

Old Basing Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116039
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312157
Inspection date	14 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	248
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Deborah Thorne
Headteacher	Mrs Vera Cottrell
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Milkingpen Lane Basing Basingstoke RG24 7DL
Telephone number	01256 325704
Fax number	01256 364475

Age group	4-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the achievement of higher attaining pupils
- if there is any difference in the attainment of boys and girls
- whether teachers have high enough expectations of how well pupils achieve.

Evidence was gathered from performance data, observations of teaching and reviewing work produced by pupils. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with a group of governors, staff and parents also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This over-subscribed average sized infant school serves the village of Old Basing. About a quarter of the pupils come from the surrounding area. The social circumstances of most pupils are above those typically found. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion with a learning difficulty or disability is average. The school has achieved Investors in People status and has gained the National Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Old Basing Infants is an outstanding school in which pupils thrive in both their personal and academic development. The school prepares pupils exceptionally well for their move to the junior school. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and almost all say that their children enjoy school, are safe and they make good progress. Many parents rightly commented on the positive and supportive ethos that encourages the pupils to achieve outstandingly well. All the adults support pupils well, treat them as individuals and ensure that they reach high standards. Parents' views were encapsulated in the comment, 'The school has a positive work ethic which is supported through recognition of achievement. This takes place in a disciplined, yet caring environment which actively encourages learning and fun'. The curriculum is outstanding and contributes to the pupils' enjoyment exceptionally well. A parent rightly commented, 'The school encourages the children to learn well using interesting ways to develop their skills'. The curriculum is rich and broad and encourages effective learning because teachers set high quality activities that are given a purpose and are made relevant. One means of doing this is the creative manner in which teachers link subjects. For example, in the recent robot week, which had a design and technology focus, the pupils were excited when they explained how they designed, made and evaluated robots. They talked animatedly about the poems and stories they had written and the robot dance and music sessions led by a specialist teacher. Other teachers used good quality programs on the computer linked to the theme. All of the resulting work was displayed in an attractive manner. This helped to boost the pupils' self-esteem as they delighted in pointing out photographs of their robots. The week culminated in a celebration assembly. This approach made learning real and contributed well to developing pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and each other. Such positive attitudes are reflected in the high levels of attendance.

Because the quality of teaching and learning is excellent and staff ensure that work set matches pupils' needs well, they make excellent progress. Teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. They have excellent relationships with pupils and manage them well. This engenders rapid learning. As one pupil said, 'Our teachers make learning fun and we give us really hard work and we like that.' Teachers' high demands, when linked to the fast pace of learning and very good use of resources such as interactive white boards ensures that lesson objectives are met. In the past, the progress of more able pupils, although good, was not as strong as others. In addition, the performance of girls was not as strong as boys. These differences have been removed. All groups make excellent progress in reading, writing and mathematics and current Year 2 pupils are on course to attain exceptionally high standards. Almost all pupils gain the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics and a majority exceed the expectations for their age. Good assessment procedures ensure that any pupils that fall behind or have particular learning needs are identified quickly and effective programmes are put into place to ensure excellent progress towards targets set.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and what constitutes a healthy lifestyle because the personal, social and health education programme is very effective. 'We need milk', proudly stated one Year 2 boy, 'Because it provides calcium to make our bones and teeth strong.' In addition, pupils enjoy taking responsibility. School councillors, for example, take their role seriously and are proud of the changes that they have suggested such as extending the games available during lunchtimes.

They also enjoy choosing charities for which they raise money such as 'Save the Children' and NSPCC.

Parents are pleased with the way that the school cares for their children. All safeguarding and child protection arrangements are fully met. Academic guidance is excellent. Pupils' progress is tracked closely and pupils are very clear about how to achieve the targets set for them because marking is of good quality.

The school fully deserves its good reputation within the community. High quality leadership and management lie at the heart of the school's success. The headteacher continues to provide excellent leadership. She is supported well by the deputy head and senior leadership team. The excellent self-evaluation processes, in which all staff with responsibilities are directly involved, enable leaders to have a pin-point knowledge of strengths and weaknesses. These systems not only provide good means to check provision and progress, but also are used well to establish improvement priorities and inform the good quality development plan. Staff, including the support staff, work closely as a team to make sure that all pupils, whatever their starting points, achieve well. The positive impact of leadership and management demonstrate an excellent capacity for further improvement. This can be seen in the excellent improvement in the provision for gifted and talented pupils which was a weakness in the previous inspection.

Governance is excellent. Governors are committed to further improvement, are not complacent and they have an excellent and astute understanding of the school's position. This is because they are directly involved in monitoring the school's provision by having regular visits to the school. They are supportive, yet challenge the school to do better.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The Foundation Stage unit caters for the needs of the children outstandingly well. Children are exceptionally well cared for and staff expectations for children's progress are high particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. Children thoroughly enjoy learning and parents say that they settle well and quickly become confident. Activities are stimulating and challenging and meticulously planned and assessed. Recent changes to the curriculum organisation now ensures that there is a good balance provided between those activities that are planned by staff and those chosen by children. Children enter school with skills that are above those typically found and they make excellent progress, particularly in their social and communication, language and literacy skills. By the time that they leave almost all attain the expected goals and a majority exceed them. However, although the outdoor learning space is used well, its use is limited because there is no cover.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide cover outside the three Reception classrooms.

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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?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

28 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Old Basing Infant School, Basingstoke, RG24 7DL

I really enjoyed visiting your school. Thank you very much for the friendly way you welcomed me and for your help in finding out about the school.

Both you and your parents told me that you love school and that you feel safe and well cared for. I am not surprised. Yours is an excellent school and everybody who works there tries hard to help you to do well. Your teachers work hard to make sure that lessons are made interesting and exciting. Your headteacher has done an excellent job to make sure that everyone helps you all to work and play together in such a friendly way and to make the school successful. I was very impressed with your excellent behaviour and your positive attitudes to each other. Your teachers help you to learn exceptionally well and also make sure that everyone feels part of the family of your school.

You work hard in lessons so that you learn lots of new things. Your progress is excellent and you attain high standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

I have asked your teachers to do one thing. This is to make sure that there is some cover outside the Reception classrooms so the children can carry on learning whatever the weather.

Thank you once again for being so helpful to me.

With very best wishes for your future.

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector