



Overdale Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120022
LEA Leicester City
Inspection number 280710
Inspection dates 16 May 2006 to 17 May 2006
Reporting inspector Chris Kessell AI

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Eastcourt Road
School category	Community		Knighton
Age range of pupils	11 to 11		Leicester, Leicestershire LE2 3YA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0116 2883736
Number on roll	363	Fax number	0116 2570737
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Gwyneth Cubison

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is above average in size. The pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average. The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. However, a number of other ethnic groups are represented and a significant number of pupils are from Indian backgrounds. A few pupils are at the early stages of acquiring English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher started at the beginning of the current academic year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and it has some good features. This is also the school's evaluation of its provision. The issues from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. The new leadership team has introduced a number of new initiatives to raise pupils' achievement and standards and to improve the quality of education. These include procedures for assessment, tracking pupils' progress and target setting, but it is too early to judge the impact of these measures. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school is popular with its pupils and parents. The good care it takes of the pupils is reflected in their good personal development. The school curriculum is enhanced well by visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. Provision for music and physical education is good.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Consequently, pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school. Some of the teaching is good. However, in a few classes, teachers' expectations for pupils are not high enough and work is not consistently well matched to individual pupils' needs. Some of the teachers' marking is outstanding, particularly in Year 6 English. This is not the case in every class.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher is leading a drive to raise standards further and improve pupils' achievement. She has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school has the capacity to improve further. However, development planning is insufficiently focused on raising standards and improving achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve expectations, challenge and marking so that teaching is good in all classes.
- Ensure that the school's procedures for assessment are used rigorously to track pupils' progress and set challenging targets.
- Implement a more rigorous development plan for raising standards and pupils' achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Pupils start the school with broadly average standards. Most pupils make satisfactory progress. By the time they reach Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are at the expected levels. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when they were not high enough. The school is developing its procedures for setting academic targets. Currently, targets are not challenging enough to raise pupils' achievement and standards. Good strategies to improve the pupils' writing skills have been introduced. Though successful in some classes, the overall impact of these strategies on improving the pupils' writing has

been limited because it depends on the quality of the teaching, which varies from class to class. Writing skills are taught more effectively in classes where the overall quality of teaching is better. At present, the overall impact on improving standards in writing is limited.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress. However, when they are withdrawn for specialist support, particularly in English, their progress is good. When assessment information is not used thoroughly or teachers' expectations for their pupils are not high enough, higher-attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently. This prevents these pupils from making the progress they are capable of. The few pupils who are at the early stages of learning English make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They behave well, enjoy school and have positive attitudes to their work. Pupils feel safe in school. Bullying is not a problem. Members of the 'FAB' team are successful as mediators if there are issues between pupils. Attendance is satisfactory.

Pupils are keen to represent their class on the school council. It is popular because it provides pupils with a voice in the running of the school and initiates improvements, for example, to the school playground. The school is involved in the local and wider community. The choir regularly represents the school in local events. Pupils choose their own local and national charities to support and plan events to raise money for them. The school successfully develops pupils' personal skills such as confidence and independence, and their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. This is preparing them adequately for their next stage of education, as well as later life.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthy lives. They benefit from good opportunities provided by the school for exercise and sport, especially in swimming. When the school pool is open pupils say: 'It makes us feel good.' Pupils appreciate the benefits of obtaining fruit from the tuck shop saying, 'We're healthier than when we ate biscuits, sweets and crisps.'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils settle quickly and attentively to their work and are generally keen to learn. Where teaching is good, it is sensitive to individual pupils' needs, and lessons are planned effectively to build on what pupils already know and can do. Where teaching is less effective, insufficient attention is paid to the individual needs of pupils and the expectations are not high enough. As a result, the pupils do not achieve as well as they could do.

Pupils are provided with group targets to help them improve their work. This practice is not consistent in all classes. Many pupils, particularly the younger ones, are confused by the use of targets and how these should be helping them.

Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities, or are at the early stages of learning English, are identified early through the school's assessment procedures and are given targeted support. When they are withdrawn from class, for example, to receive extra help with literacy, they are well taught. Teaching assistants give effective support in lessons for those pupils who find learning difficult. There are examples of good marking, particularly in English in Year 6, providing good advice to pupils on how to improve, but practice is inconsistent in other year groups. The successful introduction of Learning Logs has enabled parents to support learning at home.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' personal and social skills, music and physical education. The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' safe and healthy lifestyles and their overall personal development. Good enrichment of the curriculum through visits, visitors, community involvement and after-school activities contributes to pupils' achievement and enjoyment. The range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school is appreciated by the pupils, who welcome the opportunities to participate in extra sporting activities or play a musical instrument. The curriculum gives priority to the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and computer skills. The school is in the early stages of developing links across the curriculum to enable pupils to use and further develop these skills in other subjects. Weaknesses in provision for science and ICT, identified at the last inspection, have been successfully addressed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides good care, and satisfactory guidance and support. All adults show a high level of commitment in promoting the pupils' health and safety. Pupils are confident that they have an adult to turn to if they are worried. Child protection procedures are good and understood by all staff. Pupils work in a safe, secure and clean environment. Safety checks and risk assessments are routinely carried out. Pupils are taught about the importance of healthy living, and they are regularly reminded of the need to take care, for instance, when going swimming. The school has strong links with outside agencies and pupils with additional needs are catered for well. The school is still developing its procedures for tracking pupils' progress and target setting. Although all pupils are given group targets for English and mathematics, the support and guidance they receive to achieve these targets are variable and this affects the value they get from them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher is ambitious for the school and acknowledges that there is room for improvement, particularly in raising pupils' standards and achievement. She is supported well by the new deputy headteacher and the leadership team. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory overall. Progress in some areas, such as the development of ICT, has been good. The school has the capacity to improve further. However, the school development plan does not accurately identify the necessary priorities to drive improvement, especially those related to raising standards and achievement. The criteria to measure whether development priorities have been achieved are not sufficiently challenging. Although the school's self-evaluation is accurate, parents are not involved in the evaluation process. The school is starting to develop a culture of monitoring and evaluating, but observing of teaching and learning is not sufficiently developed, particularly amongst subject leaders, and this is slowing school improvement.

The school is well supported by its governing body. Many governors are new to their roles, and have not received any formal training. The governing body is not fully representative of the community that it represents. The governors acknowledge that they need to become more involved in the strategic development of the school.

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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	NA	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	Yes	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	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?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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	3	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

Many of you will remember that we visited your school a few weeks ago. Thank you for making us so welcome and sparing the time to talk to us about your school and work. We particularly appreciated the posters produced by Year 5 pupils to discourage smoking and the pupils who told stories in assembly. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school.

What your school does well

The staff take good care of you so that you feel safe and happy at school.

There are lots of clubs and activities which you enjoy. It was good to hear you playing instruments and singing so well during the inspection.

In some lessons teaching is always good and you learn well.

You all have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and the importance of exercise.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Make sure that all lessons are good so that you can all make good progress.
- Provide you all with more challenging targets.
- Plan carefully how the school is going to continue to improve in the future.