



Headington Quarry Foundation Stage School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122968
LEA Oxfordshire LEA
Inspection number 281374
Inspection dates 23 May 2006 to 24 May 2006
Reporting inspector Sean O'Toole AI

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Quarry School Place
School category	Maintained		Headington
Age range of pupils	3 to 5		OXFORD OX3 8LH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01865 762345
Number on roll	79	Fax number	01865 762345
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Dr Bridget Durning
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2000	Headteacher	Miss Sue Vermes

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 5	23 May 2006 - 24 May 2006	281374

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Headington is located in an area of mixed housing and children come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Two-thirds have White British heritage and the remainder come from many minority ethnic backgrounds. Eleven are at an early stage of learning English. Very few have learning difficulties. Children start Nursery in the term following their third birthday. The school provides wrap-around care for 24 children. A neighbouring primary school houses its Reception class in the Nursery and children from both schools mix freely throughout the sessions. The Nursery has applied to become a Children's Centre from June 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school accurately judges its effectiveness as good; in fact, there are some areas in which it excels. 'My child has made wonderful progress since starting school and is now very confident.' These words sum up the views of many parents. The school accurately judges its effectiveness as good; in fact, there are some areas in which it excels. The children quickly settle into the welcoming atmosphere and thrive on the personal attention given and the good teaching. By the end of their time in the Nursery most are working at levels which are in advance of those expected for their age. They achieve well and have particularly effective personal and social skills such as working independently and making choices about their learning. Relationships are outstanding.

The curriculum is good although there is room for improvement in organising and monitoring a wider range of activities to engage boys in writing. Staff accurately assess the children's progress but do not always use the information to pinpoint the next steps in learning. High standards of care, with a focus on nurturing the children, underpin the school's work. Leadership and management are good and have devised well crafted plans which include clear priorities. The outstanding governors provide high levels of support and challenge. The school provides good value for money. It has made good headway since the previous inspection and the move to new premises has been managed very well. Good standards have been maintained and work on the outdoor area has led to a wider range of opportunities for children to learn through exploration. The school is well placed to build upon its strengths.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use of assessment to guide the staff on planning sharply focused activities which accelerate learning.
- Organise and monitor more effective activities to stimulate boys' writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievements and standards are good. The strong focus on equipping children as effective learners enables them to achieve well. By the time they leave the school, the children are happy, confident and ready for further success. Their outstanding progress in personal, social and emotional development enables them to exceed expectations for their age in this area of learning. Children with learning difficulties make good progress as the staff focus effectively on meeting their needs and set work which is pitched at just the right level. Those at an early stage of learning English thrive alongside their peers.

Boys and girls meet with good success. Overall, they are working at levels which are in advance of those expected for their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematical, physical and creative development. They also have a good grasp of knowledge and understanding of the world. Even the youngest children sustained

intense concentration for a long period, and giggled with excitement, as they watched blue tits feeding their young. Staff capitalise on such enthusiasms by posing well focused questions, showing the children books about their interests and providing activities which stimulate further learning. All children rapidly improve their recognition of letters and the sounds they make. Girls are more successful than boys in early writing because they practise more regularly.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The children are inquisitive and independent; their personal development is outstanding. They love coming to school and attendance is good. Rushing in, they settle into their groups and join in enthusiastically, sharing ideas and listening intently. Co-operative skills and relationships are excellent and result in constructive and purposeful play. Sharing is the norm and this generous spirit makes the school a happy place. Good progress in basic skills, high standards of behaviour, and care for others and the natural world, contribute much to preparing the children for the future. Newcomers benefit much from the sensible example of older children.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Children benefit from a rich array of visits. Special visitors like the Bishop of Oxford and an artist who inspired work on Ganesha help them to appreciate and begin to grasp the cultural and spiritual diversity of Britain today and their part in the community. The children enjoy every aspect of their work. They know about healthy eating and relish their school meals, fruit and milk. Robust activity in the outdoor area helps them to improve their fitness and co-ordination.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The intense focus on meeting the needs of individuals, thorough planning and preparation, and good knowledge of how young children learn underpin the good teaching. Those with learning difficulties are quickly identified and supported through well focused individual targets and personal attention. Similarly, children with English as an additional language are nurtured and encouraged to practise their speaking in a wide variety of situations. The focus on helping children to be independent and to use their initiative is an especially strong feature. In an outstanding session, the teacher skilfully set challenges for a group of boys, based around a rocket launch. By building a huge launch tower the boys made substantial headway in counting up and down to 20 and used accurate mathematical vocabulary about shape and size to describe what they were doing.

All staff are fastidious in measuring and recording the children's progress. However, this information is not always used to pinpoint the next steps in learning and this means that boys do not make as much progress in writing as the girls. Adults make

good use of the children's ideas to extend learning. Following one boy's holiday to Lanzarote, activities were planned to include making volcanoes and experimenting with water to develop scientific understanding. There is a good focus on developing children's speaking and listening skills. The way staff read stories inspires the children to take an interest in books and the sounds that letters make.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Much enjoyment is generated through the school's good curriculum and this contributes effectively to teamwork and the children's self esteem. As one parent said, 'Everything is fun here and helps the children to do well.' The school successfully meets one its prime objectives, 'To provide a stimulating environment which fosters success for everyone.' It is inclusive and makes sure that the needs and interests of all are met. Staff make good links between the areas of learning when planning work. Basic skills are promoted effectively although there is insufficient focus on organising and monitoring boys' work in writing.

There are excellent links with other establishments. The inclusion of the Reception class from a neighbouring school adds much to the overall quality of education. Staff are keen to improve; they reflect much on their work. Involvement in a project to encourage observation has led to good developments in using children's ideas in planning the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents are full of praise for the school's high levels of care. One parent said, 'The way in which parents are included and given opportunities to attend courses contributes much to a feeling of support and community which benefit our children.' Robust procedures for child protection, risk assessment and for checking on the suitability of all involved with the school help to create a safe haven where children thrive. Health and safety are given high priority.

All staff know the children and are vigilant in providing support and encouragement, taking special care of the vulnerable and insecure. They draw on the support of external agencies when needed. Group leaders keep track of the children's progress and keep parents well informed. The mutual trust between the staff and parents is a hallmark of the school's success in providing so effectively for the children's well being.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has correctly judged its effectiveness as good. The headteacher, staff and governors are ambitious for the children and have put in place rigorous systems to build on established success. There is no sense of complacency and the outstanding governors offer much challenge and support in keeping the school focused on

improvement. Ambitious plans for re-development are well advanced. Leadership and management have made good improvements to the outdoor curriculum and staff now engage more productively with the children in discussing their work. Issues from the previous inspection report have been tackled well. More remains to be done to bring consistency in developing boys' writing and using assessment to pinpoint the next steps in learning but the leadership's successful track record show that there is good capacity to improve.

The school's vibrant ethos is rooted in a desire to serve the needs of all children. Good analysis of teaching, linked to sound performance management, and the willingness of staff to respond to suggestions provide a strong basis for further improvement. The headteacher makes it crystal clear what needs to be done next and has the full backing of staff, parents and governors. The views of parents and their children are given much consideration in determining the next steps. As a result, the school's long term plans are well crafted and priorities are sharply defined. Governors play a key part in monitoring the school's work and spending. They have a rigorous system to check on the school's success in meeting its goals. Underpinning all the school's work is the belief that every child matters.

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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	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	1	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	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	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?	1	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?	2	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	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	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	NA
Learners are educated about sexual health	NA
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

Children

I enjoyed visiting your school very much. Thank you for helping me to find out about it. I enjoyed sharing lunch with you and helping you to build a rocket launch tower. Your teachers help to make the school a good place to learn and I know that you really enjoy learning new things.

You and your teachers do lots of things well.* you are very kind and helpful, and everyone gets on together* your teachers are good at making learning fun and plan lots of interesting activities* you work very hard and are especially good at finding out about interesting things, such as how snails and slugs move* everyone in the school cares for you very well* the headteacher, the other staff and governors are working hard to make the school even better.

I have asked the teachers to plan different ways of helping the boys to improve their writing, and to keep a closer check on how everyone is doing. I hope that you are always as happy at school.

Yours truly,

Sean O'Toole

Lead inspector