



Oxley Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104295
LEA Wolverhampton
Inspection number 286901
Inspection dates 16 May 2006 to 16 May 2006
Reporting inspector David Carrington AI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Ripon Road
School category	Community		Wolverhampton
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		West Midlands WV10 9TR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01902 556486
Number on roll	149	Fax number	01902 556487
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Gary Tranter
Date of previous inspection	21 May 2001	Headteacher	Miss Catherine Gray

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 11	16 May 2006 - 16 May 2006	286901

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector spent time examining the school's self-evaluation files and other documents, talked with the headteacher, staff, governors and pupils, and visited lessons and an assembly. The inspector and headteacher observed a lesson together. In addition, 65 completed questionnaires from parents further assisted the writing of this report.

Description of the school

Oxley Primary School sits in the wedge between two busy roads leading out of Wolverhampton city centre and is tucked beside one of the largest tyre works in Europe. Not far away are two main line railway embankments and sandwiched in between is a site for traveller families where a significant number of the pupils live. Many families in the area suffer from hardship of one form or another. There is a rich racial mix in school, though most pupils are from White British families. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. Many pupils, regardless of ethnicity, start school with limited language skills. Quite a few pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. Most children join the nursery with much lower-than-average skills and knowledge.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Oxley provides an outstanding education for its pupils. They enjoy extremely rich learning experiences provided within an exciting environment that helps them develop both academically and socially. The school's very many strengths are the result of outstanding leadership and management. School self-evaluation is rigorous and reliable, if slightly modest. The school is very well placed to continue to go from strength to strength.

The Nursery and Reception classrooms are vibrant and eye-catching. The children work eagerly, happily and harmoniously. They steer their tricycles round the cramped triangular yard, work out how to stick the string on their kites, investigate what happens when their clothes get wet, or journey into space in the twelve-foot rocket that stands awaiting their command in the centre of the room. Overall they make outstanding progress, though standards are still well below average when they move to Year 1.

The wealth of experience does not stop with the youngest children. During the inspection, Year 2 were learning about sentences and adjectives using a commercial word-processing package. On its own, this is a fairly typical task for infant children, but at Oxley the work is linked very carefully to individual targets that very much influence the marking of work, deployment of teaching assistants and pupils' self-review of their learning. All this impacts strongly on learning. In the past pupils, particularly the more able, did not always make fast enough progress, especially in writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2. However, changes to staff have resulted in significant improvement to the quality of teaching and the rate of pupils' progress. Standards are not far below average at the end of Year 2.

Standards at the end of Year 6 have been sustained at above-average levels for a number of years. This reflects outstanding achievement. Although the current Year 6 are not on track to reach such high standards because their starting point was extremely low, they are making very great strides forward in their work. This pattern of high achievement is due to the excellent quality of lessons, the very skilful match of work to individual needs and the challenging nature of the activities. The school has developed intensive and very effective systems to assess and track the progress of individual pupils and this ensures no-one is left behind. If any pupil runs the risk of underachieving it is spotted quickly and effective action is taken to help them regain brisk progress.

Pupils' personal development is a particular strength of the school. They behave extremely well, have very positive attitudes to school and really enjoy their work. The pupils know the headteacher's room as a place where the door is always open. The 'tea for two' sessions when the headteacher invites carefully selected individual pupils to join her for a drink before morning school are renowned locally for their impact on attendance, motivation and self-esteem of pupils. At this time, the stresses and strains of school, and sometimes home, are talked about in a welcoming and reassuring atmosphere. There are quite a few challenging pupils in school, but the school has outstanding success in helping them all to settle to achieve very well.

Pupils are very clear about what makes Oxley so special. 'It's the teachers, they make learning fun...' 'Yes, we know our targets and teachers tell us how to reach them and what we have to do next.' 'I had this idea for a toy fair and I asked my friends if they would help me if I got permission...we raised money for the new apparatus in the hall.' Pupils have a strong say in what the school does and how they learn and they are listened to carefully. They are particularly proud of their work to improve the toilets for junior pupils and say their next priority is to improve those for the infants.

A key example of encouraging really positive attitudes and a will to learn well is to be found in the Breakfast Club. Pupils' enjoyment of the activities first thing in the morning is infectious and this successfully encourages pupils to come to school on time. It's evident that pupils in school know what a healthy meal consists of and they are pleased that fruit is offered as a dessert at lunch. Children at the Breakfast Club are grateful for the work of the crossing wardens, who make their journey to school safe in the face of the endless traffic on the two main roads. Other pupils also single out the wardens as friends who make the start and end of the day really good.

Assemblies are the focal point of the school day. Each class takes a turn to present a theme to the others. On the day of inspection Year 4/5, all decked out in tricolours, moustaches, berets and stripey tops, entered, took up their places and began to sing with vigour about France and its customs. The audience of pupils, staff and parents learned how to count to ten, to name the days and to sing about colours. This grounding in very basic French made a strong contribution to pupils' knowledge of life in other places and the wealth of cultures there are to celebrate. It also helped them develop skills that will be of great help when they eventually leave school for work. Examples such as this show very clearly the high quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. In lessons pupils work with enthusiasm, sense of purpose and an aim to please. Teachers bring the work alive, and ensure that there is enough hands-on activity to motivate the pupils to learn new skills and knowledge in a way that greatly broadens the pupils' understanding. A particular success is the introduction of 'talking partners' to help improve pupils' speaking and listening skills, which are very weak when they start school.

The impact of such approaches is to be observed in the improvement to reading and writing that is emerging as the pupils strengthen their use of standard spoken English. The school tracks pupils' achievements closely. This is rooted in the very challenging targets that are set for the pupils. Two words sum up pupils' learning – Can Do! Thus, many children start with very low standards, but in recent years Year 6 pupils have left with above-average skills and knowledge. This marks outstanding progress, which is once again consistent in all classes following a brief period when teaching was not up to the usual standard at Oxley because of temporary cover for staff absence.

The school maintains a rigorous approach to health and safety, risk assessments are regular and pupils' interests are safeguarded very carefully. Parents and carers say that the school takes exceptional care of their children. Children who are particularly vulnerable are kept in close view to ensure they can enjoy the same wealth of learning as other pupils and achieve equally well. Parents hold their school in high esteem,

have very few concerns and are able to share their ideas for its future knowing that the response will be thoughtful and well judged. Because the school works so hard and successfully to encourage parents' involvement, they are gradually taking a much more central place in the education of their children.

The curriculum provides pupils with excellent opportunities to broaden their skills and knowledge and to enjoy a wealth of experiences that prepare them well for their secondary education. Pupils are eager to share what they have been doing in school with their parents and carers. Homework covers many subjects, including music, and is welcomed by parents, who are increasingly giving a helping hand to their children as they learn. Many pupils stay after school to take part in the rich programme of out-of-school activities. Computer Club is particularly popular, as are sports, but the pupils are unhappy that some of their laptops and other equipment are constantly the target of thieves. They say that 'Burglar Bill' is not welcome in school, even though the youngest children love his adventures and develop a thirst for reading by listening to his cries of 'I'll take that...'

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher has an acute understanding of the school's successes and weaknesses, as do the staff. This enables them to make sure that resources are effectively allocated to improving weaknesses. The headteacher goes about her work calmly, quietly and with care. She values people and allows them, staff and pupils, to shine. Delegation is a strength that enriches the school community. Most importantly, the headteacher sets the standards and expectations for others. Her leadership is second to none, a hard act to follow. Oxley is a first class school that gives outstanding value for money, but it does not stand still.

The staff are conscientious in their work and subject leaders review the strengths and weaknesses of their subjects thoroughly. They have a very clear understanding of the priorities for improvement and successfully help the school to move ahead. English, for example, is expertly managed by a leader who is both a role model for her class and for the staff. There is constantly improving achievement because work is so well matched to pupils' needs. This is shown by the records of achievement of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. They do particularly well under the watchful and resourceful eye of their teaching assistants. These pupils feel a great sense of 'I too can do it.'

Governors represent the local community well. They know the school's strengths, and, like the pupils and parents, they are proud of them. An outstanding example of this is to be found in their work with the traveller community. These families are placing increasing value on their children's education because the school works effectively to reach out to them. More traveller pupils are joining the school, they are staying for longer and they are absent less. Importantly, most of them are now achieving well. The school tackles absence determinedly and the attendance of traveller children is now better than the national targets set for them. The overall level of attendance is below average, but it is rising a little each year. Governors know what needs changing too and talk confidently about improvements to provision for Year 1 and possible redevelopment of the cramped outdoor space for Nursery and Reception children.

There is a clear sense of priorities, high expectations and a determination to get things done. The governors look forward to the next two years in school, which they know will see many major changes to the site and the locality. It has improved very effectively since its last inspection and in the future it has every chance to thrive.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

This grade is explained above.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

This grade is explained above.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

This grade is explained above.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

This grade is explained above.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This grade is explained above.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

This grade is explained above.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	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	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	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

I didn't know when I turned into Ripon Road what a brilliant day I was about to have. Thank you for making me so welcome and for showing me around school to your favourite places. I came away thinking that you were very proud of your school and your work, and it's not hard to see why.

• You get on so well with each other and help each other in lessons and at playtime. • You are keen to come to school and you like your learning a lot. • You work hard to reach your targets and you know what you have to do next to get there. • You are taught really well. Not many children are lucky enough to enjoy such good lessons. • Your behaviour is excellent. • There are lots of exciting things to do in school. • Your teachers want you to be as successful as you can be. • Your headteacher cares for you all and she makes sure that the school is the best in the district.

There's just one important thing that your headteacher, governors and teachers have to work on.

• Children in Year 1 should have more chances to learn things in ways that are best for them.

You told me that Oxley is always as good as the day I came. There were certainly many things going on. You may like to read more about your school in the report that will be sent to your homes. I wonder if you can find the bit about 'Burglar Bill'?