

New Oscott Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134774
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	294168
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Tom Shine

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	675
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Hemming
Headteacher	Linda Whitfield
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Markham Road Sutton Coalfield B73 6QR
Telephone number	0121 6753658
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a much larger than average primary school that opened in September 2005 following the amalgamation of the formerly separate infant and junior schools on the same site. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with a small proportion from minority ethnic background groups. The school received Healthy School status in the spring of this year and is working towards a number of other awards including the Arts Mark Award. It provides both before and after school care facilities on both sites that are well attended.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'We feel that we have to write to express our delight and appreciation for all the hard effort, care and support from the many staff who have contributed to our son's educational experience at New Oscott School' is just one of the very positive comments that reflect the views of the majority of parents about this good school. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and, together with her able deputy and other senior staff, drives improvement forward. The overall quality of provision, including teaching, is good. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve well in relation to their broadly average attainment in most areas of learning when they enter the school. Since the school opened, standards have risen steadily and are above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported very well. Consequently they also make good progress and achieve well.

Teaching and learning are good. The excellent provision in the Foundation Stage, including high quality teaching, ensures that children make a flying start to their education. By the time they start Year 1 they have attained standards that are better than those often found. In the rest of the school, teachers plan their lessons well and ask good questions to check on the pupils' understanding of what is being taught. Pupils generally enjoy their lessons and are keen and attentive. Occasionally in a small minority of lessons the pace is too slow to maintain all pupils' interest and imagination. When this happens pupils' attention tends to wane and as a result they do not make as much progress as they should.

Pupils like coming to this friendly school and as a result enjoy learning. They like their teachers and say: 'they are nice and friendly and we can talk to teachers as a friend. You don't feel awkward when you need help'. They are keen therefore to attend school and miss far fewer days than average. The curriculum is good. One of the aspects that greatly appeals to pupils is the wide variety of lessons and other activities outside the school day. The school provides well for the development of pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology (ICT).

Pupils' personal development and well-being are exceptional. Pupils feel safe and say 'this school is a very secure place'. Many comment on how well they play together. They also have a good awareness of the importance of exercise and keeping fit. They are knowledgeable about the importance of eating healthily and enjoyed the presentation on Healthy Eating given by the school council. Many pupils say they enjoy eating fruit and vegetables. The school provides good care, guidance and support for its pupils, including those with learning difficulties. There are exceptionally high levels of pastoral care and support. As a result, all pupils behave very well and have very positive attitudes to learning.

The management of the school is very good. The headteacher, deputy and her senior staff are very effective in their roles and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have managed the potentially difficult task of amalgamating two schools very successfully. The governing body, ably led by the chair, is not afraid to call the school to account, and together with the headteacher, has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve it further. As a result, the school's capacity to improve is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all lessons maintain pupils' interest and concentration to enable them to make good progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and attain above average standards. Children enter the Nursery with broadly expected skills in most areas. Children in the Foundation Stage, including those with learning difficulties, make exceptionally good progress as they are very well supported. By the time they leave the Reception Year, their levels of attainment are above those expected for their ages in all areas of learning. The results of the national assessments in Year 2 in 2006 were above average in reading and writing and were broadly average in mathematics. Current standards remain above average in reading and writing and have improved in mathematics where they are well above average. In Year 6 in 2006 standards were above average in English and science but were below average in mathematics. Current work in the school shows that standards in English and science remain above average, and in mathematics, as a result of the school's focus, have improved considerably and are now slightly above average. The pupils currently in Year 6 have made good progress since they started in Year 3 and are achieving well. Pupils use their good skills in literacy and ICT to achieve well in subjects such as geography and history.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a strong sense of community, summed up well by a pupil who said, 'This school is like a family.' Pupils are mutually supportive and very sympathetic to the needs of others; 'You are never alone in this school', said one pupil. Pupils are courteous and helpful in keeping with their very good behaviour. They particularly value the playground friend and peer pal system the school has established. Pupils' social skills are outstanding. They value the many opportunities they are given to contribute to their community and have an effective voice on the school council. One pupil said he could not remember a decision where pupils had not been consulted. Pupils have also been given many responsibilities that will contribute to their future well-being. For example, a school grounds committee has taken the responsibility, after consultation, to plan how to use a donation to develop activity zones for all children to use. Pupils benefit from and enjoy the many opportunities to develop their financial literacy such as the 'Apprentice' project for pupils in Year 6. Pupils' developing economic skills, together with their good social skills, and their good progress in literacy, numeracy and ICT prepare them well for the next stage of their education and beyond.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan well to systematically build on pupils' previous learning. They have good relationships with their pupils and manage their classes very well. They ask good questions to test their pupils' levels of understanding and use this information well to plan future work. Teachers present their good subject knowledge confidently and in interesting ways. As a result, pupils listen well, have very good attitudes to learning and are keen to do their best. Just occasionally, the pace of some lessons is too slow to fully maintain pupils' interest, and this results in their progress being impeded. Teaching assistants work well with the teachers and do a good job in supporting particular pupils, such as those who find learning difficult. The

quality of teachers' marking is good and shows pupils how to improve their work. Only occasionally does it slip from this high standard and could be more helpful to pupils.

In the Foundation Stage, teaching is exceptionally good and imaginatively organised with exciting activities to meet children's individual needs. Consequently, children make very good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum provides every child with a wide range of experiences, including a variety of after-school clubs, helping to ensure that they enjoy school. Pupils in each class follow a common theme but with work set at an appropriate level for each ability group. Pupils' use of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects is being successfully developed through enterprise and other projects. The school is fostering creativity well and younger pupils especially produce good work in subjects such as art and music. Creativity is being developed among the older pupils but there is still some way to go. In the Foundation Stage, children enjoy an excellent range of imaginative activities both in and out of the classroom.

Across the school, the high quality of provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship is reflected in their outstanding personal development. The school gives pupils good opportunities to learn about the range of cultures in British society and beyond, including work on different religions. The school has effective systems in place to identify the most able and provide extra challenge for them. Trips to places of interest and visitors to school also add interest to pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Some aspects of the care and support for pupils are outstanding. All pupils feel valued and the principles of inclusion underpin everything the school does. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are very well supported. Adults and pupils are very caring. There is a particularly shared awareness of the needs of disabled pupils developed through the constructive and beneficial links with a local special school. The school has received local and national recognition for the way in which it includes all pupils in its range of activities. Pupils with behaviour problems or lack of self-esteem benefit considerably from the support provided in smaller nurture groups.

The school has developed its systems for tracking pupils' academic progress significantly over the last year and pupils are given good guidance on how to improve. Most pupils understand their targets for improvement in English and mathematics. The school rightly wishes to extend the good practice to other subjects, to forge greater consistency in how targets are used, and to involve the pupils more in evaluating their own work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership team's accurate knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses has resulted in the school developing well since the amalgamation. Under the headteacher's outstanding leadership great strides have been made in uniting the staff in working together very well with a shared commitment to improvement. The headteacher has introduced rigorous school

self-evaluation procedures from which flow priorities for school improvement. These include robust procedures for checking on the quality of teaching, and, as a result, there is a good awareness of where improvements need to be made. Staff's commitment to inclusion underpins all planning. This is exemplified in the provision given to pupils of all abilities, including the gifted and talented and those who have learning difficulties. The senior management team and staff play a significant part in decision making and in developing policies. The knowledgeable and supportive governors play a pivotal role in supporting the school and in holding it to account.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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	1
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	NA

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	2
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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?	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?	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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of New Oscott, Sutton Coldfield, B73 6QR

Thank you very much for all the help you gave to us when we came to your school recently. We liked talking to you and to your teachers and coming to your assemblies. Your school provides you with a good education. You are making good progress because you are well taught.

These are the things we liked most about your school.

- You make an outstanding start to your education in the Foundation Stage.
- You achieve well in English, mathematics and science.
- You are all very friendly and polite.
- You are extremely well cared for and you told us you feel safe and very well supported.
- Your headteacher, who leads the school exceptionally well, makes sure that those of you who need extra help get it.
- You enjoy school and attend very regularly.
- You behave well and get on very well with each other and with all members of staff.
- You have a good understanding of the importance of exercise and healthy eating.
- You enjoy the range of out-of-school activities and clubs.

This is what we think could be better.

- We have asked the school to ensure all lessons are as exciting and interesting as the best.

We really enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn and wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Tom Shine Lead inspector