



# Ocker Hill Infant School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 103919  
**Local Authority** Sandwell  
**Inspection number** 286808  
**Inspection dates** 7–8 December 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

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

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|---|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Infant             | <b>School address</b>   | Gospel Oak Road |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community          |                         | Tipton          |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 3–7                |                         | DY4 0DS         |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed              | <b>Telephone number</b> | 0121 5561119    |
| <b>Number on roll (school)</b>            | 252                | <b>Fax number</b>       | 0121 5561119    |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body | <b>Chair</b>            | Vacant Position |
|   |                    | <b>Headteacher</b>      | Susan Hendry    |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 14 May 2001        |                         |                 |

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|-------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| <b>Age group</b><br>3–7 | <b>Inspection dates</b><br>7–8 December 2006 | <b>Inspection number</b><br>286808 |
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is in an area of high social and economic disadvantage. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The vast majority of parents just miss their entitlement because they undertake part-time work. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is average. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below that seen in other schools, especially in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. The school has received its Investor in People, Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Sandwell Bronze Healthy Schools and Citizenship Awards.

## 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. Pupils' personal, social and emotional development, the care, guidance and support offered to pupils and the leadership and management of the headteacher are outstanding. The school has exceptionally good relationships with parents, who value all that staff do for pupils and are delighted that their children are happy and learning well.

From a low baseline on entry, pupils attain average standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) by the time that they leave school, and their achievement is good. Achievement in the Nursery is outstanding because of the excellent range of learning opportunities children receive. In Reception, their achievement is good rather than outstanding, as not all pupils learn enough in some independent activities although they make good progress in basic skills. Throughout the school, pupils make exceptional progress in speaking and listening and talk confidently in lessons. Progress is good in ICT, reading, writing, mathematics and science but there are times when the small number of more capable pupils are not sufficiently challenged in writing. Overall, these pupils make satisfactory progress and the school already has plans in place to address this issue. Pupils with learning difficulties and the average and below average attainers make consistently good progress because assessment information is used well to match tasks to their needs. Pupils experience many barriers to learning. They lack vocabulary and have difficulty in expressing themselves. They also find it difficult to retain information and apply what they have learnt in one subject to another.

Teaching and learning are good overall. Inconsistencies of practice, especially in marking, the overuse of worksheets which restricts pupils from developing their extended writing skills, and the occasional lack of challenge for more capable pupils, prevent teaching from being outstanding. The presentation of pupils' written work is not as neat as it could be. The curriculum is good. It is broad, balanced and enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities such as a skipping workshop, opportunities for sports, and visits and visitors. 'We love our visits, especially when we go to Aston Hall. There are just so many rooms', said one pupil. The curriculum in the Nursery is outstanding because children have very good opportunities to experience learning using their senses.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development, is outstanding because of the very high quality of care, guidance and support they receive. They have a very good understanding of how to stay safe and be healthy. Pupils have good skills of independence, and the newly-formed school council has made valuable suggestions, which have been implemented, about improvements to the playground. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to take on responsibilities. For example, 'Huff and Puff' monitors proudly talk about their responsibilities and this enables these pupils to develop skills for their future lives because they have to make collective decisions and work in groups. Attendance is broadly average and pupils love receiving the 'Register Rabbit' as a reward for attending regularly.

Leadership and management, including governance, are good overall. Self-evaluation is outstanding and the headteacher and senior staff have monitored the school's performance very well. The school's capacity to improve is good because all staff are committed to raising standards and know what they need to do in order to improve.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- reduce the use of worksheets and ensure that the more capable pupils receive more challenging work, especially in writing
- improve the quality of presentation of pupils' written work
- establish consistently good teaching throughout the school and ensure that all teachers have the opportunity to learn from the most effective practice.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are average by the time pupils leave school and pupils' achievement is good in relation to their low starting points. Whilst progress throughout the school is good overall, it is inconsistent, with the best progress seen in the Nursery, one Year 1 and one Year 2 class. The 2006 national assessments show that standards were broadly average, although the more capable pupils did not always do as well as other groups. For example, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in writing was lower than in reading and mathematics. The school has already recognised this as an area for improvement.

Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage but make faster progress in the Nursery than in Reception because of the highly stimulating learning environment. In some independent activities in the Reception classes, insufficient intervention by teachers reduces their rate of progress. Pupils generally make consistently good progress because of the good use of assessment information to move almost all groups of pupils on in their learning. Targeted group work and the good use of the learning mentor and support staff ensure that pupils' barriers to learning are quickly recognised and rectified.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils have outstanding attitudes to learning and their behaviour is exemplary because of the very high quality of the academic and pastoral guidance they receive. 'You have to work hard here', said a member of the school council, 'but teachers help you all the way.'

Pupils are confident, independent and are very polite to visitors. In lessons, they say thank you to the support staff when they have been handed equipment and they take turns in listening to their 'talk partners'. Pupils value and respect one another and, when applying for positions of responsibility such as 'Huff and Puff' monitors, they are aware of their own personal qualities. 'I would like to be a monitor because I am good at helping people', said one seven-year-old. Pupils understand the need for

healthy eating and staying safe. They know that they need to look out for cars when they cross roads and not to talk to strangers. Pupils grow in confidence when they work in small groups because they are constantly encouraged to express themselves. Attendance is satisfactory and the school uses a very good range of strategies to ensure that pupils come to school regularly.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Exceptional features of teaching and learning are the use of ICT, the setting of targets for pupils and the teaching of small groups of pupils by support staff to help them overcome their barriers to learning. Pupils learn well because teachers model correct responses. For example, when teaching key words for reading, pupils know that the system of 'my turn, your turn', where the teacher models words which pupils then repeat, ensures good learning.

Teaching is not yet consistently good across year groups. At times, where teaching is usually satisfactory, teachers' questioning does not challenge the more capable pupils sufficiently. In addition, marking does not inform pupils of what they need to do to improve. Teachers also use too many worksheets and pupils are not expected to present their work neatly. The teaching in the Nursery is outstanding because of the very high expectations the teacher has of these young children and the excellent opportunities provided for them to learn using their senses.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects. An outstanding feature of the curriculum is the way teachers present learning in real-life contexts. For example, when pupils write stories, they take their own photographs and then write about them. Teachers make an exceptional range of good quality games to support learning which encourage pupils to develop their thinking skills. This develops work-place skills which contribute well to their future economic well-being. Links with other subjects are in the early stages of being developed and this prevents the curriculum from being outstanding. The curriculum is well planned by all staff, taking into account pupils' needs and interest levels.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

The recent focus on setting individual targets and using information from assessment to move pupils on in their learning ensures that pupils enjoy their learning because tasks are suited to their needs. Staff know their pupils very well and have particularly good links with parents, who are seen as true partners in their children's learning.

Child protection procedures are robust and excellent risk assessments are carried out, ensuring that pupils learn in a safe environment.

Pupils with learning difficulties are very well supported in lessons, and regular checks are made on their progress in relation to the targets identified in their individual education plans. A particular strength is the outstanding provision for transition from the Foundation Stage into Year 1, which enables pupils to feel very secure in school. Parents are particularly pleased with the care, guidance and support that their children receive.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher is the driving force behind the school's success and has outstanding leadership and management skills. She is well supported by her deputy headteacher and senior management team. There is still some work to do in ensuring that the senior management team develops the curriculum further, improves the satisfactory teaching to good and provides additional challenges for the more capable pupils. These relative weaknesses result in leadership and management being good overall rather than outstanding.

Performance management is exceptionally well managed, and all staff are perfectly clear as to what is expected of them. School self-evaluation is of a high quality. The correct issues have been identified for improvement, with resources carefully targeted to ensure that staff have access to the correct training to raise standards.

The school works exceptionally well with external agencies. Excellent links exist with local schools, which enable staff to engage in professional dialogue with one another in an attempt to raise standards of teaching and learning further. Governors are very supportive of the school and fulfil their statutory duties well.

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## Inspection judgements

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | <b>School Overall</b> |
|---|-----------------------|

### Overall effectiveness

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b> | 2   |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?  | 1   |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage  | 2   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 1   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements  | 2   |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection   | Yes |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 2 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 3 |
| 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

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 1 |
| The attendance of learners  | 3 |
| 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                                    | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 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   | 1   |
| 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  | 1   |
| 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 for telling us about all the wonderful things that are happening in your school. We spent a lovely time with you and your teachers and it was so nice to see you going about your daily activities.

You go to a good school that helps you to do well. Your attitudes to learning and behaviour are exemplary. You work well in lessons and are very polite to your teachers, friends and visitors, especially the way you thank the support staff when they have helped you. You listen carefully in lessons and clearly want to do your very best.

Your headteacher and staff look after you very well. You take your roles of monitors and being members of the school council very seriously and you have done a great job in ensuring that no-one gets left out during play time. You do a lot of interesting things in school. For example, you told us how much you enjoyed your trip to Aston Hall and how you managed to see all of those rooms.

We have asked your headteacher, staff and governing body to put a few things in place to help you make even better progress. You can help your teachers by writing more in lessons, especially those of you who find learning easy, and by making sure that your handwriting is always neat. We have asked your teachers not to give you so many worksheets to fill in and to make your lessons even more interesting by sharing what they do well so that they learn from each other.