



Oxbridge Lane Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111644
Local Authority Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number 289012
Inspection date 19 October 2006
Reporting inspector Andrew Scott

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Oxbridge Lane
School category	Community		Stockton-on-Tees
Age range of pupils	3-11		TS18 4DA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01642 607421
Number on roll (school)	375	Fax number	01642 605896
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Caroline McHale
		Headteacher	Mrs Susan Moppett
Date of previous school inspection	29 October 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves a mixed urban area with some deprivation. When they enter the school, children's development is below that usually seen. Most pupils come from White British families but about a fifth, of predominantly Pakistani heritage, speaks English as an additional language. There are also a small number of refugee pupils. The movement of the pupil population is average, as is the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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 with some outstanding features. It has an excellent atmosphere in which pupils are respected, extremely well cared for and encouraged to succeed in their work. As a result, pupils are relaxed, open and eager to learn. The headteacher's outstanding leadership is the key to the school's success. As one parent said, 'She personifies the ethos of the school.' Indeed, she ensures that all the staff in the school are of the same mind and so pupils benefit from great consistency in the level of personal support and guidance, as well as teaching.

This explains why pupils achieve very well throughout the school. Children start in the Nursery with some key skills that are below average, which include speaking and listening and personal development. They begin to catch up by the time they leave the Reception class and, by the end of Year 2, standards are average. Standards for Year 6 in 2005 were above average. Results were lower in 2006, largely because there was a higher percentage of pupils who had learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the group. Standards in speaking, listening and writing are a little lower than in mathematics and science, partly because links with parents to promote the pupils' learning are not strong enough. Attainment tends to be above average in most other subjects, especially information and communication technology (ICT).

The quality of teaching is good in all year groups and is sometimes outstanding. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects, and their enthusiasm fires pupils' interest and grips their attention. Teachers have high expectations of pupils who, in turn, appreciate and respond to the good advice they receive about how to improve their work. Teachers use their good knowledge of pupils' progress to provide extra support or more challenging work.

The care and support for pupils are, as another parent put it, 'second to none'. Very thorough systems for safeguarding pupils reinforce the high level of pastoral care. Led by the headteacher, all staff show great regard for pupils, making sure that the school is an oasis of calm and raising the aspirations of pupils and families. As a consequence, pupils develop very well as individuals. They adopt a very healthy approach to life. Pupils respect one another and become mature and responsible, establishing good skills for their future life. They play a full role in the school community and have beneficial links with the wider world.

The leadership of the school, provided by the headteacher and senior staff, is excellent. The school sets challenging but achievable targets for itself that explain its good progress since the last inspection. The management of the school is good. The school knows itself very well but does not always act swiftly enough to implement new initiatives. Governance is good because governors are knowledgeable and well involved in the school's development. Overall, the school is in very good shape, it is rightly held in high regard by parents and is well set for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' speaking, listening and writing, especially by strengthening links with parents to promote learning at home.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve very well throughout the school. Children start in the Nursery with skills and abilities that are below average, especially in language, personal and social development and knowledge of the outside world. They make good progress through the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) and reach national expectations, except in language.

By Year 2, standards are average. Pupils make good progress overall, although progress in writing is at present slightly weaker than in other subjects. By Year 6, standards are never less than average and for the past four years have been significantly higher than the national results. In the national tests of 2005, standards were significantly above average but performance was lower in 2006. This year group had a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. In addition, performance in English was lower than predicted and the school has requested a review of marking. Pupils in the current Year 6 are making good progress and are on track to meet challenging targets.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well, although not always quite as well as other pupils. The refugee pupils have recently arrived at the school and have settled in very well. It is, therefore, too early to judge their progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are a credit to the school and their families. Around school, they are courteous, considerate, open and friendly. They are very responsible and proud of the jobs they do for the school community, for example, acting as playground buddies. Their influence reaches beyond the school. Each year, for instance, pupils design a Christmas card for a local company on an environmental theme.

Behaviour is good. Pupils said that there is some misbehaviour but it is not significant and they feel quite safe. This is reinforced by their clear concern for the safety of others. Pupils develop considerable self-esteem through exciting lessons and other activities, such as participating in creative photography in Durham and working with a blacksmith to create a metal tree sculpture for a nearby park. This contributes well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which is excellent.

Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to their work and maintain very good concentration in lessons. They are very aware of a healthy lifestyle and how to take care of themselves. Their strong interpersonal skills and their robust literacy, numeracy and computer skills stand them in good stead for their life ahead.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall with some that is outstanding. Pupils appreciate that teachers make lessons fun as well as challenging for the most part. The rapport between staff and pupils is excellent. Pupils are enthused by teachers' confidence in their subjects and respond eagerly in lessons because their contributions are valued. Lessons are mostly planned well with reference to pupils' previous learning. Classrooms, therefore, exude an atmosphere of organised and fruitful activity.

Teachers present new learning clearly and sympathetically to pupils' needs. They ask good questions to check and reinforce understanding but do not always expect enough from pupils' answers so that their speaking skills are improved. Their expectations are generally good, and at times high, conveyed by clear advice in class and helpful marking that pinpoints strengths and weaknesses. Occasionally, however, teachers do not match the work closely enough to the specific needs of individual pupils and so their progress may falter at times.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has a good curriculum and follows national guidelines closely. Teachers are beginning to be more flexible and creative in their approach, particularly in blending subjects to put learning in context and motivate pupils. During the inspection, for instance, pupils in Year 6 were engrossed in editing their digital videos of the scenes in Romeo and Juliet they had previously enacted. Close ties with a neighbouring secondary school and the City Learning Centre expand pupils' opportunities in sport, ICT and design and technology. The school also enriches pupils' experiences well through exciting visits to the Planetarium, for example, and activities like Filipino dancing. There is a good range of after school clubs which have a positive impact on the pupils' achievement and their personal and social development.

Good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, especially through well-designed learning plans, ensures that they make good progress.

Similarly, well-focused activities enable children in the Foundation Stage to learn well through hands-on activities and trial and error.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school is extremely effective at ensuring pupils' well-being. Formal systems are all very well established and regularly updated. Training in key aspects, such as child protection, is frequent and rigorous. An even greater strength is the level of pastoral care provided by all staff. Pupils value this greatly and feel very safe and comfortable. The school works hard to support families with particular issues. A few parents feel

that the school does not always listen to their views and those of their children. This opinion is not shared by the vast majority of parents, nor borne out by inspection findings.

The school has very organised systems to check pupils' progress in their work. These enable teachers to usually focus support skilfully through clear, individualised targets that benefit pupils' learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership is outstanding, especially that of the headteacher. She has developed the school extremely well, maintaining an emphasis on both care and academic achievement. She has forged strong links with external agencies to support families and strengthen pupils' learning, for example, in ICT. Senior staff are crucial to the school's development. Individually and collectively, they work closely with the headteacher to spearhead the right priorities for the school.

Management is good. The school has a very thorough view of itself. It identifies most areas of concern and compiles a very good development plan of a few, finely focused actions. It is not afraid to repeat priorities if they have not been fully achieved. Sometimes, action is not taken swiftly enough. For example, the school is only just beginning to meet the needs of pupils with specific gifts and/or talents.

Governance is good. Governors are well involved, increasingly so now that each governor is linked with one class. They are effective as 'critical friends' but do not systematically evaluate the results of their decisions.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection, by successfully resolving its key issues, improving standards and strengthening its ethos. With the stability and cohesion of the staff and strong leadership, the school is well placed to improve further and provides good value for money.

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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?	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	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

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	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	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	1
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

Oxbridge Lane Primary School

Oxbridge Lane

Stockton-on-Tees

TS18 4DA

19 October 2006

Dear Children

Thank you very much for all the help you gave me on my visit to your school. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and all the staff at Oxbridge Lane. It was a pity that I did not have more time to see everything that you do.

I agree with you that yours is a good school, and it has some special strengths. I liked particularly, the way in which you develop as individuals during your time at the school. You are polite, friendly, responsible and mostly well behaved. You are increasingly leading a healthy lifestyle and look after one another extremely well. You play a full part in supporting your school by carrying out your jobs reliably and suggesting ways in which the school could improve, through your school council. I know you really enjoy your work, concentrate hard in lessons and appreciate teachers' help in making your work better. You make good progress in your work throughout the school. All these skills should make the move to your next school that much easier.

All this is possible because your teachers take extremely good care of you and want the best for you. They also teach you well and try to make lessons fun. I like the way the school provides exciting activities, like the digital video work I saw Year 6 pupils hard at work on, as well as fascinating visits. Usually, the work in lessons is quite hard, and not too hard; occasionally, though, it is too easy. I have also asked the school to help you improve your English, especially speaking, listening and writing. You might like to ask your parents to help you more at home with this.

Your headteacher makes the school what it is. She is excellent at making sure all the staff work well together and look after you very well. She, the staff and the governors have the right ideas to make your school even better, so the future of Oxbridge Lane looks bright.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Lead Inspector