



Oldfield Park Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108997
Local Authority Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number 288246
Inspection dates 10–11 October 2006
Reporting inspector Christine Huard

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Dorset Close
School category	Community		Bath
Age range of pupils	4–7		BA2 3RF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01225 422903
Number on roll (school)	154	Fax number	01225 473232
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Sarah Wall
		Headteacher	Joanna Claridge
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2003		

Age group 4–7	Inspection dates 10–11 October 2006	Inspection number 288246
-------------------------	-----------------------------------------------	------------------------------------

© 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 two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small infant school in Bath. It serves a mixed area of privately owned and rented flats and houses. Children entering the Reception class have a very wide range of skills, varying between very low and well above those expected at the age of four. Overall attainment is about average, although skills in language and communication are more limited than those in other areas. The school has a few pupils from minority ethnic groups who are at an early stage of learning English.

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 providing an effective education for its pupils. The school's motto of 'Together We Learn' is reflected well in all that the school does. Staff, parents and the local community are fully involved in contributing to the education of its pupils. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and feel, as stated by one parent, that 'standards are high in all aspects, from the curriculum through to the care and support given to the children.' The children are lively and really enjoy school, which is shown in their good attendance and eager participation in lessons. They behave well and enthusiastically, take on responsibilities such as serving on the school council and devising questions to ask at the interviews for a new teacher. They have an outstanding understanding of the need for a healthy lifestyle and know how to stay safe. Relationships are strong. There are good opportunities for pupils to engage in collaborative activities and problem solving, all of which will hold them in good stead for the future.

Standards are above average. The national test results at the end of Year 2 in 2006 were above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Through the good teaching, pupils achieve well, making good progress from their starting points when they enter the school. However, boys' writing is a relative weakness and it is too soon to judge the impact of the actions taken by the school to improve this. Children in the Reception class make good progress, particularly those with low levels of skills when they start. The school offers an exciting curriculum with plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop their imaginative and exploratory skills through initiatives such as 'Curiosity Sacks.' Teachers make their lessons interesting and exciting for their pupils. They have a good understanding of the different ways in which children learn and carefully plan their lessons to take this into account. Questions are sharply focused and pupils are encouraged to discuss their ideas together. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored, and targets are set and regularly reviewed. The 'Learning Journey' file carefully records progress in each pupil's academic and personal development. The staff know their pupils exceptionally well and take excellent care of them as well as providing the support and advice needed for the pupils to make good progress in their academic and personal development. They feel safe, knowing they can confide in the adults when they are unhappy or have a problem.

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher provides excellent direction in driving the school forward and in ensuring that the quest for high standards is rigorously pursued, whilst also promoting the all-round development of the pupils. Governors are efficient and know their school well, effectively challenging the leadership on progress being made in areas requiring improvement. The headteacher, staff and governors all know how well the school is doing because of the rigorous checking systems in place. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and is well placed to make further improvements. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and comprehensive, although inspectors found the school's own grading of its effectiveness to be rather cautious.

What the school should do to improve further

-
- Help boys to structure their writing more effectively to raise standards further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. When children join the Reception classes there is an exceptionally wide variation in the level of skills possessed by each child. The well-thought-through provision means that children make good progress, especially those who enter with particularly low levels of skills. Most children reach the goals expected by the end of Reception, although some have comparatively weaker communication, language and literacy skills.

Standards are above average overall by the time pupils leave Year 2 and pupils achieve well. The school has taken effective action to raise standards in all areas since the last inspection. Initiatives such as 'Story Making' have had a positive impact on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills as well as their writing skills. The school is aware that boys do not structure their writing as well as the girls and has put much thought into strategies and planning to ensure that boys are more engaged in classroom activities. However, it is too soon to see the impact of the school's actions in work produced. Pupils at an early stage of learning English make good progress, as do pupils with learning difficulties. This is because they receive effective support both in and out of the classroom.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding and are encouraged by the happy and safe school environment. Pupils are trusted and their views respected, nurturing personal confidence and self-worth. Pupils are friendly, and look after each other carefully. They know it is important to eat healthy foods and understand the need to take plenty of exercise. Behaviour is courteous and thoughtful, and good relationships flourish. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, encouraged by the extensive opportunities provided by the school to develop personal as well as academic skills. They enjoy opportunities to take responsibility, for example, in their contributions to the school's agreed 'Golden Rules.' Pupils make a very positive contribution to the school, and also to the wider community, through charitable fundraising or visits to the local community garden. Pupils feel both physically and emotionally safe, and are confident that adults in school care for them. Their good literacy, numeracy and personal skills mean they are well prepared for the next stage in their education and later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Activities for children in Reception are imaginative and exciting and show a good understanding and awareness of the needs of individual children. In Years 1 and 2 pupils learn successfully because there is a consistency in approach across the school and teachers provide well for the needs of all. Pupils are encouraged to be imaginative and have good opportunities for discussion with their 'talking partners' in order to clarify their ideas. However, occasionally, there is too much talk, which leaves too little time for written tasks. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties, who make good progress against their targets. Assessment is good and, with the teachers' help, pupils are beginning to judge how well they are learning for themselves and what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, being well balanced and covering all subjects of the National Curriculum and areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage. It is innovative, exciting and tailored to meet the needs of the pupils well. The school has investigated ways to ensure the interests of boys are met in order to raise standards of writing. However, there is not a sufficiently consistent approach to this by all staff. There is a strong programme for pupils' personal development and as a result of the 'Philosophy for Children' programme, pupils demonstrate growing confidence in their ability to think for themselves and sort things out when they are stuck. An extensive range of enrichment activities, visits and visitors provides exciting and valuable additional opportunities. Gifted and talented pupils are given additional opportunities through a programme of activities. Well-targeted provision for pupils with learning difficulties ensures these pupils make good progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are outstanding. The school's first Golden Rule, to 'care and share' is upheld by all members of the school community. The school values all pupils as individuals, and staff are dedicated to their well-being. Pupils with learning difficulties are identified early and the good support they receive enables them to make good progress. Effective procedures ensure the health and safety of pupils. They say they are confident that any worries they have will be listened to and dealt with promptly. Assessment procedures are comprehensive and are used effectively to check on progress and to set targets for each pupil in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils know what their targets are and understand what they have to do to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is led and managed well. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding and provides the focus and drive to take the school forward. Her commitment to high standards and concern for the individual needs of pupils are shared by all in the school. As a result, pupils love coming to school and are excited and enthusiastic about their learning. All staff with management responsibilities effectively check the effectiveness of their subjects and areas. Governors show a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are fully involved in monitoring and strategic planning. The school uses data well to check its own performance. For example, language and literacy were identified as concerns. The success of the 'Story Making' initiative in developing pupils' speaking and listening skills is evident in the wide vocabulary and confidence the pupils have developed. However, it is taking longer to have an impact on boys' writing. Rigorous checking of planning, lessons and pupils' work assesses the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that pupils continue to make good progress. However, the monitoring to ensure a consistent approach towards improving the writing of boys is not yet effective enough. The school has good capacity for further improvement. Parents are regularly consulted over initiatives such as the travel plan and they have complete confidence in the school. 'It has been great to watch my son blossom in this caring and supportive environment' was one of many similar comments.

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

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------

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?	1
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	2
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	2
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?	2
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?	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

12 October 2006

Dear Pupils

Oldfield Park Infant School, Dorset Close, Bath BA2 3RF

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You certainly seem to be very happy and it was good to hear how you enjoy your work and all the extra activities in which you are involved. Your school gives you a good education and everyone is working hard to make it even better.

What we think your school does well

- You make good progress with your learning and reach good standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You are taught well and your lessons are interesting, which means that you pay attention, behave well and show how much you enjoy your learning.
- The school takes excellent care of you and helps you become more confident.
- Your school is led and managed well.

What we have asked the school to do to improve

- The boys need some more help to improve their writing.

We are glad you enjoy your school and hope you will continue to work hard.

Very best wishes

Mrs Christine Huard Lead Inspector