

Owlsmoor Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 109870 |
| Local Authority | Bracknell Forest |
| Inspection number | 310127 |
| Inspection dates | 28–29 November 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | George Rayner |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 482 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Stephen Jefferies |
| Headteacher | Mr Richard Blackmore |
| Date of previous school inspection | 11 March 2002 |
| School address | Cambridge Road Owlsmoor Sandhurst GU47 0TA |
| Telephone number | 01344 776642 |
| Fax number | 01344 761479 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is larger than most primary schools. Pupils' socio-economic situations are broadly average overall, but with considerable variation in individual home circumstances. The great majority of pupils are of white British heritage, although the proportion from minority ethnic groups has risen over recent years. Very few pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. The headteacher has been in post for seven months.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Parents say that their children are happy here and make good progress in their learning. Good pastoral care contributes to pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils say that they enjoy school and show this in their above average attendance, the good behaviour of the great majority and their willingness to join in with all that the school has to offer. They have a strong awareness of safety and develop their independence well because teachers encourage them to solve problems and rise to challenges. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and eagerly take part in the good opportunities for sport. They realise the importance of a balanced diet and can say which contents of their lunch boxes are most and least healthy.

Pupils' good attitudes help them to take advantage of the good teaching and learning and good curriculum, so that they achieve well. Standards are generally above average by the end of Year 6, in almost all subjects. They are broadly average in science in which, although satisfactory, progress is slower than in other subjects. This is because teaching is less effective in encouraging pupils to enjoy the subject and to become independent in finding things out through investigation. This contrasts with mathematics, for example, in which teachers succeed well in encouraging pupils to enjoy using their skills to solve problems. They do this with a good variety of challenging and interesting tasks.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has quickly identified the strengths for the school to build on and the areas that it needs to improve. He is successfully supporting staff and governors to develop a self-critical approach that sharply identifies areas needing improvement. This has helped all to recognise that procedures for setting targets and checking how well they are being met have not been consistent throughout the school, so that they have been more effective in some subjects than others. While helping the school to set challenging targets that were an important ingredient in raising standards in English and mathematics, they have not yet had an impact on science standards. The school has introduced new systems, which are already beginning to have a beneficial impact, for example, by providing more regular review of each pupil's progress. As yet, not all staff are using these with equal effectiveness to speedily identify and help the pupils not making the progress expected of them. The school has succeeded well in addressing the key issues identified by the last inspection of raising the quality of teaching and achievement where this has been needed. The track record and continued focus on raising standards demonstrate a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Foundation Stage at broadly expected levels for their age in almost all areas. They are a little weaker in using language to communicate and personal and social development. They progress well in all areas of learning, particularly their weaker ones, so that they are securely at expected levels by the end of the Reception class. This is because teachers use assessment information well to focus sharply on children's areas of greatest need. They occasionally miss opportunities to record children's progress, for example, by noting down how they respond to their tasks as work proceeds. From an early stage, children learn to make choices, to develop independence and to be considerate of each other. Because the adults succeed well in making learning fun, children enjoy their time there. Teachers collaborate well with parents. This includes good support for developing language skills through the provision

of home school learning kits about 'Archie the Elephant', provided by the local speech and language support service.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in science by ensuring that pupils have consistently good opportunities for investigation and enjoyment.
- Use the information from tracking pupils' progress more effectively to identify and support pupils in danger of not making the progress expected of them.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and reach generally above average standards by the end of Year 6. They make quick progress in Years 1 and 2, so that their standards in reading, writing and mathematics become above average by the end of Year 2. This is due to recent improvements in teaching and learning. The Year 6 pupils who were assessed in 2007 entered Year 3 with average standards. They showed their good progress by an above average proportion reaching or exceeding expected standards in English and mathematics. Most pupils develop a good vocabulary and use this well to write confidently for a variety of purposes. Pupils become proficient in using their good numeracy skills to solve problems. Although pupils make satisfactory progress in science, their standards remain broadly average. Pupils develop a sound scientific knowledge, but do not always use this well to carry out their own investigations and test their hypotheses. Because their individual needs are carefully identified and efficiently provided for, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make as good progress as their classmates. The most able pupils show good initiative in responding well to their mainly good challenges and also achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say, 'Teachers help to make you mature and responsible for what you do. They try to find a talent in everyone and make sure you are ready for secondary school.' Pupils respond well to this. They enjoy taking responsibilities and experiencing the world of work, for example, through library and dining room duties and being playground 'buddies'. They particularly enjoy leading younger pupils in 'Kick Start' dance routines. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall although their preparation for living in a multi-cultural world is less strong. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and value the help that teachers give them in this by being 'fair, kind and patient'. Pupils work hard to gain house points for effort and achievement. The great majority behave well and are kind to each other. They report that a small minority do not treat others well but know there is always someone to turn to for help. Pupils are beginning to have opportunities to make a difference to their school through the recently formed school council. They are active fundraisers for several charities locally and in the wider community. The choir and brass band are in much demand to entertain in the community, especially the elderly.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are well planned to provide a varied range of activities to instil good enjoyment of learning. Teachers secure good relationships with pupils, through effective management of behaviour and ability to establish rapport. This encourages confident discussion and helps pupils actively to seek to learn. Teaching assistants contribute well by giving individual support to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities can keep up with the work. Although teaching is good overall, there is some inconsistency. While work is usually well matched to pupils' needs and abilities, providing a good level of challenge that helps especially the higher attaining pupils reach their potential, sometimes it does not meet all pupils' needs well enough and does not always fully engage them. In science teaching has not been sufficiently focused on investigative work, so progress has not been as good as in other subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Personal, social and health education lessons make an important contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being. Music and drama are strong features that contribute greatly to pupils' enjoyment and involvement. Timetabled information and communication technology lessons improve pupils' skills well and they have frequent opportunities to use them in other subjects. French has recently been introduced in Year 3 and plans are well in hand to extend this to other years. The science curriculum is not always sufficiently focused on investigations or providing work that will make pupils enjoy the subject. Good enrichment includes a wide range of well-attended clubs. Physical education and sports are especially popular. Many enrichment activities are organised involving visits or visitors from the local community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The overall quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory. Good pastoral care ensures that pupils feel secure. Procedures for safeguarding pupils, child protection and health and safety are efficient. Medical welfare is well provided for and several staff are trained in first aid. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported with the effective help of teaching assistants. Additional support is organised for vulnerable children, for example through group sessions, which succeed well in raising their self-esteem. Liaison with external support agencies to provide any additional help that pupils might need is good. Although anti-bullying procedures are usually effective, the school has listened to concerns raised by a small number of parents that they have not always worked as well as intended and is reviewing them. Systems for tracking pupils' progress have recently been improved by making these consistent throughout the school. Staff are still learning to use these to gather assessment information. Therefore this is not yet being used effectively enough in all areas to ensure that pupils in danger of missing their targets are quickly identified and helped.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is succeeding well in providing opportunities for staff working at all levels to share responsibility and accountability. Colleagues are responding with enthusiasm and commitment. Subject leaders and others working at middle levels are becoming increasingly involved in monitoring their areas. They are not yet sufficiently involved in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in their areas, through activities such as observing lessons and guiding colleagues on further improving their practice. Governors are very committed to the school. They have worked effectively to equip themselves with the skills that they need and use them well to challenge the school whenever necessary. Rigorous self-evaluation has been used effectively to improve provision and outcomes in Years 1 and 2 since the last inspection and has reversed a dip in Year 6 English and mathematics standards.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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

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| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| 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

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|--|---|
| 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? | 3 |

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

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| 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 | 2 |
| 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

11 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Owlsmoor Primary School, Sandhurst, GU47 0TA

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and we are grateful for the help you gave by talking to us and showing us your work. We were able to see that yours is a good school. You make good progress in most of your subjects. This is because the teachers usually teach you well and you work hard. Some of you told us that you enjoy school, and you show this by your good behaviour. You told us that you really like all of the clubs and you join in with these very well.

The only part of your learning which is not quite as good is in science. This is because the lessons do not give you enough help to find things out and they are not always as enjoyable as in other subjects. We have asked the teachers to improve this.

Your headteacher has quickly worked out how to make your school even better. He and the other adults are working together well to do this. They have improved the way in which they keep notes on how well you are doing. They are not yet using these really well to make sure that they quickly spot any of you who might not be doing as well as you should be. We have asked them to make sure that they always quickly give extra help to any of you who need this to catch up.

We would like to say well done for all of your hard work so far and wish you all the very best for your future.

George Rayner

Lead Inspector