



The Windmill Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123047
LEA Oxfordshire LEA
Inspection number 281389
Inspection dates 2 May 2006 to 3 May 2006
Reporting inspector John Earish AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Margaret Road
School category	Community		Headington
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Oxford OX3 8NG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01865 762509
Number on roll	393	Fax number	01865 742614
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Tim Spiers
Date of previous inspection	6 December 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Lindsay Weimers

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

Windmill is situated in Headington on the outskirts of Oxford. It has recently undergone re-organisation. From September 2002 it began its transition from a first to a primary school. Children from a local school which was subject to closure also transferred at this time. This was completed by September 2003. In June 2004 it transferred to the site of a former middle school and, in line with a change in local authority policy, was able to admit children from the start of the academic year in which they became five. About a third of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and fifty two of these pupils are learning English as an additional language. Attainment on admission is average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average, but the number with a statement of special educational need is higher than this. A below average proportion is eligible for free school meals.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The school makes an accurate evaluation of its current performance and recognises that pupils in Year 6 underachieve. Inspectors agree with this evaluation and judge that the school's overall effectiveness is inadequate and that it offers unsatisfactory value for money. Teaching, though satisfactory overall, is inconsistent and middle management is not yet fully effective in supporting the drive to raise standards.

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the achievement of the oldest pupils and the effectiveness of middle managers to address this weakness.

However, the school does have the capacity to improve. The headteacher has a clear view of what needs to be done and has set the right priorities for the school's future. She has recognised the root causes of underachievement in Year 6 and is taking effective action to make improvements. Teaching is now satisfactory overall and beginning to help to raise pupils' achievement. However, the school is aware that it needs to increase the quantity and consistency of good teaching in order to address the legacy of inadequate teaching. The subject co-ordinators are successfully guiding and supporting their colleagues. They recognise, however, that their monitoring of the quality of teaching and their checks on the standard of pupils' work must be more rigorous to sustain pupils' rapid progress.

The reception classes provide the pupils with a warm and secure environment which helps them settle well into school life. The care and support that the school provides for its vulnerable pupils are good, and it is successful in helping pupils to understand how to stay safe.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- Improve the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 so that pupils make rapid progress.
- Ensure subject leaders are effective in their roles.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

The school has identified that pupils' achievement is inadequate. The pupils get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. Imaginative teaching helps them achieve standards that are, by the end of the Reception year, broadly typical of children of the same age. Progress for pupils in Year 1 and 2 is satisfactory and recent results in national tests were broadly average for writing and mathematics and significantly above average in reading. Inspection findings show these pupils continue to achieve satisfactorily. In Years 3 to 6, records show that the school adds too little value to the

pupils' learning in English, mathematics and science. Achievement and standards are therefore inadequate. The senior management team has identified the causes for this underachievement including a legacy of inadequate teaching in Year 4 and inconsistencies in the expectations of what pupils can achieve. These weaknesses are being effectively addressed and this is having a positive effect on pupils' progress in lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language are supported well and make satisfactory and sometimes good progress. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds consistently outperform white British children.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' enjoy school. They value their friendships and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They particularly enjoy the visits to places of interest and the visitors who come into school to tell them about different lifestyles and cultures. They talk with enthusiasm about the clubs and are very proud of the choir and orchestra. Pupils in the Foundation Stage showed obvious enjoyment in the video showing them acting out a Chinese dragon dance.

Most children have good and responsible attitudes to school. They concentrate on their work and behave well. However, there are a small number of pupils with significant behavioural needs who sometimes do not behave well. Other pupils disapprove of this behaviour. One pupil has been excluded for one day this year, and there have been two lunch time exclusions. This is a significant improvement over last year. Attendance is below average and it is improving.

Pupils have a good understanding about using resources and equipment safely and develop an appropriate awareness of how to keep themselves safe. They know about the benefits of healthy eating, but admit that they do not always make the healthy choices. Pupils of all ages are helping to make improvements through their school council and the sunshine club. They have a good sense of community responsibility and a desire to help others. They are also developing skills which will prepare them for the world beyond school by, for example, devising and organising their own money raising schemes for charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Taken overall teaching is satisfactory. The pupils make a good start in the Foundation Stage where classrooms are effectively organised and the children flourish. Teachers quickly get to know the children well and provide a stimulating range of activities for them and encourage learning.

Elsewhere teaching lacks the necessary consistency to support more rapid progress, especially in Key Stage 2 where the legacy of inadequate teaching in Year 4 has held back the achievements of the current Years 5 and 6 pupils. However, these pupils are

now making satisfactory progress from a low starting point. Good and imaginative teaching was observed in several lessons. The impact of recent staff training in the development of speaking and listening skills was evident in the effective use of paired and group discussions. Most teachers plan thoroughly so that tasks are matched to the wide range of pupils' abilities. They ensure that pupils are clear about what it is they are expected to learn.

Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are not always high enough. Too many pupils are allowed to get away with slovenly presentation in exercise books when good quality classroom displays show they are capable of much better work. There are examples of helpful and informative marking in Years 2 and 5 that build on the pupils' own self-review and tell them how to improve still further. Elsewhere, marking lacks this necessary rigour and often fails to spur on the higher attaining pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory range of activities for its pupils. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good and provides effectively for the children's personal and academic development. Another good feature of the curriculum is the provision for personal, social and health education. This has a beneficial impact on the pupils' self esteem and their understanding of the importance of keeping safe and leading healthy lifestyles. For example, residential visits provide the older pupils with opportunities to live together away from home and take part in adventurous outdoor pursuits. Arrangements for pupils with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language are satisfactory. The school has rightly focused its attention on addressing weaknesses in the way the curriculum is organized in order to address the backlog of the older pupils' underachievement. For example, it has responded by providing regular, intensive booster groups and additional activities for the older pupils in mathematics and English.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school's arrangements for keeping the pupils safe are well known by all staff and effective. The school works well in partnership with other agencies to support vulnerable pupils. This aspect of the school's work is good. Individual pupils' achievements are celebrated and this is beginning to raise pupils' self-esteem, pride and confidence as learners. However, in the past, the systems for making sure that pupils fulfilled their academic potential were not effective and older pupils did not make sufficient progress. Recent developments in the school's assessment arrangements are beginning to improve the quality of academic guidance available to these pupils. Induction arrangements for new pupils are good. Transfer arrangements ensure that pupils are adequately prepared for the next stages in their education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and her deputy have made an honest and accurate appraisal of the school's current performance. They recognise the root causes of underachievement in Year 6 and are taking effective action to improve educational provision. Inadequate teaching is being addressed and challenging targets reflect a sharper focus on pupils' achievements. Pupils are now making improved progress.

The subject co-ordinators currently provide helpful support and guidance to their colleagues. However, current approaches to their monitoring of the quality of teaching and their checks on the standard of pupils' work lack sufficient rigour.

The school consults with parents and has responded positively to their views by improving the frequency and quality of information provided. A significant number of parents wrote to the inspectors expressing their concerns about some pupils' behaviour, especially in Year 4. Inspectors can confirm that a small number of pupils with significant behavioural needs can occasionally present challenge to the smooth running of the school. Arrangements for the inclusion of these pupils are appropriate and staff are vigilant.

The governors have provided good support for the school throughout the process of reorganisation. They have contributed to the successful development of the school's aims and vision and provide effective challenge, especially in relation to the management of the school's budget.

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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?	4	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	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	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?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	4	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	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?	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	4	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

Pupils

As you know, we visited your school recently for two days. I am writing to you, on behalf of the inspectors, to tell you what we found out about your school. We talked to some of you, and we would like to thank you all for being so friendly and willing to talk to us. It was really useful to listen to what you had to say about what you enjoy. However, we think there are things the school could do to help you reach higher standards.

There are things that we like about your school. Some of them are: * Your school is friendly and welcoming. * You listen carefully to what your teachers have to say and try hard in your lessons. * You willingly raise money for charities so they can help those who are less fortunate. * You like all the clubs the school has organised for you. * The school council represents your views very well and the older children help the school run smoothly.

Your headteacher and all of the other people who help run your school are working very hard to make sure that you get the very best education. However, we think there are some important things the school could do to improve: * Help you to learn better in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6. * Make the teaching better, so that it is good in all classes. * The teachers should check more regularly on how well you are taught. We enjoyed being in your school. We hope that in the future it is more successful in helping you to do as well as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely,

Mr J Earish

Lead inspector