



Oxley Park Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134717
Local Authority Milton Keynes
Inspection number 294157
Inspection dates 30–31 January 2007
Reporting inspector Emma Ing HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Oxley Park
School category	Community		Milton Keynes
Age range of pupils	4–11		MK4 4TA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01908 503870
Number on roll (school)	275	Fax number	01908 867348
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Ken Webb
		Headteacher	Mrs Cathy Higgins
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspector and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Oxley Park opened in September 2005 to serve new housing currently being built around the school. When it opened it took pupils from Reception to Year 5 and the number on roll in that first year was 108. The school is however expanding rapidly towards its planned maximum capacity of 420. Currently there are 275 pupils on roll which this year includes a Year 6 cohort. New pupils arrive almost daily to join the school and additionally, the school opens new classes as new houses are completed. As a result very high numbers of pupils join throughout the school year.

About one third of the school speak English as an additional language which is higher than average. Although the proportion of children taking free school meals is relatively low the children are not generally from an economically privileged background.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Although only just over a year old, Oxley Park is already well established as an outstanding school. Children are warmly welcomed into the school family, and learning, which is at the heart of the school's life, takes place in a friendly and happy environment. As one parent explained,

'Their promotion of key values and behaviour makes the school a fantastic place to be'.

Walking around the school a visitor is struck by the purposeful learning, the range of interesting activities going on and the happiness and courtesy of the individuals within it. Despite a large number of children joining the school throughout the school year, staff ensure that each settles in quickly and effectively.

The school has been developed around the principles of Every Child Matters. As a result, the provision not only ensures but promotes children's ability to make a positive contribution and to achieve economic well-being together with their health, safety, enjoyment and achievement. Within the curriculum strong links are made to the wider community and world outside and subjects are enriched and reinforced by work across the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to use their initiative and they are developing into responsible partners in the life of the school. For example, a Year 5 pupil was instrumental in forming a school football team, independently emailing a local school to ascertain how they might join the local league. An eco-council, made up of pupils, seeks to develop the sustainability of the school, by ensuring that waste is properly recycled and that resources are not wasted.

The Foundation Stage gives children an outstanding start to their education at Oxley Park. Relationships are warm and supportive, teaching is lively, and children quickly settle to learning. Highly imaginative activities such as the Oxley Clock Shop, the care of small animals and the challenge to design a suitable shoe box for Cinderella's glass slippers broaden children's understanding of the world, and enrich their language. Because so much of the work is made interesting, they apply themselves to it very seriously. One five-year-old told us,

'We work like mad in here!'

Children learn quickly, with enjoyment, and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

All pupils are extremely well cared for. Those who need additional help with their work or with their behaviour are well supported both in lessons and in play times. The school currently sets layered targets for learners, but leaders are aware that their next step is to work with learners individually to set targets.

As a result of this good quality care and of outstanding teaching, the progress made by pupils is exceptional. Although children are currently entering the school with standards below the national norm, they leave with standards well above average.

Lessons are carefully planned to ensure progression and are made relevant and interesting for all. Teachers' marking of the pupil's work is very helpful, but pupils are not being given enough opportunities to assess their own progress in their learning.

Parents value the good links that the school makes with them, the accessibility and helpfulness of the staff and the way in which the school supports them to support their children's learning. One commented,

'I am impressed with the system by which they are teaching both the parents and the children reading, writing and spelling'.

All this has not happened by accident. The governing body had a clear vision for the school from the outset and the headteacher, whose work is characterised by high expectations, clear vision and the implementation of deeply practical systems and procedures, has worked closely with them to create a child-centred school where all are enabled to achieve well. She leads a strong team of staff who are very committed to the school. The school has made immense strides since opening and has demonstrated outstanding capacity for further improvement and exceptional value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

As the school plans, further increase pupils' sense of responsibility by:

- Engaging all pupils in the process of setting their own targets for learning.
- Enabling pupils to assess their own and others work from time to time.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Although they have been in the school for a very short time, pupils at all levels learn very quickly. From their varied starting points, their achievements are outstanding. Children enter the Foundation Stage with a wide range of abilities, but the overall standard is slightly below average because many lack the breadth of early experience of the world that supports good language learning. They settle very quickly, are well taught and learn a great deal in a short time. Most exceed the standards expected by the end of Reception, and this provides an excellent springboard for future learning. This rate of progress continues into Years 1 and 2. Pupils coming to the end of Year 2 in 2006 reached above average standards. The work of pupils now in Year 2 and Year 6, and the school's own tracking indicate that they too will meet the challenging targets set by the school and surpass national expectations.

The school has devised a simple but effective tracking system so that the progress of each pupil can be monitored and intervention made if the pupil is not making good progress. This shows that progress in writing is slightly better than in reading and mathematics but is well above average in all three areas across the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those with English as an additional language are well supported and their achievement thus mirrors that of the cohort as a whole. The needs of newly arriving pupils are identified quickly, and they too achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They are thoughtful and conscientious in their attitudes to work, kind and tolerant to each other, and appreciative of all the school does for them. They develop spiritually, morally and socially, and have acquired a good appreciation of cultural difference - in large part through excellent work in the visual arts. They flourish in a harmonious community, with older pupils helping those in the Foundation Stage with their hot lunches, and ensuring no-one is without friends in the playground. Pupils greatly enjoy lessons, and generally behave excellently. Attendance and punctuality are good. As they get older they develop important skills to secure their future economic well-being. Through the eco-council, and the newly established school council, they contribute enthusiastically to school and environmental improvement, and they learn what it means to live in a democratic community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Strong pedagogical principles underpin the teaching which ensures that at all stages the progress made is exceptional. Teaching is characterised by imaginative and inventive activities which capture and sustain the interest of pupils. Teachers take care to relate learning to the world outside school and real life and to involve learners. Lessons are very carefully planned to ensure that each builds on previous learning. Group and individual work is carefully matched to individual needs so that each pupil makes good progress. Teachers are very good too at assessing the progress of individuals in a lesson and moving some on faster if necessary.

The work that pupils do is supportively marked with good indications given of what each needs to practise or learn next. However, although pupils are always able to explain what they are learning they are not often given opportunities to assess their own and others' work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is carefully planned to ensure that pupils have a wide range of interesting opportunities to learn and develop important skills that will help them progress through the school and beyond effectively. Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are taught both as discreet subjects but also themed with other subjects in order that the skills learned in each further support other learning. The school's facilities for these and for design orientated subjects are excellent.

Learners have excellent opportunities to contribute to the community and to develop both economic awareness and responsibility. For example, supported by their teacher and a governor, Year 6 pupils each participate in the running of a small company that simulates buying and selling stock on the stock market for profit. Others participate in creating and selling the school's own newspaper, working in role in a small 'news office'.

Creative skills are nurtured through lessons and through community afternoons when, together with helpers from the local community, engage in creative activities of choice.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of the school's concern for each individual's personal and academic welfare provides the secure foundation for all pupils to achieve to their best. The arrangements it makes are outstanding. Meticulous checks are carried out to ensure pupils' safety, and the school is constantly alert for any hint of bullying or harassment. Pupils feel known and appreciated. They look after one another well. They are confident that they can bring any personal concerns or anxieties to the teachers' attention. All pupils have access to a kaleidoscope room based on colour and light therapy where they can relax and reflect on their learning. Pupils who have difficulties make use of this room to reflect on their difficulties and determine strategies for improvement.

The school's close links with its local community mean it is well placed to give the right support to pupils thought to be vulnerable, or those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Careful and regular checks are made on each pupil's progress in learning. This means staff can quickly identify any who are slipping behind, and take action to help them. In lessons those with learning and behavioural needs are well supported by teaching assistants and nursery nurses who form a strong team with the teaching staff. Targets are set for all groups of pupils, and the school is rightly planning to extend this to provide targets for individual pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The outstanding headteacher and deputy headteacher supported by the newly appointed assistant headteacher work extremely closely with the governing body has high expectations of everyone in the school. Together they have ensured that the school has a strong ethos of teamwork and achievement. There is a great commitment to the all round growth of each pupil. Extremely good links are made with parents and with the outside community as a whole to ensure that the school is at its' heart.

The working life of the school is underpinned by very clear policies and guidance to enable all to work to a high level. These are carefully monitored and as a result the school is keenly aware of its strengths and weaknesses. Leaders work extremely efficiently to build strong teams, to coach and to support all staff to deliver the best

possible education for their pupils. Outstanding teaching and effective classroom management is modelled by senior leaders and managers alike.

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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	NA

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	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	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 your warm welcome when we inspected your excellent school. We very much enjoyed talking to you, and seeing your fabulous work.

We were very impressed by your wonderful school. Each of you, however new, fits in well, works hard and makes excellent progress. You look after each other well and take on important responsibilities in the school. The activities that you do both in class and outside are really fun and interesting and we can see that you are all learning a good deal. We were particularly impressed by the work of the eco-council to make the school a sustainable community, and loved the 'news room'.

Your teachers plan your learning well so that it builds on what you already know and they give you good support when you need it. When teachers mark your work they are very clear about what is good and also give you helpful ideas about what you need to do to improve your work. We noticed, however, that although you always know what you are learning you do not assess your own or others' work. We are sure that to do this sometimes would help you learn even more and have suggested to the school that they should introduce this.

You are very well cared for, the teachers track your progress in order to make sure that each of you is doing their best and most of you are aware of the class targets in literacy and numeracy. We have asked the school to work with you to make sure that each of you has individual targets in the future.

You are very privileged, as your parents told us, to be part of such a super school but, as you told us, you are the most important part of the school and it is up to you to continue your very good work, your care for each other and for the community as a whole to ensure that the school remains outstanding even as it gets bigger.

With best wishes,

Emma Ing

Her Majesty's Inspector