

Oliver Goldsmith Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101528
Local Authority	Brent
Inspection number	307723
Inspection dates	31 January –1 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Thrussell

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	460
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr N Rozanski
Headteacher	Mrs S Knowler
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2003
School address	Coniston Gardens Kingsbury London NW9 0BD
Telephone number	020 8205 6038
Fax number	020 8205 4987

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large, popular, two-form entry primary school in North London. It serves an ethnically and socially diverse community and just over 90 % of the pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. Just over two thirds have a home language other than English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school has gained many awards, including the Artsmark, Basic Skills, Eco Schools and Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Oliver Goldsmith is a good school. The headteacher provides strong leadership, which unites the staff in their commitment to the school. Most parents are very appreciative of the work of the school. One parent comments that 'the school is a good environment for pupils to learn and grow in'. The school's pastoral care for pupils is good and ensures their safety and welfare. Good links with outside agencies helps to ensure that pupils who have particular learning or physical needs, are new to learning English, or who are vulnerable, are well supported and able to make good progress in their learning and personal development. Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy school and the many opportunities provided for them through an extremely well enriched curriculum. They particularly enjoy trips out of school, and the special events organised for them. An Egyptian day was organised for Year 6 during the inspection, which brought learning to life and was recalled with great pleasure. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and learning, which contribute to the progress they make in their learning.

Achievement is good. Pupils get a good start to school in the Foundation Stage. Here, and throughout Key Stage 1, they make good progress. At the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently well above average. Year 2 teachers, especially, focus their teaching and additional support well to ensure that pupils reach these high levels. Progress slows in Years 3 and 4 and is broadly satisfactory. Progress accelerates in Years 5 and 6. Teaching in Year 6 is well directed to pupils achieving their end-of-key stage targets. In 2007, these adequately challenging targets were mostly exceeded. Pupils know and understand the levels they are expected to reach and are well guided towards them, often with strong support from home. Standards at the end of Year 6 are consistently well above average in English, and above average in mathematics and science.

The school assesses and monitors pupils' progress carefully. It uses this information well to identify where pupils have not made the expected progress and to provide additional support. However, it does not look as closely at why some pupils fall behind in their learning. Although teaching and learning are monitored regularly by senior leaders, lesson observations pay insufficient attention to the progress different groups of pupils are making. The school improvement plan sets out appropriate areas for action. However, the criteria for measuring the success of these actions do not ensure their full and timely effectiveness. The school has good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with below average levels of attainment. They make good progress due to enthusiastic and effective teaching. By the end of Reception, the majority of children are working well towards the learning goals expected at this age. The practical curriculum links different areas of learning, which means that children learn in interesting and meaningful ways. Good teamwork between staff is evident in their commitment to implement new initiatives and to work together to review practice. For instance, recent improvements to assessment have resulted in more focused observations, providing useful information to feed into planning. Improvements in planning have led to greater consistency in learning between and across Foundation Stage classes, and builds on previous learning well. Children happily work alongside each other, whilst adults provide lots of care, support and encouragement. Parents are strongly encouraged to work in partnership and are invited into school to support in a wide variety of

ways, including the sharing of dual language stories. The foundation stage is well managed with a clear understanding of strengths and areas of development, which has resulted in good improvement since the last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency and quality of classroom practice through rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning, particularly in Years 3 and 4, especially in relation to the progress pupils make in lessons.
- Ensure that assessment information is used to plan appropriate activities for all pupils and to guide them in their learning, so that all make the best progress possible.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter school with below average standards and by the end of Year 6, attain well above average standards, this is good progress. Pupils make very good progress in the Foundation stage and in Key Stage 1, and their starting point in Year 3 is well above average. Progress slows in Years 3 and 4 and accelerates again in Years 5 and 6. By the end of Key Stage 2 good progress has been made in English but a relative weakness has been identified in the progress some pupils make in mathematics. The school has started to address this through a greater emphasis on mental calculation and developing the language skills required for problem solving. In English, the use of drama, to enliven pupils' imagination and help improve their creative writing, is an area of improvement. Insufficient time has passed to see the full impact of this, especially on improving boys' writing, but the early signs are good. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress due to well targeted support programmes. However, their progress in lessons is at times reduced when the activities set for them are too difficult and additional adult support is not readily available. Pupils from all backgrounds achieve well at the school, the pupils' success in English is particularly good as two thirds of them do not speak English at home.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They understand safe practices, but a minority of pupils sometimes become over excited and do not act sensibly. They forget that what they do affects others. Junior Safety Officers are enthusiastic about their recent initiative to improve road safety. Pupils have a good understanding of diet and keeping healthy. Good opportunities for sport and physical education are enhanced through coaching links with a local secondary school. Attendance is satisfactory, but is adversely affected by long holidays taken in term time. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and the school is a harmonious community. Pupils respect each other's feelings, with a good awareness of the different cultures in their own school, and of other faiths and cultures around the world. Pupils take pride in their responsibilities, such as peer mentors and school councillors, and are enthusiastic in supporting many charities. Their good personal development and the basic skills they acquire equip them well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Classes are managed well. Good relationships mean that pupils are generally attentive and work hard. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together, although in some lessons assistants do not take an active enough role in supporting pupils. Where teaching is most effective, the work set is challenging and well focused to promote good progress. In the best lessons, questioning is used well to develop ideas and vocabulary and activities are well explained and understood. In some of the satisfactory lessons, pupils, although keen to work, did not fully understand what was expected of them and subsequently made less progress. Much of the planning for lessons does not show in enough detail how the activities planned are to be matched to the particular learning needs of different groups of pupils. The school has a policy of discussing the quality of the pupils' work with them and what they need to do to improve. As this is not usually recorded in the pupils book the benefit of this guidance can be easily forgotten by them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a wide and varied curriculum, including a very good range of well supported clubs and special events that contribute well to pupils' personal and social development. Planning for English and mathematics has been reviewed and some adjustments made. There are now more opportunities to develop ideas and understanding through speaking and listening. For example, pupils take part in a live radio show, 'The Big Toe'. Community links result in extra support for pupils in mathematics and reading. Year groups make effective links between subjects, which make learning more interesting and purposeful. Very good use is made of visits and visitors to help bring learning to life. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in music, drama, French and sport. Electronic whiteboards are in use in every classroom, except the nursery and the use of ICT to support teaching and learning is developing.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care of pupils is good. Child protection procedures are secure and risk assessments and health and safety procedures are firmly in place. Pupils say that if they have any concerns, there are adults they can talk to. Peer mentors also help pupils to sort out minor concerns. Pupils in Year 6 have individual targets to guide them in their learning. They know the steps needed to reach these targets and this supports the good progress they are making. However, this level of academic guidance is not fully established throughout the school, and has yet to be fully supported by the written as well as oral marking of work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

All leaders share a sense of purpose and want to do the best they can for pupils in their care. The result is a school that is welcoming and promotes pupils personal development well. The headteacher is an effective leader and manager. She has built a school where as well as the

pupils developing the personal qualities to become very good citizens they also achieve above average standards in literacy and numeracy. Satisfactory systems are in place to check how well the school is doing and to identify what it could do better. Subject managers are gaining in confidence in their role. They are developing a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, more recently in relation to progress in Years 3 and 4. The school's self-evaluation takes due account of the views of parents and pupils, but does not provide a fully accurate picture of the school's overall effectiveness. Governors know the school well through their visits and work in committees. They offer good support and challenge in equal measure.

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

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	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	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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

14 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oliver Goldsmith Primary School, London, NW9 0BD

I am writing to let you know what we found when we visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke with many of you during our visit and you were always interesting to talk to, very polite and helpful. You spoke very enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things in which you take part. Oliver Goldsmith is a good school.

We liked these things the most.

- Children in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 get a good start to their time in school. By the end of Year 2, you are doing especially well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards by Year 6 in English are well above average. You have many interesting things to write about and enjoy reading.
- The school makes sure that you are safe and well looked after.
- Those of you who find learning difficult, or who are new to learning English, are well supported.
- You behave well, enjoy school and are all very keen to keep fit and eat the right things.
- You go on lots of trips, have lots of exciting events and many school clubs to choose from. The Egyptian day was very memorable.

We have asked the school to work on the following things. The school must check lessons carefully to see that you are given work that is just right for each one of you, neither too easy nor too difficult, so that you all make the best progress possible. You should also be more aware of how well you are doing, for example through the comments made in your books about your work and the targets you are given to aim for.

We did enjoy visiting your school and watching you learn.

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector