



Oldfield Brow Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106284
Local Authority Trafford
Inspection number 287465
Inspection date 18 October 2006
Reporting inspector Brenda McIntosh

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Taylor Road
School category	Community		Altrincham
Age range of pupils	3–11		Cheshire WA14 4LE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 9125963
Number on roll (school)	151	Fax number	0161 9125964
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Martin Glarvey
		Headteacher	Mr Robert Merrell
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Oldfield Brow is a smaller than average primary school. The number of pupils joining the school other than at the usual starting time is high. The demand for places exceeds supply because of the school's good reputation. The school serves a community of mixed social and economic circumstances. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is about average. The majority of pupils are from a White British background. The school has an increasing ethnic diversity but no pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. A broadly average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities but the proportion with a statement of special educational need is above average.

The school was awarded Arts Mark Gold Status in 2005 and gained recognition by the Basic Skills Agency with Quality Mark in 2002 and 2005. The school has also been accredited with the Healthy School Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This outstanding school is very much at the heart of the local community and is highly regarded by pupils and parents. Its motto of 'only the very best will do' impacts on every aspect of school life. It is a happy school and prides itself on its friendliness and warmth; it is easy to see why places are in demand; it is a vibrant place to be and very successful in getting the best out of people. Many comments from parents reflect these sentiments. Adults gain much pleasure out of working here and seeing pupils flourish both socially and academically. The school is fully aware that some pupils have limited experiences out of school and goes to great lengths to expand their knowledge. With this in mind it meets its aims extremely well in providing the best experiences that can possibly be offered for every pupil.

Its success stems from outstanding leadership and management. The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a great partnership and set high standards in the continual drive for improvement. All staff are, without exception, highly motivated and passionate about the school and contribute effectively in providing the best for each individual pupil. Governors and parents too play their part in the success of the school. For example, they have helped enormously in bringing about improvements to the building and grounds to provide a very pleasant environment indoors and outdoors. All aspects of the school's work are rigorously checked. There is no complacency as the school builds on its strengths to improve standards and achievement even further. The school has been slightly modest in evaluating some aspects of its work because of the culture that has been established of 'only the very best will do'.

The quality of teaching is outstanding. Learning experiences are rich, diverse and exciting. As a result pupils are highly motivated, happy in their learning and achieve exceptionally well. In the Foundation Stage children get off to a flying start because of the excellent provision. All groups of pupils make outstanding progress relative to their starting point. On entry to Nursery children's skills are well below those expected for their age and by the end of Year 6 standards are significantly above average. The rigorous tracking of pupils' progress is central to their achieving so well. The school keeps meticulous records of how well pupils are doing and uses the information to set challenging targets and to provide extra support to those pupils who may need it. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are consequently catered for extremely well. Marking is good overall. Whilst there is some exemplary practice that tells pupils exactly how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve this aspect is not consistent. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils. Imaginative links are made between subjects and bring a relevance and excitement to learning. The wide range of learning opportunities offered includes French, Spanish and strong attention to developing pupils' creativity through the arts, including performance. Innovative use of information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the school, for example storing data and presenting information, help pupils prepare for later life and gain an appreciation of the benefits of modern technology.

Pupils are appreciative of the outstanding care, guidance and support they receive. Their response to the teachers' high expectations is seen in the excellent attitudes to

learning and exemplary behaviour. Pupils are friendly and polite. They feel safe in school and are confident that their teachers will help them if they have a problem. Pupils' contribution to the school and wider community is excellent. They get involved in local issues, such as presenting a petition to the council to campaign for a safe crossing point for cyclists over a nearby canal. It was successful; a great opportunity for pupils to see democracy in action.

After the last inspection the school was left with no issues to address. Nevertheless, it has grown from strength to strength continually seeking to improve its provision to suit the changing needs of pupils. High standards and achievement have been maintained. The school is in an excellent position to improve further. It is working closely with a range of outside agencies and has initiated a major programme of intervention called Sharecare that will focus on working with parents in developing pre-school children's low communication skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure all marking matches the best practice in letting pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Children enter Nursery with skills that are well below those expected for their age. Many have poor communication and social skills. They make very good progress in the Foundation Stage and are well prepared for Year 1, although some still have problems with language and communication. In Years 1 and 2 pupils build very well on their previous learning and attain average standards by the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 6 when pupils leave the school standards are usually above average and sometimes well above, as reflected in the test results in 2005. In 2006 high standards and achievement were maintained. Boys and girls do equally well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also achieve highly; in the tests at the end of Year 6 most attain the nationally expected levels for pupils aged 11.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. As many parents commented, pupils achieve far more than just reaching good academic standards. Pupils are respected and nurtured. They think it's good being a pupil at this school because it's a fun place to learn and everyone is kind and helpful. The development of pupils' creative talents through, for example, art, music and school performances, results in their developing a real sense of their own self-worth that increases their confidence and raises aspirations. During the inspection it was the Harvest Festival where pupils gave presentations of the different

countries they had studied and provided food they had made for all to taste. The atmosphere in the hall was buzzing and it was a delight to see so many parents attending to share their children's achievements and take an interest in their learning. Pupils are gaining a good awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles. They eagerly take part in a number of sports and enjoy the well organised physical activities at playtimes. Attendance levels are average; issues to do with an illness this year had a significant impact on the figures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Lessons are planned very well to build on pupils' previous learning. They are varied and imaginative and consequently pupils' interest and engagement is high. Teaching assistants work closely alongside the teachers contributing effectively to pupils' learning. In the lessons visited during the inspection pupils were always busily involved in their work and exceptionally well behaved. Classrooms are bright stimulating environments. The marking of work is good overall but it does not always indicate clearly to pupils how they can improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and meets the needs of all pupils. It provides pupils with a wide range of diverse learning experiences and helps them achieve highly both academically and in their personal development. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is exciting with a strong emphasis on the development of communication and social skills. Lessons in Year 1 are planned extremely well to ensure that learning is continuous from Reception and meets the needs of the children. ICT is used widely as a very effective aid to teaching and learning and to ensure that management systems are efficient.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils' progress is tracked rigorously and the information gained is used effectively to help pupils make outstanding progress. Child protection procedures and those for safeguarding pupils are in place and meet current requirements. Health and safety arrangements promote a safe learning environment. Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that their teachers would help them if they have any difficulties. Links with outside agencies are very effective and ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive the support they need.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school is led excellently by the headteacher. The deputy headteacher, staff, parents and governors give their full support. Pupils' well-being is at the heart of the school's development. There is a strong team spirit where everyone's contribution is valued. The professional development of staff is given a high priority and is closely linked to staff's own development and the development of the school. School self-evaluation is rigorous and leads to improvement and high achievement. Governors are very effective in providing challenge and support. The school has developed a number of excellent partnerships to support pupils' learning.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
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	1
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	1
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 welcoming me to your school and for being so kind and polite. I enjoyed the day very much and the chance to talk with some of you about what it is like to be a pupil at Oldfield Brow. I do agree with you that it is a very friendly place. I had a very busy day talking to people and watching you learn. I would like to share with you some of the things I found out.

I think that your school is an outstanding place in which to learn. Here are some of my reasons. Your behaviour in lessons and around school is excellent. When I came into your classes you were always busy working hard and fully engrossed in your activities. The teachers work hard to make your lessons interesting and it was clear as some of you told me that you do enjoy learning and have a 'bit of fun' at the same time. I also saw teachers giving you encouragement and extra help with your work if you needed it; this was something you had told me about and one of the reasons why you like being at this school. During your time in school you make excellent progress in reaching high standards by the time you leave at the end of Year 6. This prepares you really well for your next school and hopefully makes you think of continuing your studies after that. You are lucky to experience a wide range of exciting learning experiences. Although I did not visit an ICT lesson I did manage to look at the fantastic presentations that the Year 6 pupils had put together. Keep that interest up and the use of ICT will help you enormously in your studies now and in later life. I looked at the displays around school and some of the CDs on which you store work. The displays from your Arts Week were amazing. The visitors who came to your school helped you produce some stunning pieces of work. You must have been tremendously proud of your achievements. The Harvest Festival was a wonderful occasion and it was so good to see so many members of your families coming to share your celebration. The headteacher and all the other staff look after you exceptionally well are constantly looking for ways to make things even better for you. If you think of anything that could be better be sure to tell them. Remember your views are important. To help you learn even better I have asked that when teachers mark your work they all tell you how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve it. I am sure you will all continue to work hard to keep Oldfield Brow an outstanding school.

My very best wishes for the future