

Orchards CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133782
Local Authority	CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Inspection number	295309
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Roger Sadler

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	404
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Ann Purt
Headteacher	Mrs Jacqueline Carpenter
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 2006
School address	Cherry Road Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 3NP
Telephone number	01945 583799
Fax number	01945 461313

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves an economically disadvantaged area of Wisbech. Most pupils are from White British families and speak English as their main language. An above average and growing proportion of pupils are new to Britain and speak little English when they arrive. A high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties. The school operates a daily pre-school breakfast club.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. This reflects the considerable advances made since the previous inspection of 14 months ago. School leaders, with good support from local authority staff, have taken effective action to remedy shortcomings that were apparent then. Consequently, the school provides a satisfactory quality of education. The headteacher, senior management team (SMT), and subject leaders have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and where improvement is needed. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It has improved substantially and is now good in many classes because leaders are providing staff with effective guidance and training. The improvements the school has made over the last year indicate a good capacity to improve further. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Children enter the Nursery with knowledge and skills well below those typically found at this age. Progress in Nursery and Reception (Foundation Stage) is good but standards remain below average by the end of Reception. In Years 1 to Year 6 achievement is satisfactory. School records and pupils' work indicate that pupils are learning at a faster rate than previously and progress, although satisfactory overall, is good in many classes and this is helping standards rise. Despite improved progress, many pupils currently in Year 6 are still attaining well below national expectations. Years 1 to 5 pupils are making up lost ground but the standards they are achieving are still below national expectations for pupils of their ages.

Pupils are well cared for, guided and supported and they feel safe and secure. The school keeps a close eye on the progress of each pupil and provides extra help for those who need it. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress because teachers know their learning needs and ensure they are provided with additional support by teaching assistants. Those pupils in the early stages of learning English benefit from focused support and make satisfactory progress to acquire a sound understanding of the language. Teaching assistants are not always given tasks which make the best use of their time, particularly whilst the teacher is taking a whole-class lesson.

The curriculum is satisfactory and often provides appropriate challenge for all learners, although work in whole-class lessons is sometimes insufficiently demanding for higher attaining pupils. The school has introduced an effective system to provide pupils with targets for learning. In the classes where the system is fully used, pupils are aware of where they need to improve their work. In other classes pupils are unclear about their targets and are given insufficient chances to evaluate their work against clear criteria and this slows their progress.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Most pupils concentrate well and work hard. By the time they leave the school they have developed into well rounded individuals.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of pupils in each group reaching or exceeding national expectations for their ages in English, mathematics and science.
- Ensure that higher attaining pupils are provided with sufficient challenge in all lessons.
- Ensure that pupils in all classes know their targets and that all teachers help pupils to evaluate and improve particular aspects of their work.
- Ensure that best use is made of teaching assistants' time.

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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and progress are satisfactory. Progress and provision in Nursery and Reception are good. Assessment is effective and there is a good balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated work. In 2006, results in national assessments for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils were well below average. Although pupils throughout the school are now learning at a faster rate than previously, the oldest pupils have still not caught up and are attaining well below national expectations. School records and pupils' work indicate rising standards and that more pupils from Years 1 to 5 are attaining standards expected for their ages. However, too few pupils are attaining above expected levels. Pupils who join the school with little English make sound progress and many are learning to talk, read and write English confidently and successfully.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. The school is a calm and friendly place where pupils develop good relationships with their teachers and each other. The secure and happy environment helps pupils grow in self-esteem and confidence. Pupils say they feel safe in school and they feel valued as members of the community. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and they behave well. Attendance is carefully monitored and pupils attend regularly. During most lessons pupils enjoy learning and concentrate well. Most pupils have a clear understanding of a healthy lifestyle through their regular participation in sports and healthy eating choices. Pupils make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school and benefit from their involvement in a range of activities and fund raising in the local community. Pupils are proud that their suggestions, through the work of the school council, have brought about many improvements. They are learning the appropriate basic skills to provide them with sound preparation for secondary education and the world of work beyond.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and more teaching is of good quality. Effective induction arrangements and good teaching enables children to make a confident start in Nursery. Throughout the school, teachers assess pupils' work and monitor their progress well. Relationships between adults and pupils are good and, as a result, most pupils are keen to learn. Teachers plan lessons to meet the learning needs of lower and middle attaining pupils well, but in some lessons, higher attaining pupils could do harder work. Many teachers use interactive whiteboards confidently and this adds impact and enjoyment to whole class teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties receive sound support which enables them to make the expected rate of progress. Teaching assistants often work well with groups or with individuals but they are not always used to best effect while the whole class is being taught.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and good in the Foundation Stage. Provision for outdoor play is a particular strength. The curriculum for pupils from Years 1 to 6, particularly for mathematics and science, has been reviewed and improved since the previous inspection. This has resulted in more demanding teaching, focusing more closely on the needs and interests of different groups of pupils. However, the school recognises that not enough opportunity is provided for pupils, especially those of higher ability, to develop as independent learners and sometimes too little is expected of more able pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties have appropriate individual education plans that help them to make sound progress. The curriculum is suitably modified to enable pupils with little English to participate in lessons, enjoy school and make satisfactory progress. The school provides a broad range of enrichment activities. Pupils benefit from their involvement in extra-curricular clubs and educational visits which make a good contribution to effective learning and personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Pastoral care is a significant strength of the school. Staff know pupils well and understand their often complex needs. Pupils feel safe because they are confident of adult help should problems occur. Although some pupils are concerned about bullying, the school is vigilant in monitoring and recording all incidents and dealing with them promptly. The school works closely with a range of outside support agencies to provide extra help for pupils with particular needs. The procedures to ensure pupils' protection, safety and well-being meet statutory requirements and staff training is up to date. The deputy headteacher has introduced an effective system to track pupils' progress and this is used well to allocate additional support for pupils who are attaining a little below the levels expected for their ages. A good system to provide pupils with targets for learning in English, mathematics and science has been started. This is having a good impact on learning when it is used effectively so that pupils know their targets. However, in some classes it is not fully used to help pupils understand what they have to do to improve specific aspects of their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Following the previous inspection, staff responded positively and worked together well to bring about the necessary improvements. Monitoring and evaluation are rigorous and accurate. Standards are rising and the school has good capacity to continue to improve. Staff are provided with effective guidance on key policies. All teachers mark pupils' work well because leaders have checked that all staff understand and adhere to the school's marking policy. Staff have been given good support on how to provide pupils with learning targets. However, the headteacher is aware that some inconsistencies in pupils' knowledge of targets remain and this slows learning in the classes concerned. Subject leaders are developing their roles effectively. They check teachers' planning and pupils' work well and have a good overview of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. They also provide guidance to staff when areas of weakness come to light. They have not, as yet, been given sufficient opportunities and training to observe colleagues teach and to ensure that all initiatives

in their subjects are fully understood and consistently implemented. Governors are supportive of the school and have a reasonable overview of its strengths and areas for development. However, they do not provide sufficient challenge to the SMT. The school sets sufficiently challenging targets for the proportion of Year 6 pupils who should attain the nationally expected standards, but the school does not expect enough pupils to achieve above national expectations.

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	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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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	3

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	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	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

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

12 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Orchard CE Primary School, Wisbech, PE13 3NP

Thank you for making Mrs Hackney, Mr Jones and me so welcome when we came to inspect your school. We are pleased that you like school so much. We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you and your teachers and watching you learn. We think your school has improved well over the last year, is properly run and is giving you a satisfactory education. Staff provide satisfactory teaching and care for you well so that you make sound progress and standards in your school are rising. In Nursery and Reception you settle in quickly and learn well. Your behaviour is good and most of you attend regularly. Many of you are developing into mature and responsible people. You know right from wrong, show consideration for others and show good understanding of what it means to be friendly and helpful to each other. We were impressed by how older pupils take responsibility for helping others within your school and by what you do to contribute to the community, such as fundraising for charities.

There are four things that we have asked your school to work on.

- To help more of you reach and go beyond the standards expected for pupils of your ages in English, mathematics and science.
- To make sure that those of you who are quick to learn are given hard enough work in all lessons.
- To ensure that you all know your learning targets and know how to improve particular aspects of your work.
- To ensure that teaching assistants' time is always used as well as possible to help you learn.

With very best wishes for the future,

Mr Sadler

Lead Inspector