work done by the head and deputy to make the school better.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection. We hope you will continue to enjoy learning at Oldfield. Most of all, we hope that you will help your teachers to make the school even better.