

Windmill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123047
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	298583
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Christopher Schenk HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	396
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tim Spiers
Headteacher	Mrs Lynn Knapp
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2006
School address	Margaret Road Headington Oxford OX3 8NG
Telephone number	01865 762509
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Windmill is a larger than average primary school. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than in most schools. The proportion of minority ethnic heritage is above average. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is in the middle, since it is more than about half the schools in the country and less than the other half. The proportion identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average.. The school's age range was extended to 11 in September 2003; prior to that it was a First School. When the school was last inspected in May 2006 it was given a Notice to Improve. A monitoring visit took place in November 2006 and judged that the school was making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement. A new headteacher took up post in January 2007 and a new deputy head in April 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school. In accordance with Section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and thorough. Its good capacity to improve is demonstrated by the improvements that have already taken place. For example, mid-year assessments showed that lower attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4 were not making sufficient progress in mathematics. Further support was allocated to the lower sets, intervention programmes were put in place and teaching was improved. As a result, the end-of-year assessments show that nearly all the Year 3 and 4 pupils, across the attainment range, have made satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress.

When pupils first come to the school at around the age of four most have the skills and knowledge expected of their age, though the range is wide. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, reaching standards by the end of Year 2 that are above average. In the past, this progress has not been sustained in Key Stage 2. However, the school's careful tracking shows that the progress that is now being made throughout the key stage is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Assessments by teachers indicate that standards at the end of Year 6 have continued to rise and that achievement in English, mathematics and science is now satisfactory.

Behaviour is satisfactory and improving. A revised behaviour policy was introduced in January 2007 and gives clear guidance to pupils so that they know what is expected of them. Any sanctions that are needed are carried out consistently. As one pupil said, 'There are rules so there aren't any bullies and you can feel safe.' However, it is still the case that inappropriate behaviour slows the pace of some lessons. The teaching observed during the inspection was never less than satisfactory, sometimes good and occasionally outstanding. Nevertheless, there are some common weaknesses in the lessons judged to be satisfactory. In particular, the whole-class parts of lessons go on for too long, leaving too little time for group work.

The curriculum is satisfactory with some good features. The school has sensible plans to develop the curriculum further. The school has close links with the nearby secondary school, which is a language college and which provides visiting specialist teachers for French and Latin. There are good procedures for identifying pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, but there is no systematic identification of pupils who have particular gifts and talents.

The headteacher leads the school well and has successfully created a common sense of purpose among the staff and governors. She has the support of parents, whose responses to a questionnaire sent out at the time of the inspection were very positive.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that progress throughout the school is sustained so that, in time, achievement by the end of Year 6 is good.
- Develop the curriculum to increase interest and challenge while keeping a clear focus on the pupils' progress in key skills.
- Improve behaviour further and ensure that all lessons maintain an appropriate pace, leaving sufficient time for group work.
- Identify pupils with gifts and talents systematically and make appropriate provision for them.

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 is satisfactory. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average and at the end of Year 6 are around average. The strengths at Key Stage 1 have been maintained for several years. In 2006, results were above average in reading, writing and mathematics and particularly good in mathematics. The teachers' assessments show that this positive picture has been continued in 2007, with some further improvements in writing. By contrast, the situation in Key Stage 2 has varied, though with a continuing trend of improvement. In 2004, the first year in which the school had pupils across the full key stage, standards were below average in English, mathematics and science. In 2006, standards were a little above average in English but still below average in mathematics and science. The teachers' assessments this year indicate that results overall will be around average. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities generally make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Through assemblies and class teaching, values are explicitly talked about and emphasised and this has a beneficial effect on the pupils' good spiritual, moral and social development. Cultural development is well fostered by visits, musical activities and events such as the recent art week. Throughout the school pupils produced good work that was attractively displayed when the gym was turned into an art gallery, featuring for example the skyline of the 'dreaming spires' of Oxford, and the front lawn into a sculpture garden, featuring land art inspired by Andy Goldsworthy.

The youngest children show a good level of independence in choosing learning activities and are confident, keen to talk about what they are doing and complete tasks with enjoyment and success. The behaviour of pupils is satisfactory and is improving, but there are still some lessons where the thoughtless behaviour of a few slows the pace of the work and takes up too much of the time of the teachers. Instances of bullying or racism are very rare and pupils are clear that when such behaviour happens it is well dealt with. A pupil emphatically commented, 'We're a school where there is no rejection regardless of who you are or what you look like'. The pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is average. Pupils feel happy and safe in school and know who to ask for help. They understand the importance of making healthy eating choices and taking regular exercise and have opportunities for energetic activities both in and out of lessons. The school council takes its responsibilities seriously and is clear that it has a role in helping to make improvements to the school. The recent cafand;eacute; project gave Year 6 pupils good opportunities to develop enterprise skills as they planned and bought the food and welcomed parents and friends into the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are carefully planned with clear objectives that are shared with the pupils. In Years 3 to 6 pupils regroup by attainment for mathematics and in Years 5 and 6 they also do so for English. The sets that are formed nevertheless cover a range of attainments, particularly the lower sets. The planning includes the identification of tasks at different levels of difficulty, appropriate for the range of attainments within each class or set. However, it is too often the case that the whole-class part of a lesson is too long with the result that there is not enough time for groups to work at different levels. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution, often giving particular support to lower attaining pupils.

In many classes, but not all, the marking is good, giving encouragement, pointing out what has been done well and making suggestions for further improvement. The school has identified the need to use homework more consistently and effectively to support and extend the pupils' learning. A survey of parental views has been undertaken to inform the plans for a new homework policy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum which has some good features. It is extended through the inclusion of French throughout Key Stage 2 and Latin in Year 6 and is further enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities, a variety of visits and visitors to the school, and events such as the recent science and art weeks. During the inspection the pupils put on a dance display for their parents, drawing on dance traditions from a variety of cultures including traditional English country dancing, celebrating the special legacy of Headington in the English folk revival.

Recent initiatives to enrich the programme of work in science are beginning to have an impact on standards, particularly through the increased emphasis on developing pupils' thinking skills. The school plans to apply a similar skills-based approach to other areas of the curriculum.

Planning and provision in the Foundation Stage are good: children are given a broad range of learning opportunities with an appropriate balance between adult-led and independent activities, enabling pupils to make good progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities has recently improved with increased sharpness in the targets that are set and reviewed on a regular basis. There is effective support for pupils who speak English as an additional language from a visiting teacher, but there is no-one within the school who has specific responsibility for co-ordinating this provision.

Links with parents are developing well and there are also good links with a wide range of external agencies. The school has an effective tracking system to identify where support can be most efficiently focused for pupils and this is having a positive impact on raising achievement and standards. Pupils have targets for literacy and numeracy that are helpful in guiding them

towards the next steps that they need to take, though there is room for further development in the way that they are set and used. Child protection and health and safety systems are firmly in place and the positive ethos of the school has a clear impact on the good personal development and well being of the pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory, with some good features. The energetic leadership of the headteacher is having a positive impact on the development of the school. She has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She has the support and commitment of the school community and this is reflected in the positive comments made by staff, governors, pupils and parents. As one parent commented, 'The school has a really positive buzz about it.'

The development plan is appropriately focused on raising standards and has correctly identified some important initiatives to support improvement. Subject leaders are making a valuable contribution to raising standards in their subject areas through providing appropriate support and guidance for teachers. They monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects, but they do not always evaluate the impact of new initiatives on the pupils' progress.

The governors have a good understanding of the priorities for improvement. They are actively involved in the work of the school and provide an appropriate level of challenge as well as support.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	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	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	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	3
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	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

4 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Windmill Primary School, Oxford, OX3 8NG

Thank you for your welcome when we came to visit your school. We are particularly grateful to the members of the school council and to a group of Year 6 pupils who met us and told us about the school. We enjoyed seeing the work from art week that was on display in the gym and on the front lawn, and the summer dancing that took place on the second day of our visit.

We think that the school is improving and that you are reaching reasonable standards in your work and we hope that these improvements will continue. We are pleased that the school is tracking your progress carefully and giving you targets in your literacy and numeracy, so that you know what you need to do to get better. You told us that behaviour has improved and that you like the new rules that have been introduced because you know what is expected of you. Unfortunately, we did still find some thoughtless behaviour in a few lessons, which was a pity because it was only a small number of children but it slowed the lessons down and stopped the rest of you learning as much as you could. We hope that you will all think about your behaviour in and out of lessons so that it gets even better.

Before we left, we talked to your headteacher and to some of the other teachers and governors and we asked them to do four things. We would like them to make sure you all keep up your progress, because we think that the standards you reach need to continue to get better over the next few years. We would also like them to find even more interesting things for you to do in lessons. Thirdly, we would like all the lessons to move on at a brisk pace, so that you don't sit listening for too long but have plenty of time for tasks that are at the right level for you and are not too easy or too hard. We think you can help your teachers do this by making sure you all behave well. Lastly, we would like your teachers to find out which of you are really good at particular things so that you can be given extra challenges.

Best wishes

Christopher Schenk

Her Majesty's Inspector