

Otford Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118279
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	291072
Inspection date	20 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Don Mason

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bryan Sinn
Headteacher	Peter Denereaz
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2001
School address	High Street Otford Sevenoaks TN14 5PG
Telephone number	01959 523145
Fax number	01959 525393

Age group	4–12
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds and almost all are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little below average but varies considerably from year to year. A small number of pupils taught in mainstream classes have significant needs related to autism. Pupils' attainment on entry to school is broadly at the level expected for four- year-olds.

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 outstanding features that enables pupils to achieve well. A strength of the school is the leadership of the headteacher and his deputy, who have put achievement and the desire to ensure pupils take control of their learning at the heart of the school ethos. Leadership and management are good overall. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school life. Their good personal development and well-being are evident in the care they show for one another in and out of class and their high levels of self-esteem. Most parents express strong support for the school, many sharing the view of one that 'the ethos of the school is very child-orientated, promoting the well-rounded development of the whole child. Even when my child is ill, it is difficult to keep her at home!'

Good teaching and interesting activities ensure that children in the Reception Year make good progress. Most exceed the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning by the start of Year 1. This good progress is built on successfully in other year groups so that pupils reach above-average standards at the end of Year 6, although fewer pupils reach the higher levels in writing than in other subjects. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. It is improving as teachers make use of better assessment information to plan work which closely matches the needs of groups of pupils of different abilities. However, some inconsistencies in the use of assessment information in teaching remain, particularly in ensuring that activities are challenging for some of the more capable pupils in writing and for all pupils in mathematics.

The curriculum is good and pupils' enjoyment is promoted by a wide range of sporting activities, visits, visitors and projects such as the science garden and the wildlife area. The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are outstanding. Adults in school look after pupils very well, with the result that pupils feel safe and grow in self-confidence. The academic guidance provided for pupils is good overall but less well developed in mathematics and science. In English, there have been good developments in the guidance for writing. A very positive culture of pupil self-evaluation is developing across the subjects.

Pupils with learning difficulties, including those with significant needs related to autism, often make outstanding progress because of the intensive one-to-one support provided for them by conscientious teaching assistants. The staff team is well motivated and enthusiastic. Staff have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and a clear plan of action is in place to bring about improvements. Senior subject leaders have good opportunities to exercise their leadership role effectively in their efforts to raise achievement further. Improvements in recent years, particularly in achievement in the Reception Year to Year 2, provide evidence of the school's good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that assessment information is always used fully, in all year groups, to match teaching to pupils' needs in mathematics and to challenge the more capable pupils in writing.
- Develop the guidance to pupils about how to improve their performance in mathematics and science to the same high quality as that provided in English.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and standards, as seen in national tests, are well above average by the end of Year 6. Children in the Reception Year make good progress, especially in their personal and social development and in writing. This good progress is maintained, and built upon, in Years 1 to 6, although the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level in writing is not as high as in other subjects. The school has been working hard to remedy this situation and improve standards in writing generally. As a result of improved assessment arrangements and academic guidance, pupils are now given clear advice about their writing and how to improve it. These developments are having a positive impact but a few of the most able pupils are still not challenged fully. The school does not make use of national intervention strategies, with the result that the progress of pupils working slightly below the level expected for their age is not always as rapid as it could be, especially in mathematics. Many pupils with learning difficulties make outstanding progress because their needs are met exceptionally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their behaviour is good, although the perception of some pupils and parents is that it could be better. Pupils display positive attitudes towards their work. Their good attendance is an indication of their enjoyment of school. The school continues to take action to improve punctuality, which is satisfactory. While spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, pupils' understanding of non-White cultures is relatively underdeveloped.

Pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe. Their outstanding understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle is reflected in the decisions they make about what they eat regularly and what is acceptable to eat as a treat. Year 6 pupils act as 'lunchtime buddies' and one of their duties is to award stickers to acknowledge the healthy contents of packed lunch boxes. In this role, through the school council, and in many other ways, pupils make an excellent contribution to the community. Pupils make good progress in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). The development of basic skills and their understanding of the world of work prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education and their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching ensures that pupils make good progress. Teaching is improving as teachers make use of more detailed assessment information to plan work which meets the needs of all pupils more effectively. This is particularly true in writing, where pupils are given clear advice about how to improve their work, although the school recognises that, in some cases, the more capable pupils are not always fully challenged. In mathematics, the day-to-day checking of pupils' progress, and matching of work to meet pupils' needs, is not always as good as it could be.

Lessons are well planned. Pupils respond positively to clear routines and the pace of lessons is good, keeping everyone involved. A strong feature of teaching is the culture of pupil

self-evaluation which is developing. Pupils are frequently reminded of the purpose of activities and encouraged to think about what they have achieved and what they have to do next.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum contributes much to pupils' good progress throughout the school. There is a good emphasis on literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, the impact of which is evident in pupils' progress in these areas. Pupils with significant needs are fully involved in all aspects of school life, with adaptations made to the work in subjects where relevant.

A wide range of visits and visitors, together with themed days and weeks, enriches the curriculum and makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and enjoyment. The school's recent award of the 'Activemark' is an acknowledgement of good sporting provision. Activities such as the annual 'Safety-in-Action' event and lessons in personal, social and health education successfully promote pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Staff recognise that there is scope to further use and develop pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy throughout the curriculum. They are making good progress in providing activities which make links between subjects, thereby enhancing pupils' enjoyment and achievement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils thrive in this very caring, supportive and inclusive school in which pastoral care is of an exceptionally high quality. A teaching assistant has been trained to provide support for pupils with speech and language difficulties, and pupils' emotional development is given a high priority. The meticulous attention given to the needs of autistic pupils ensures that they are fully integrated into all aspects of school life. Policies to promote pupils' safety are securely in place and regularly reviewed. The academic guidance provided for pupils is strong. As a result, pupils are clear about the learning objectives for each lesson and are given many opportunities to assess their own progress towards achieving them. Pupils report that their targets, especially in writing, help them to make progress and that teachers' marking of their work is encouraging and helpful. The guidance for pupils in mathematics and science is not as strong as that being given in English, where the guidance for writing is now of high quality.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Following a 'vision day' two years ago, the school renewed its focus on learning and set itself a new priority to help pupils to become 'active learners' with growing responsibility for their own learning. The commitment, of all staff, to this vision shines through. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses and has a clear plan of action to bring about improvements. It now has very thorough procedures in place to monitor pupils' progress and is in a position to set challenging targets for improvement and to check that the progress in each year group is as good as it could be. Teaching is improving because it is rigorously monitored, with a focus on the progress pupils make in each lesson. A very positive culture of open discussion of strengths and weaknesses has developed amongst the staff. The full impact of these relatively new measures on achievement in every year group has yet to be seen.

The school works well with the local authority school improvement officer and outside agencies, such as 'Autistic Outreach', to support pupils' development. Whilst most parents are very supportive of the school, a number have continuing concerns about issues such as how well their views are considered, mixed-age classes and pupils' progress. Governors are loyal, supportive and effective in helping the school to move forward.

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Annex A

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	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	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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.

Annex A

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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

21 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Otford Primary School, Otford, Kent TN14 5PG

I really enjoyed my visit to your school. Thank you for being so helpful and friendly. I particularly enjoyed visiting your classrooms, seeing the work you were doing and talking with you. I found that your school provides you with a good education and that it has some outstanding features.

Good things about your school

- You make good progress in your work and standards are above average at the end of Year 6.
- Your attendance is good. You behave well in school. You enjoy your lessons and get on very well with your teachers.
- You make good progress in your work because the teaching and curriculum are good and teachers help you to evaluate your work.
- You are proud of your school and the many after-school activities and events which the teachers provide for you.
- The care and guidance that you receive from adults are outstanding.
- The staff work very well together and are determined that the school will get better and better.

What I have asked your school to do now

- Make sure that the information on your progress is always used fully to match teaching to your different needs.
- Tell you more about how you can do better in your work in mathematics and science. A few of you can help your teachers by making sure that you always come to school on time and that your behaviour is always the best that it can be.

I wish you very well for the future.

Mr D Mason Lead Inspector