

Oxspring Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106584
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	309167
Inspection dates	10–11 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Joyce Taylor

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	108
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr N Taylor
Headteacher	Mrs K Evans
Date of previous school inspection	24 November 2003
School address	Sheffield Road Oxspring Sheffield South Yorkshire S36 8YW
Telephone number	01226 763020
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This popular school takes the majority of its pupils from the local area, although a number come from beyond the immediate village. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is below average. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average as is the proportion with a statement of special educational need.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Oxspring Primary School provides a good education for its pupils and parents are rightly pleased with the outstanding care their children receive. They say the school provides a strong family atmosphere that ensures their children gain confidence and enjoy their education and that they, as parents, are always welcomed and listened to. As a result of these good relationships parents strongly support the work of the school. Attendance is above average and cheerful good manners underline the pupils' excellent behaviour. The school gives good value for money.

Teaching and learning is good. On leaving Year 2, pupils reach above average standards in mathematics and average standards in reading and writing, showing good overall achievement. Despite the good achievement, standards could be higher in reading and writing by the end of Year 2. By Year 6, pupils have responded well to sharply focused teaching and reach above average standards in English and mathematics. Standards are average in science: pupils achieve well in this subject, although at times they are not challenged enough. Moreover, more able pupils, throughout the school, do not have enough opportunities to use their high-level literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, because some tasks are insufficiently challenging.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because work is closely matched to their needs. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution by expertly supporting individuals and groups and ensuring their progress is good. Some of the support given is first-rate in its effect on pupils' thinking.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They work enthusiastically, thoroughly enjoying the lively and active learning opportunities teachers provide. The school council, chaired and administered by pupils, takes its work very seriously and has contributed to several school improvements. A dedicated team of staff provides expert guidance to any pupil who experiences difficulties, helping them become successful learners. Initiatives such as the work towards achieving health and fitness awards have contributed extremely well to pupils' pride in their school and their excellent understanding about healthy living.

The curriculum is good. Active tasks ensure learning is interesting and detailed planning ensures subjects link together well. For example, Year 2 pupils effortlessly linked literacy with healthy eating as they wrote instructions on how to make a face using pieces of fruit.

Using good leadership and management strategies, the headteacher is effectively moving the school forward. There is a very clear grasp of what needs to be done in order to lift standards and ensure pupils do their best. The school has undertaken a detailed review of its strengths and weaknesses and is benefiting from rigorously monitored improvements. For example, teachers respond well to improvement initiatives and work has already begun to lift standards where weaknesses have been identified. The headteacher has, extremely effectively, involved pupils, staff, governors and parents in broadening the work of the school. There are also considerable strengths in the use of assessment to plan new learning and accelerate progress. The strong team spirit, welding together recently qualified and more experienced staff, is a significant factor in the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for Foundation Stage pupils is good and children achieve well. Children settle well and learn quickly. Good teaching produces successful lessons that are fun. Children are fully

involved in lively activities. They arrive with standards that are slightly below expected levels in reading and writing and slightly above what is expected in mathematics and several aspects of their personal development. By the time they move into Year 1 they are reaching and sometimes exceeding the expected goals, although reading and writing skills still lag behind mathematics. The children have access to a good range of resources, inside and outside the classroom. They learn to make sensible decisions as they work and play. Their progress is tracked closely and lessons are planned to support identified areas of weakness.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure pupils, particularly those who are higher attaining, are challenged more effectively in science and the broader range of curriculum subjects.
- Improve reading and writing standards by the end of Year 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

New and rigorous strategies have raised standards and ensure pupils achieve well in English, science and information and communication technology (ICT). This is a particular improvement in ICT, which was below average at the time of the last inspection. Standards have been maintained at an above average level in mathematics throughout the school and achievement in this subject is consistently good. Detailed monitoring by the headteacher and staff identified weaknesses in the achievement of certain groups of pupils and, for the most part, these have been remedied. However, some weaknesses remain in the achievement of the most able pupils across the broader curriculum. Satisfactory standards in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 are also areas for improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school lives out the characteristics of its aims. Pupils are valued and are at the heart of the school's work. They thoroughly enjoy making a contribution to school life and develop their citizenship skills extremely effectively by taking on a wide range of responsibilities. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of cultural awareness and an excellent understanding of right and wrong and how to get on together. Pupils greatly enjoy school and talk enthusiastically about their favourite lessons. They say, for example, 'ICT is good because of the new laptops.' and, 'I like science best because you do stuff.'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers are very effective at helping pupils feel good about themselves and, as a result, pupils like their teachers and work hard in lessons. Good use of assessment data contributes effectively to pupils' accelerating progress. Occasionally, pupils all do very similar tasks where the most able could have tackled more challenging work. Monitoring of lessons has identified this weakness and staff are already adopting good new strategies to improve pupils' achievement. However, it is too soon to see the full impact of these measures. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Some of this support

is outstanding where close attention is paid to pupils' needs and their understanding is questioned closely.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is designed to help pupils as thinkers. Investigation and problem solving activities are built in to many lessons and pupils are frequently expected to discuss their thoughts with a partner before making decisions. Subjects are linked well and pupils clearly understand what they are learning. In science in Years 3 and 4, for example, pupils demonstrated a wide range of general knowledge when suggesting ways of testing the hardness of different rocks. 'Hit it with a hammer!', 'Use a drill!', 'Let water grind it away!' and 'Look it up on the computer!', were some of the rapid suggestions. As yet, the curriculum does not challenge all pupils as well as it could, although the school is taking action to improve this situation. The curriculum is extended through a good range of visits, visitors and clubs that effectively build up pupils' skills and confidence.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school knows its pupils very well and provides them with an exceptionally caring environment. Vulnerable pupils are supported extremely sensitively and discretely so they can cope with difficulties and make the most of their learning. Parents particularly value the school's concern for individuals and feel their children are cared for extremely well. Very effective use is made of outside agencies to support pupils. Tracking of academic progress is extremely thorough and the school uses these data to identify groups of pupils who may be able to achieve more. Staff and governors are well trained in aspects of health and safety and child protection procedures are robust.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a very accurate view of how well the school is doing and sets clear directions for improvement. The pupils' achievement has improved as a result. Leading staff evaluate their areas of responsibility and identify what needs to be done next. Their work is effective and has a positive impact on the school. Targets for most pupils are challenging, although some more able learners could do more in some subjects. Improvement strategies for these groups are already in place, but it is too early, as yet, to determine outcomes.

The outstanding quality of care pupils receive helps remove obstacles which might prevent learning. Equality of opportunity is tackled well and the vast majority of pupils learn well as a result. Good use is made of partnerships with the local authority, nearby schools and the community, to promote learning and well-being. Governance is good. Governors are challenging, they have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and work hard on the school's behalf. The overall impact of this effective provision is that pupils' progress is improving on several fronts and the school has a deservedly good local reputation.

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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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	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.

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Inspection of Oxspring Primary School, Sheffield, S36 8YW

Thank you for your help when I visited your school. I very much enjoyed watching you work and talking with you in your classes and around school. Yours is a good school and it provides you with interesting and lively opportunities for learning.

You have a good headteacher and an enthusiastic, hardworking staff. Your parents say they are particularly pleased you come to this school because you are given such excellent care and helped to do well. You work hard and, as a result, you reach high standards in English and mathematics by the time you leave the school. However, there are still some of you who could do even better, both in these subjects and the others that you learn. Additionally, standards in reading and writing from Reception to Year 2 could increase. Across the school you enjoy your lessons, you behave extremely well and help each other.

I have identified several areas for the school to improve. These will help you do even better in all areas of learning.

- Ensure that you are given work that challenges you at the right level to learn quickly, particularly in science and such subjects as information and communication technology, history and geography.
- Improve your reading and writing in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.

You are enthusiastic about your school and I hope you carry on enjoying lessons and making Oxspring Primary School such a happy place for learning.