



Gateway Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123016
LEA Oxfordshire LEA
Inspection number 281383
Inspection dates 6 July 2006 to 7 July 2006
Reporting inspector Rob Crompton AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Netheravon Close
School category	Community		Carterton
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		OX18 3SF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01993 842189
Number on roll	277	Fax number	01993 842595
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr George Fox
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Gay Hennessy

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. Typically, three quarters of pupils have parents serving in the Royal Air Force. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average. There are significant factors which affect pupils' learning, including substantial mobility. Many pupils have attended up to six schools before they are eleven.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that is led well by the headteacher, who has a clear vision for school improvement. This sense of purpose is shared by staff and governors. Staff show a determination to improve but are modest in their evaluation of the school's performance, which they assessed as being satisfactory. Although there is very high mobility of pupils, they achieve well and, by the end of Year 6, they attain above average standards in reading, mathematics and science. Attainment in writing is a weakness, especially for the more able, because assessment is not used enough to provide challenging work. The school is taking steps to raise standards.

Good provision in the Foundation Stage gives children a very secure start and, by the end of Reception, they are working at levels which are appropriate for their age. Effective teaching across the school means that pupils are well motivated and try hard, although assessment is not used effectively enough to pinpoint the next steps in learning. Pupils have positive attitudes, behave well and contribute to the smooth running of the school. They are well cared for. Newcomers are made very welcome by staff and pupils, reflecting the school's aim to 'create a happy community in which each individual is valued'. The curriculum is satisfactory but does not sufficiently arouse pupils' curiosity or encourage them to use their initiative.

The school provides good value for money and has a good capacity to improve, as illustrated by the headway made since the last inspection, especially in raising standards. Almost all parents hold the school in high regard. Their views were summed up by one who commented, 'I feel that the school and I are working as a team for my son's benefit'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by making better use of assessment to enable teachers to increase the level of challenge in lessons
- Extend opportunities for pupils to use their initiative through a more challenging and exciting curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school sets challenging targets for pupils, including those with learning difficulties, and most meet them. From a broadly average start, children achieve well in the Foundation Stage and reach the standards expected in most areas of learning, although their language skills are not as well developed. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading, mathematics and science. The exception is writing where attainment has hovered around average in recent years. In particular, the standards achieved by more able pupils in writing are lower than they should be.

Performance figures indicate that progress through Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. However, this does not take account of the substantial turnover of pupils. The work

in pupils' books and school records show that most pupils make good progress. By Year 6, standards are above average in mathematics and science. Standards are good in reading but lower than they should be in writing, especially for the more able. However, achievement in writing is accelerating rapidly, particularly in Years 3 and 4, where the school has focused on developing teachers' expertise. This success is due to several new strategies which are beginning to make an impact across the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' moral and social development is good. They are polite, cooperate well in class and happily play alongside one another. However, friendships are difficult to sustain because of the high turnover of pupils. Pupils show respect for the feelings of others and have a good sense of right and wrong. They make a good contribution to school life through membership of the school council and the 'eco group' and often take the initiative in supporting local and national charities. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. They respect different beliefs and have a growing appreciation of art and music. However pupils lack confidence in exploring their own ideas and values.

Pupils have positive attitudes, generally enjoy learning and consistently behave well. Attendance is average. Pupils have a good awareness of healthy eating and the benefits of exercise. They know how to avoid hazards and minimise risks, for example when cycling or taking part in adventurous activities. Pupils' good communication skills, together with competency in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), prepare them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Staff in the Foundation Stage work very closely to plan activities which stimulate children's curiosity and eagerness to learn. Warm relationships provide children with the security to try things out and adults are on hand to note children's often tentative steps and to provide new avenues to explore. Across the school, teachers successfully interest and engage pupils. Pupils are increasingly encouraged to reflect on their own learning. Pupils in a Year 3/4 class drew up their own criteria for good writing. They subsequently produced some good work, including some imaginative phrases, describing The Iron Man as having 'lamppost sized legs'. Although not all English lessons are as well balanced and interesting, evidence in books shows that teachers are becoming more competent in developing writing.

Sound assessment procedures mean that teachers are generally quick to identify pupils' individual needs and to plan work accordingly. This benefits particularly the pupils who have additional learning needs, but pupils with the potential to excel in writing

are not identified early enough. Where pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve, they make good progress. Some marking provides very good guidance and flags up the next step in pupils' learning, but this is not consistent practice across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum provides pupils with an appropriate range of activities and experiences. Learning in the Foundation Stage is well organised. A wide range of activities and a strong focus on basic skills stimulate children's interest in learning. Pupils in all parts of the school are particularly appreciative of enrichment opportunities provided by visits, visitors and special events, for example, the annual Arts' Week. Pupils say they enjoy the opportunity to work with members of different year groups and to acquire new skills. They are not always as excited about day-to-day lessons if work is not particularly interesting or challenging. This is reflected in some underachievement in writing. Not all subject leaders have a clear understanding of how to enliven learning and promote links with other subjects.

A good programme supports pupils' personal, health, social and development and promotes their understanding of citizenship. Pupils value being able to discuss things during circle time, and the opportunities to involve themselves with the local community.

The extra-curricular programme encourages a range of interests and also helps pupils to develop a healthy lifestyle. The school is energetically raising pupils' awareness of life in other countries through forging links with overseas schools and by lessons in French and Spanish.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils receive a good level of care, guidance and support. The school has considerable success in helping the high number of new arrivals to settle in; as a recent entrant said, 'The school made me very welcome'. Pupils' academic progress is tracked carefully so the minimum amount of time is lost in providing appropriate levels of challenge for newcomers. However, the school is not systematic enough in tracking personal development.

There are sound procedures for the vetting of staff and for child protection which enables pupils to feel safe and confident. There is a strong sense of collective responsibility to ensure pupils are well cared for and a continuing emphasis is given to promoting pupils' health and fitness. The school works well with outside specialists to support pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Standards are rising and the school has good capacity to improve further. Effectively led by the headteacher, the school meets the challenge of ensuring a positive and calm ethos. The headteacher is skilfully developing the role of subject leaders. However, more remains to be done to forge links between subjects in order to provide more interest and challenge for the learners. Good use is being made of external advice and training opportunities for staff to support improvements in pupils' writing.

Provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is managed very well. Pupils' individual needs are sensitively and appropriately identified and bespoke support enables them to make good progress.

The school's processes for evaluating its work are satisfactory and improving. It is increasingly adept in reviewing its work and enabling parents and pupils to have their say so that appropriate priorities for development are identified. However, opportunities to promote wider issues, such as spiritual and cultural development, are not consistently included in the subject plans or school reviews. Teachers and learning assistants know their pupils, needs well and set appropriate targets, but these are not always made sufficiently clear to the pupils.

Governors are effective as part of the leadership and management team. Their programme of regular visits provides them with a good idea of how well the school is doing. They regularly receive and discuss reports from curriculum managers. This helps them to set priorities for development. Governors are very supportive of the headteacher and have a high level of commitment to 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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	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?	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?	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	3	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	2	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?	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?	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	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	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	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

Children

Thank you for making us so welcome last week and sharing your work with us. We agree with your parents that this is a good school. You told us that you enjoy having visitors to talk to and you treat them in a very polite way. It was pleasing to see how well you behave in lessons and around the school.

We saw that the school helps you make good progress. You work hard in lessons but we feel you need to work more independently at times. You enjoy opportunities such as Arts' Week when you can work with artists and others who teach you new skills. Some of you are not as interested in ordinary lessons, so it is good to know that the school is planning more exciting ways for you to learn. Many of you attend the good variety of school clubs which help you to keep fit, stay healthy and take up new interests.

You are doing well in reading, mathematics and science. However, your writing needs to improve to make it more interesting and we have asked your teachers to make writing tasks more challenging. You can help by sharing ideas, checking one another's efforts and reading widely to build up your vocabulary. Your books are neat and you clearly take pride in your work. We wish you every success in the future and we hope you enjoy the many good things the teachers are planning to improve your learning even further.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Crompton

Lead Inspector