

Onny CofE (A) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123560
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	292711
Inspection date	25 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Graham Sims

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Stewart
Headteacher	Philip Dale
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2002
School address	Onibury Craven Arms SY7 9AW
Telephone number	01584 856320
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Onny Church of England Primary School is a small village school which draws its pupils from scattered locations within a 15 mile radius. Its pupils are almost all of White British heritage and come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The overall level of attainment when children join the school is lower than it was some years ago and is below the level expected. Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils on roll has fallen, and the number of classes has reduced from four to three. A part-time Nursery was opened in 2004.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The pupils at Onny Primary School really like their school. 'I like the teachers ... Everyone is nice and friendly ... If you are stuck, the teachers will always help you ... We get to do fun things', are typical of the many comments voiced by pupils. Parents have a high opinion of the school too. It is, indeed, a friendly, happy community where everyone gets on well with one another. There is an excellent sense of teamwork amongst all of the dedicated and hardworking staff, who provide a good standard of care, guidance and support. This helps pupils to feel safe and well cared for and contributes significantly to their good personal development and well-being. The pupils are well behaved, contribute well to the running of the school and develop good interpersonal skills.

Under the enthusiastic leadership of the headteacher, there have been significant improvements to the school's environment and accommodation. The establishment of a Nursery class has had a positive impact on preparing children for the start of their formal education. Bright, attractive and spacious accommodation for the school's younger pupils provides a welcoming environment and enables the staff to organise a wide range of interesting activities. The outdoor environment with its raised beds and attractive garden area provides good scope for pupils' broader education and, through the harvesting of seasonal vegetables, contributes well to their good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle.

The school places considerable importance on developing pupils' skills in English and mathematics, but its efforts in this direction have not been as successful as the drive to improve the school's ethos and environment. Although pupils' progress is satisfactory in relation to their attainment on entry, standards remain below average in most parts of the school. Some pupils of average and above average ability are capable of achieving more. For this reason, and despite the many good features of the school, its overall effectiveness, pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum and leadership and management are judged to be satisfactory. Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what the average and higher ability pupils are capable of achieving and do not provide enough feedback on how pupils can improve their work. Insufficient attention is given to developing pupils' investigative skills in science or their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects. Some subjects, such as history and geography, are not taught in enough depth to consistently challenge all pupils. Staff cooperate well on development initiatives, but not enough responsibility is delegated to staff to lead these initiatives so that improvement can take place more quickly.

Despite these areas requiring development, there is much to celebrate. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities receive good support and make good progress. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in their personal development and this is built on effectively throughout the rest of the school. There is good teaching for pupils in Years 1 and 2, and the quality of work in pupils' books shows that standards in this part of the school are improving. Provision for physical education and music is good. Pupils greatly enjoy a number of specially planned activities, such as a residential visit for older pupils and discovery walks in the adjacent countryside. Staff are enthusiastically preparing for special themed weeks to develop pupils' environmental awareness and multicultural understanding.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise teachers' expectations of what pupils of average and above average ability are capable of achieving.
- Give pupils clearer feedback on their work so that they know what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.
- Ensure that all subjects are taught in sufficient depth and that they are used more effectively to promote pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.
- Involve staff more in actively leading initiatives so that improvement, particularly in pupils' standards, takes place more quickly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The differing nature of each small year group, falling standards on entry to the school and an increasing number of pupils who join the school part-way through their primary education are all factors leading to significant variations in standards in each year. The general picture for the last few years has been of below average standards at the end of Reception and Year 2 and of broadly average standards in Year 6. Given the below average standards on entry to the school in recent years, this represents satisfactory achievement. Writing is still a weakness for many pupils, particularly when undertaken outside the confines of English lessons. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics and investigative skills in science are also underdeveloped. Whilst their achievement is satisfactory, some pupils of average and above average ability are capable of achieving higher standards, particularly in Years 3 to 6.

There are, however, some areas where pupils achieve well. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development in the Nursery and Reception Years. Standards in all areas are improving in Years 1 and 2, and these pupils have made particularly good progress in reading over the last year. At the end of Year 6, test results in English were above the national average in 2006, marking a significant improvement over the previous year and indicating good progress for that year group. Standards in mathematics have also improved from the exceptionally low results of 2005 and below average results in 2006. Because of the good support and additional attention they receive, pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress relative to their prior attainment.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and are particularly keen on practical activities, such as those undertaken in design and technology or on the residential experience in Years 5 and 6. Pupils participate well in lessons and collaborate well with their classmates. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They behave well and have a good understanding of how to live in a community. Older pupils, for example, frequently help the younger ones. The level of attendance is satisfactory, having improved over the last two years to around the national average.

Pupils feel very safe within the school environment. Playtimes are harmonious occasions, and relationships amongst the pupils and between staff and pupils are very good. Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying in school. They have a good understanding of what is required for a healthy lifestyle. They engage in plenty of physical activity and most pupils eat and enjoy the fruit which is available for them. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school in many ways, such as helping out within their classrooms, distributing equipment at breaktimes or contributing their ideas through the school council. Their good social skills and their satisfactory literacy and numeracy skills indicate that pupils are adequately prepared for their future education and the later world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In the Nursery and Reception Years, there is a strong emphasis on developing children's social skills, which gives them a good foundation for their future learning. The teaching of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good. Pupils are given a wide variety of activities which are well matched to their age and ability. Expectations are high regarding the presentation and quality of pupils' recorded work, which is helping to raise standards. Throughout the school, there is particularly good provision for pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities or who have been identified through assessment as needing additional help to raise their attainment to the expected level. Much of this is carried out well by experienced and skilful teaching assistants.

In Years 3 to 6, teachers know and manage their pupils well and establish a good learning environment. Lessons are planned and structured well. However, some pupils of average and above average ability are not always challenged sufficiently. This is particularly evident in the variable quality of their recorded work and the inconsistent feedback provided by teachers when marking pupils' work. Occasionally, teachers make helpful comments which indicate what pupils need to do to improve. Too frequently, however, the work receives a cursory tick or is not marked at all, and this does not set high enough expectations, make pupils aware of where they are making mistakes or motivate them to achieve higher standards.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of healthy lifestyles and safe practices, and uses a range of outside providers well to contribute to these aspects of pupils' learning. A good range of additional activities, such as gardening and out-of-school visits, and good provision for physical education and music contribute well to pupils' broader education and enjoyment of school. Whilst much of the curricular provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good, the lack of a secure outdoor facility with easy access from the classroom restricts the range of activities available for reception children. Nevertheless, staff do their best to compensate for this.

Too much emphasis on preparation for tests has an adverse impact on the breadth of the curriculum for older pupils. Subjects such as history and geography are not taught in sufficient depth. Subjects are integrated well in Years 1 and 2, but elsewhere teachers do not make enough use of subjects other than English and mathematics to consolidate and develop basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their

scientific understanding through investigative work or to engage in problem-solving activities in mathematics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's particularly strong pastoral care and the attention given to pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities result in an inclusive, caring community, whose family atmosphere is much appreciated by parents and pupils. The school has satisfactory procedures for ensuring pupils are safeguarded in the recruitment of staff. Procedures for other aspects of ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. Although somewhat cumbersome, the school has effective procedures for keeping track of pupils' progress and uses these well to identify particular groups of pupils who need additional support. The school has implemented a system for setting targets for pupils to help them to know how to improve their performance. This works well in Years 1 and 2, but older pupils are not yet sufficiently aware of their academic targets and what they need to do to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has an accurate picture of how well the school is doing and of teachers' performance. Assessment data are used effectively to identify relevant areas for development and appropriate action is taken to bring improvement. However, some aspects of the school's work are not monitored sufficiently rigorously. Pupils' written work, for example, reveals weaknesses in marking and a lack of depth in the teaching of some subjects.

Staff work well together on the priorities of the school's development plan, and recent improvements in the teaching of mathematics, last year's improvement in the school's test results in English and the significant improvements to the school's accommodation and ethos over the last few years show that the school has sound capacity for further progress. However, there is little delegation of responsibility for leading initiatives to staff, which limits the school's potential for further development. This also hinders the development of teachers' leadership skills and places unnecessary burdens on the headteacher. Governors fulfil their legal responsibilities and are very supportive of the school. They do not, however, have a sufficiently clear understanding of pupils' progress to be as effective as they could be in holding the school to account for its performance.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Onny CE Primary School, Onibury, SY7 9AW

I enjoyed my visit to your school when I came to find out how well the school is doing. The school certainly has some good features, as you pointed out to me, and, overall, it is providing you with a sound education. These are my main findings.

- You are making satisfactory progress in your work, and those of you who receive additional help are making good progress.
- Some of your written work is not always as good as it could be.
- You behave well and care for each other which results in a happy, friendly atmosphere in your school.
- Your teachers work hard to plan and prepare your lessons.
- You enjoy school and the range of activities it provides for you.
- The staff know you very well, take good care of you and provide particularly good support for those of you who need extra help.
- The headteacher and staff work well together.

The headteacher and governors have agreed with me that they need to concentrate on the following to help you to do as well as you can:

- making sure that the work is always at just the right level and is hard enough for those of you who can do more difficult work
- giving you clearer guidance so that you know what you are already doing well and what you need to do to improve your work
- spending more time helping you to discover interesting things in subjects such as history and geography and using these subjects to help you develop your literacy, numeracy and ICT skills
- sharing responsibilities more widely amongst the staff.

I should like to thank you all for the welcome you gave me and for talking to me. I hope you will continue to try your hardest in all your work and wish each one of you every success and happiness in your future education.

Yours sincerely

Mr Graham Sims Lead inspector