



Oldswinford CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103839
Local Authority Dudley
Inspection number 286782
Inspection date 29 November 2006
Reporting inspector John Eadie

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Field Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Oldswinford
Age range of pupils	4-11		Stourbridge DY8 2JQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01384 818790
Number on roll (school)	384	Fax number	01384 818791
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	E Gale
		Headteacher	S Pepper
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This larger than average school serves a relatively affluent suburban area. Almost all pupils are White British. Nearly all speak English at home and those who do not are coping with the demands of a curriculum in English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is significantly lower than average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'Our children are challenged, motivated and encouraged in an atmosphere that allows them to develop socially and academically.' This was typical of comments made by many parents and is why the school is so popular. It is a good school with some outstanding features. So, what lies behind the success of this school? In no small measure it is good leadership and management. This is exemplified by the drive and passion of the headteacher and staff to educate the whole child and not be 'entirely motivated by SATs results', to quote a parent. This has resulted in an outstanding curriculum. Pupils enjoy extremely rich experiences where, for example, the creative and cultural subjects have a very high profile. Despite this, performance in the vital subjects of English, mathematics and science has not been neglected. Pupils are achieving well through the school and they reach exceptionally high standards in the national tests by the time they leave. Children make a good start in the Reception class, where provision is good. The very good arrangements that are made to prepare children for starting school and helping them settle in are much appreciated by parents.

The major reason why achievement is good and not outstanding is that teachers and pupils are not always fully aware of what pupils need to learn next. This is because targets for pupils' next steps in learning are not consistently and clearly recorded and shared with pupils. Care, guidance and support are good, and pastoral care is excellent. This results in pupils' outstanding personal development. Pupils show high levels of care and concern for each other and their environment. They therefore play extremely safely. Pupils enjoy coming to school because it is a secure, happy place, where they are very comfortable about approaching adults if they have problems. As one pupil said, 'Teachers are just one of us really.' Pupils have a mature understanding of a healthy lifestyle, taking many opportunities to join in with the wide range of sporting activities and mostly eating healthy lunches. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and local community. They use the many opportunities to take responsibility very seriously. There are some lovely examples of older pupils looking after younger ones, such as by writing them special stories featuring the younger one's name and likes. The school is regarded as very much an active part of the local community. Pupils often offer musical entertainments locally and entertain senior citizens with tea in school.

Teaching is good and pupils learn well. A positive feature of teaching is the very good relationships between teachers and pupils. Consequently, pupils are keen to please and work very hard. Teachers are good at planning activities for the range of abilities in their classes and pupils of all ability levels achieve equally well. Although teachers frequently make good use of paired and group discussions, these are not often extended into opportunities for pupils to plan their own learning and learn more independently.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that clear targets are set for individual pupils' future learning and that pupils' progress towards these targets is clearly recorded, so that teachers and pupils know what pupils need to learn next.

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to plan and carry out their own research independently to broaden their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter school with levels of skills and knowledge above those normally expected for their age. They achieve well through the school and leave having attained very high standards in the national tests in Year 6. This good progress is uniform through the school and between groups of pupils. A particular strength is the standards reached by the most able pupils because they are often given really challenging work. Those at the other end of the scale are certainly not neglected. Any with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have their needs identified early and achieve as well as their classmates because of the good support provided for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The strong links with the local church are built on very effectively in assemblies to promote pupils' excellent spiritual awareness. Pupils develop a very clear moral and social code and have a mature understanding of how a community operates happily and effectively. They have a good understanding of their own culture, though they are not so aware of the multicultural nature of the society in which they are growing up. Pupils' behaviour is excellent, especially in class. They are polite and very welcoming to visitors. They work very well together and are developing self-confidence. Many take initiative well and the school council is effective in improving facilities for pupils. However, they do not always show initiative in their work. Despite this they are developing skills well to equip them for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are organised and planned well and teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to make their lessons interesting. Pupils respond well to this by working extremely hard. Staff relate very well to pupils and so there is a calm and orderly working atmosphere in lessons. Support staff work very well with teachers to provide extra help, particularly for those pupils with learning difficulties, which is a key factor in their good progress. Teachers make it clear what pupils are expected to learn in lessons, and a start has been made at asking pupils to evaluate the effectiveness of their learning during lessons. Teachers do not allow enough opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves and plan their own learning.

This restricts pupils' progress as they do not develop the skill of independent learning sufficiently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Pupils and their parents are enthusiastic about the very wide range of opportunities available. A particular strength is the work provided for the most able pupils. These pupils, particularly in mathematics, are given work that extends their learning way beyond that normally found in a primary school. As well as giving due prominence to English, mathematics and science, the creative and cultural subjects have a major place in the curriculum. For example, the regular design and technology challenges are exciting and result in some really creative projects designed by the pupils. Music, too, provides plenty of opportunities, both within the curriculum and as extra-curricular activities, where two choirs as well as several instrumental groups meet regularly. As well as a wide range of well attended sporting activities, there is a very good programme to develop pupils' understanding of personal, social and health issues. A good range of learning activities is very carefully planned for the children in the Reception class to enable them to make good progress in all their areas of learning. Good links with local secondary schools further enrich pupils' learning and experiences. The school is planning to develop the curriculum further by giving more opportunities to use skills learnt in English, mathematics and ICT in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

A common theme in comments from parents is the high level of care and support provided for pupils. Every effort is made to ensure that pupils are happy and able to succeed. Child protection procedures are thorough and staff are trained well to ensure that pupils are kept safe. From the earliest days in the Reception class, staff have high expectations of pupils and, by the time they reach the top of the school, older pupils are mature and sensible and are very good role models.

Very thorough records are kept of pupils' progress from year to year and targets are set for the next year. However, teachers do not set clear targets in the short term to help pupils achieve these longer term goals and records kept of progress towards these annual targets are not kept so consistently. Pupils are therefore not sufficiently aware of what they need to learn next to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Many parents praise the dynamic leadership of the headteacher. He has created a strong leadership team which, together with the staff, has initiated a thorough evaluation of the effectiveness of the school. The views of parents and pupils have been sought and the resulting document presents an accurate and perceptive picture

of the school. The effectiveness of this process and the resultant plans for improvement are seen in the developments there have been in the quality and breadth of the curriculum in recent years. A good example is the work done with local secondary schools, particularly to provide challenging work for more able mathematicians. Governors are fully involved in the process of setting and monitoring school improvements and give very good support. Although the school improvement plan covers areas for development well, some of the measures of success are not always sharply related to improvement in standards. A thorough plan of monitoring teaching and learning is carried out, but areas for improvement, although shared with teachers, are not always recorded so that it is difficult for managers to check readily whether recommendations have been followed.

Progress since the previous inspection has been good. For example, the most important area for development then was raising standards in science. This has been very effectively addressed and standards in science are now high. Bearing this in mind, and with the very obvious commitment of all involved in the school, the school is well placed to continue to move forward.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you so much for your welcome when I visited your school yesterday. I really enjoyed talking to many of you and was very impressed with how hard you work. You are right to be proud of your school as it is good, and there are a number of outstanding things about it.

Here are the things I think are best about your school:

- Your behaviour is excellent and you care for each other very well. You are growing up into responsible young citizens.
- There is a very wide range of opportunities for you to learn. I was particularly impressed with all the music and sport that you do as well as the results of your design and technology challenges.
- All staff look after you very well. They make sure you are safe and are very ready to help with your problems.
- You reach very high standards by the time you leave school.
- You make good progress through the school because you are taught well.
- Your school is well led by the headteacher and senior team, and staff work hard to make sure that they are providing the best for you.

These are the things I think could be better:

- Sometimes you do not know exactly what you need to do to improve your work.
- You are not given enough opportunities to carry out your own research and plan your own learning.

I am sure you will play your part in helping the school to get even better by continuing to work hard at the tasks you are given.

Good luck for the future and best wishes.