

# Oldbrook First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110240
<b>Local Authority</b>	Milton Keynes
<b>Inspection number</b>	310232
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Margaret Goodchild

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	113
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Colleen Kirkbride
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sue Davies
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 January 2003
<b>School address</b>	Illingworth Place Oldbrook Milton Keynes MK6 2NH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01908 604689
<b>Fax number</b>	01908 234280

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<b>Age group</b>	4–7
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Since the last inspection, this small infant school has seen a substantial increase in the proportion of minority ethnic pupils on its roll. There are currently three times as many as in schools nationally. In the Foundation Stage and Year 1, over 80 per cent of pupils are of minority ethnic heritage. Many of these pupils speak English as an additional language and some join the school speaking no English. Pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds, with 17 different languages spoken. After White British, the next biggest group is Asian or Asian British with a fair number of pupils also from Black or Black British African backgrounds. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is a bit above average. Fewer pupils have learning difficulties than in schools nationally and they have a wide mixture of special needs. The mobility rate is high and an increasing number of pupils join and leave the school other than at the usual times. The school has Investors in People status, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Gold Healthy Schools Award, National Healthy Schools status, the Arts Mark Silver Award and Active Mark. A new headteacher took up post in September 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school with outstanding features. Parents are pleased with the school's work, describing it as 'a lovely school' that provides a 'solid foundation'. They find the staff very approachable. Their children enjoy school and 'come out smiling'.

Good teaching and an outstanding curriculum enable pupils to achieve well, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Attainment on entry is below average overall with significant numbers of children entering the school with attainment well below average in language and social skills. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Pupils reach standards that are average overall and above average in writing by the end of Year 2. However, in the most recent national tests, girls reached higher standards than boys, especially in reading and writing. Standards in mathematics have improved significantly since the last inspection.

There is a clear sense of community in the school and pupils' varied backgrounds are a source of celebration. Combined with outstanding care, guidance and support, this enables pupils to make outstanding progress in their personal development. Pupils enjoy coming to school and have very positive attitudes to learning. They talk excitedly about lessons and say that learning is 'fun and brilliant'. Relationships are very good throughout the school and pupils work and play harmoniously together.

The school is led and managed well. The school has sustained and built well on the strengths identified at the last inspection. Very secure systems are in place for supporting and quickly integrating the many new arrivals to the school. Furthermore, the outstanding vision and high expectations of the new headteacher are providing a very clear direction to the school's work. Consequently, it is well placed to improve further. All the staff are strongly committed to making it as good as possible and display great sensitivity to pupils' individual needs. Outstanding partnerships with other agencies support them in this. A good amount of information is collected about the school's effectiveness but the headteacher has, rightly, identified the need to refine self-evaluation. For example, the school has begun to develop the role of subject leaders, but not all are yet sufficiently experienced to fully contribute to self-evaluation. The governing body provides satisfactory support to the school. It is small and there have been difficulties recruiting governors. The chair of governors has an in-depth knowledge of the school but some new governors were appointed recently and the governing body is working to develop its role.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

From a low starting point, children in the Foundation Stage make good progress to reach standards that are a bit below average by the time they move into Year 1. Teaching is good overall and sometimes outstanding, especially in the promotion of language and communication. Varied indoor and outdoor activities capture the children's interest exceptionally well. The staff work very effectively together in fostering children's enjoyment of learning and expanding their horizons. As a result, children develop self-confidence and show concentration and purpose. The school has close links with local pre-schools and thorough systems for finding out what children can do when they enter the Foundation Stage. These take appropriate account of parents' views. The assessment and tracking of children's progress is very thorough. Staff plan carefully together to make sure activities build on children's prior learning. Children do not,

however, have individual learning targets to ensure that tasks are matched precisely to the next steps in their learning. The school is strengthening the connections between learning in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Parents are kept well informed and have good opportunities to become involved in their children's learning. The Foundation Stage manager is an Early Years consultant, supporting other schools and receiving visitors to observe Oldbrook's good practice.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise the attainment of boys throughout the school and raise achievement at Key Stage 1 in reading and particularly in mathematics to bring it in line with that in writing.
- Strengthen self-evaluation by developing the role of subject leaders and governors in monitoring the school's work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

In 2007, those pupils who had been in the school since the beginning of Year 1 reached above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. There is no significant difference between the achievement of pupils for whom English is an additional language and other pupils. Some good intervention strategies help ensure that the small number of pupils with learning difficulties reach standards in line with similar pupils nationally. Pupils reach well above average standards in art and design. There are vibrant, stimulating two and three-dimensional work produced in lessons, and through work with artists-in-residence.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. They are delightful ambassadors for the school and, most importantly, are developing an understanding of the special gifts that each of them has to offer, and finding out how they can use these in their learning. They are extremely enthusiastic about school. They are lively and confident but also supportive and thoughtful towards one another. They say that they feel happy, safe and secure, and know that they are trusted, listened to and treated fairly. Behaviour is good, and many pupils behave very well. Attendance has been good in recent years. The school does all it can to encourage parents to send their children to school regularly. However, extended holidays have recently reduced the overall attendance rate to satisfactory. Pupils develop an extremely clear understanding of healthy living, including the importance of eating a balanced diet. They take part in a wide range of physical activities and express their feelings well in circle time. They readily take responsibility, contributing ideas about school effectiveness through the school council, collecting money for charities and acting as 'buddies' to new pupils. The good progress that pupils make in basic skills and the many positive personal qualities they develop prepare them well for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers and teaching assistants plan lessons well together. Pupils know what they are meant to learn because expectations are made clear to them. Teachers have good subject knowledge,

especially in the teaching of writing, and they manage pupils' behaviour well. They provide pupils with very good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills, through asking probing questions that get pupils to explain their thinking, and by giving pupils good opportunities to discuss their ideas in pairs. This is one of the main reasons why pupils do well in writing. Pupils are being taught how best they learn and what particular strengths they bring to learning. Good use is made of visual resources to support pupils learning English, and the use of practical resources, in mathematics for example, engages pupils' interest. Occasionally, during practical activities, they need to be organised better and supervised more closely to ensure they use their time well and remain focused. Staff generally use effective methods to teach new concepts but these are not always matched to the needs of all the pupils, especially in mathematics.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is matched extremely well to pupils' learning needs and is exciting and relevant. As many pupils join the school with very limited language and social skills, very appropriate emphasis is placed on speaking and listening, and learning through play in the Foundation Stage and in Year 1. Throughout the school, drama, visiting theatre groups, storytellers, role-play and puppets are used very effectively to promote speaking and listening. Creativity is promoted very well: the school works closely with local artists, and the curriculum is enlivened by a wide range of special events and educational visits. For example, there are science workshops, trips to theatres and museums, visits to a zoo and safari park, and involvement in various performances. Through its extended day, the school provides a breakfast club and a number of after school clubs that are popular with the pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Procedures for safeguarding and protecting pupils are very thorough. All staff are trained in first aid. The school works very closely with a range of external agencies to support pupils with learning and other needs. It has very effective procedures for supporting pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. A learning mentor runs a nurture group for pupils with the most significant needs as well as providing other activities to promote pupils' self-esteem. A system of rewards is well established and valued by pupils. Partnership with parents is good and improving. They are kept well informed and the school has provided workshops for parents to find out about learning in literacy, numeracy, phonics and healthy eating. Pupils contribute to their own end of year reports, are involved in evaluating their progress twice a term and those in Years 1 and 2 know their targets for improvement.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher is ably supported by the assistant headteacher in working towards her vision to turn this into an outstanding school. Senior leaders collect a wealth of data: they make good use of this to judge the school's performance, to track how well pupils are doing and to set challenging targets. The school works to very good effect with a group of local infant schools as well as with other educational establishments. Senior leaders readily embrace local and national initiatives and welcome any innovation that is likely to enrich pupils' learning. For

example, a project is helping pupils to identify the particular qualities that each brings to learning. This is inspiring pupils and staff alike. Staff have very good opportunities to improve their effectiveness through training and visits to other schools to observe best practice. Performance management is used well to improve teachers' effectiveness and valuable training has been provided for subject leaders, although some still need to develop aspects of their role.

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## 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?	1
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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

14 February 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Oldbrook First School, Milton Keynes, MK6 2NH

I enjoyed my visit to your school very much. It was really interesting to see all the exciting things you do and lovely to hear how much you enjoy school. I am writing now to tell you what I found out about your school.

It is a good school and does some things really well. These are some of the best things about your school:

- it helps you to make good progress and you do especially well in writing.
- the teaching is usually good and sometimes it is outstanding
- everyone gets on very well together and you are kind to one another
- your teachers and the other people who help in the school all look after you very well and care about you
- most of you work hard and do your best
- you say that learning is 'brilliant and fun' and you really enjoy all the different activities
- you have done some wonderful art in lessons, and when you worked with artists who came into school.

The headteacher wants to make the school as good as it could possibly be for you. I have asked her to:

- make sure that boys make as much progress as girls do, especially in reading and writing
- help all of you to do even better in mathematics
- show everyone who works in the school what they need to do to make the school even better.

I hope you enjoy the rest of your time at Oldbrook First and keep working hard. Boys need to try harder in writing and everyone needs to do their very best in mathematics.

Best wishes

Ms M J Goodchild

Lead Inspector