



Orchard School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134185
LEA Bexley LEA
Inspection number 282480
Inspection dates 11 July 2006 to 12 July 2006
Reporting inspector Lyn Riley AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Oxford Road
School category	Community		Sidcup
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		DA14 6LW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8300 4878
Number on roll	212	Fax number	020 8309 9343
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Elaine Cheeseman
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mr Andrew Hogarth

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 11	11 July 2006 - 12 July 2006	282480

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a one-form entry primary school serving an area of social and economic deprivation. The school opened three years ago following the amalgamation of two local schools and this is its first inspection. The school has been operating in a new purpose-built building since September 2005. Most pupils are of White British heritage but others come from a very wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds and some are at early stages of learning English as an additional language. The school serves a large settled Traveller population. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is higher than average. The school has a Healthy Schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Orchard Primary is a friendly school that warmly welcomes pupils and families from a wide range of backgrounds. Although overall standards at the end of Year 6 are below the national average, most pupils make satisfactory progress. The headteacher has graded the school's overall effectiveness as satisfactory with good features, and the inspection team agree with this judgement.

The amalgamation and subsequent building project have been managed very well by the headteacher, senior management team and governing body. This united approach has enabled pupils to settle happily into their impressive new learning environment. Teachers and teaching assistants from both schools have stayed on to form the new staff team. The whole school has a united sense of purpose to improve provision and raise standards.

A considerable number of pupils join or leave the school during the course of each year. New pupils are helped to settle quickly, receive good support and make sound progress. Children join the nursery class with low levels of ability in literacy, communication and social skills. They settle quickly and make good progress due to the good teaching and support they receive throughout the Foundation Stage.

The headteacher's monitoring accurately shows that teaching is satisfactory across the school and is good in some classes. Pupils have learning targets which they know and understand, but these are not checked or changed frequently enough to allow higher attaining pupils to make rapid progress. The curriculum meets statutory requirements but does not sufficiently engage the interest of all pupils, particularly boys. Therefore, the school plans to review this to make lessons more active, practical and creative.

The school development plan encompasses many initiatives but does not focus sharply enough on the few key areas that would raise standards further and provide measurable outcomes and benefits for pupils. Although improving and exceeding local authority targets, attendance is below the national average. Governors fulfil statutory requirements and the school provides satisfactory value for money. Good leadership and management have improved provision and achievement to a satisfactory level during a time of immense change.

School leaders have a good track record of managing complex projects and making improvements, particularly in relation to pupils' personal development and care. Now settled in the new building, and with a strong staff team, the school has good capacity to move successfully forward, raise standards and further improve pupils' achievements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make the curriculum more active and lively to motivate and engage the interest of all pupils
- Ensure that learning targets for higher attaining pupils motivate and challenge them to do their best at all times

- Reduce the scope of the school improvement plan to a few key actions that will raise standards and improve outcomes for pupils
- Raise levels of attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupil's achievement is satisfactory, and is improving as the continuing focus on teaching and learning helps pupils to make better progress in lessons. Great importance is attached to developing children's communication and social skills in the Foundation Stage and, as a result, they make a good start to their education. By the end of Year 2, standards are still below the national average, but pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils continue to achieve satisfactorily in the older classes, so standards remain below average overall by the time they leave the school.

In Year 6, the national test results in 2005 showed a significant improvement over the previous year, although overall standards were still below average. Challenging targets for English were surpassed, but this was not the case in mathematics. Overall, girls do significantly better than boys, particularly in English.

The school has successfully focused on improving mathematics this year and the provisional results for 2006 indicate an improvement. However, standards in English have declined, so the school has identified writing as the next area for improvement.

The very high mobility of pupils in the school is a key factor influencing achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve as well as other pupils and pupils learning English as an additional language generally make good progress. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are well behaved in lessons and have good attitudes to learning. They listen attentively and generally try to do their best. Pupils enjoy participating in the wide range of extra activities on offer to them, including a well-attended dance club and a successful rounders team.

The low attendance of some pupils is an issue for the school. However, the school's close work with the Education Welfare Officer, and its own robust approach to promoting good attendance, are having a positive effect. The overall rate of absence, although above average, is steadily reducing.

Pupils' moral and social development is good. They have a clear sense of fairness and of what is right or wrong. Pupils are polite, confident and enjoy engaging in conversations with adults. Pupils' usually get on well together and form good relationships. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good and, as the school intake becomes more mixed, pupils are beginning to develop a good understanding and respect for each others cultures and beliefs.

Pupils enjoy making a positive contribution to the school community. For example, school councillors are proud of the fact that their ideas for school improvements have been listened to and acted upon. Pupils know how to stay safe and enjoy eating healthily at lunchtime. They are satisfactorily prepared for their future economic well-being through the sound teaching of basic skills and the development of positive attitudes and self-confidence.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in the Foundation Stage. School leaders have successfully focused on improving teaching and have set further ambitious targets for improvement. Strengths in teaching include the teachers' effective use of interactive whiteboards and the good support pupils receive from well-trained teaching assistants.

However, in some lessons, which are nonetheless satisfactory overall, the pace is too slow or work for higher attaining pupils is too easy. Pupils are asked to sit still and listen for extended periods of time and are not given enough stimulating activities to engage the interest and improve the progress of, particularly, boys.

Assessment and pupil tracking systems have improved and pupils are now set targets for English and mathematics, which are monitored twice a term. However, some higher attaining pupils say that these are not sufficiently challenging as they can achieve them easily and they are not moved on quickly enough. However, information from assessment activities is now being used to inform school planning and improve teaching and learning across the school.

Pupils with additional learning needs, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those at early stages of learning English as an additional language are regularly assessed, suitably supported and make similar progress to other pupils.

Parents are actively encouraged to support their child's learning through Parent Partnership Learning sessions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

As a strong emphasis has been placed on the teaching of literacy and numeracy, through an intensive support programme, provided by the local authority, the curriculum has been weighted towards the teaching of mathematics and English this year. Whilst this has improved standards in mathematics, some pupils, particularly boys, find it difficult to maintain their concentration through extended periods of teacher talk at the start and end of English and mathematics lessons.

The curriculum for personal, social and health education is good and supports pupils' personal development very well. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is well

structured and provides children with lively, relevant activities that engage their interest.

The school is rightly proud of the extensive range of clubs it provides for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds, including a well-attended breakfast club and a popular dance club. Pupils enjoy and gain much benefit from a good range of educational visitors and visits, including residential trips in Year 5 and Year 6.

To build on and develop this active approach to learning, the school has occasional themed weeks such as Healthy Schools Week and International Week where teachers link subjects together to provide an exciting context for pupils' learning. Pupils say they really enjoy these weeks and learn a great deal. Therefore, the school is at an early stage of reviewing the curriculum to identify where subjects could be linked together to provide pupils with a more active, practical and creative curriculum which would provide pupils with interesting contexts for using and applying their literacy and mathematical skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides its pupils with good care and guidance within a safe and supportive community in which all pupils are encouraged to thrive. This is much appreciated and valued by parents.

Robust child protection procedures are in place and all the appropriate vetting checks are carried out on adults working in the school. The school also has good arrangements for ensuring that any possible risks to health and safety are assessed and managed.

The induction arrangements for children entering the Nursery are good as are the links with local secondary schools. Teachers know their pupils very well and track their personal and academic progress effectively. Pupils at risk of underachieving are quickly identified during regular assessments and strategies are put in place to provide them with support.

The school has established good links with other agencies to provide appropriate and prompt support for pupils at risk. Teachers' marking provides clear guidance for pupils but higher attaining pupils are not given sufficient guidance once they have achieved their learning targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

School leaders and governors have worked very determinedly to ensure that the school's amalgamation and move to its new building has caused minimal disruption for pupils and parents. As a consequence, pupils and teachers are settled into their new environment, behaviour is good, relationships with parents are very positive and pupils enjoy their learning in a safe and supportive environment.

Since the amalgamation, much has been done to move the school forward and school leaders are in a strong position to bring about further improvement. Teaching, learning and assessment have been successfully improved during a period of considerable upheaval, and, good relationships with parents and the local community have been maintained.

The previous school development plan was a lengthy document that set out many priorities for improvement and, although it has been shortened considerably, the new plan still seeks to tackle too many priorities and does not focus clearly enough of the few key priorities that would raise standards and improve pupils' achievement at a faster rate.

Despite this, the school's self-evaluation is good. Monitoring activities have improved the quality of teaching. Relationships with parents and carers are very positive and parents' views are regularly sought and valued. Families are made very welcome in the school and are often invited to attend school events and activities, such as class assemblies, Sports' Day and Grandparents' Day.

The governing body is kept well-informed about school priorities and developments. Governors are very active in the school and have played a key role in shaping the direction of the school over the last few years. Governors have effectively supported the school through the amalgamation and the building project and continue to provide good support and challenge for the school leadership.

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?	2	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	NA	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	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?	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	2	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

Pupils

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team to your school. We enjoyed meeting you and talking to you in lessons and around the school and would particularly like to thank the school council for the important part they played in the inspection - you were very helpful.

You have a beautiful new school, with lovely grounds, and we think your headteacher has worked very hard to make sure you settled well into your new surroundings. All the adults know you very well and make sure you are well looked after, safe and happy at school. You told us that you like your new school and that you enjoy going to school to meet your friends each day. Your parents told us that they like the school too. We think Orchard School is satisfactory, with good features, and we think it is in a good position to get even better.

We have asked your school to do a few things to become even better:-* Give you more opportunities to do creative topics so that your lessons are really interesting and more of you make good progress* Check and change your learning targets more often - especially when you have reached the 'could' target* Make sure school plans focus on helping you to reach good standards and make good progressYou can help Mr. Hogarth and the teachers by making sure you come to school, on time, every day so you get the most benefit from your lovely new school.

Yours sincerely,

Lyn Riley

Lead Inspector