

Overdale Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120021
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	313481
Inspection dates	18–19 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Barbara Crane

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	269
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Sayers
Headteacher	Phillipa Maksymiw
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2004
School address	Eastcourt Road Knighton Leicester LE2 3YA
Telephone number	01162 882724
Fax number	01162570323

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large, ethnically diverse infant school drawing its pupils from a mainly advantaged area of Leicester. A third of the pupils speak English as an additional language and half of this group are in the early stages of learning English. Children's attainment on entry is above average. There are fewer pupils at this school with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than in most schools. A new headteacher took up post in August of this year.

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. Parents are very happy with what it provides for their children. The school's welcoming atmosphere and good teaching are key factors in parents' satisfaction and pupils' enjoyment in learning. Teachers are energetic in their approach and make lessons interesting. They provide plenty of chances for pupils to solve problems and talk about their ideas. One parent captured the views of many in commenting, 'My child is taught in such a way that she wants to learn and ask questions about the world around her.' Pupils' achievement is good and they reach well-above-average standards by the time they leave the school. Progress is good in all year groups for nearly all pupils. It is particularly good in mathematics because teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils and ensure that the work challenges them. Pupils in the early stages of learning English do really well in getting to grips with speaking the language. Those who have become competent speakers should be making quicker progress in writing. More-able pupils could also be achieving more in this area.

The excellent relationships between adults and pupils mean that classrooms are happy places in which pupils want to do their best to please their teachers. They learn from their classmates, as well as the adults, because they are so good at listening to each other. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their behaviour is excellent and they put into practice what they learn about eating and drinking healthily and keeping safe. The good curriculum and wide range of extra activities enhance pupils' positive attitudes to school. The good care, support and guidance given to pupils means that they learn in a secure environment.

The school's leadership and management are good. The school knows where its strengths and weaknesses lie because of good self-evaluation. Areas that need development are identified and targets for improvement are mostly met. Progress towards improvement is mainly closely monitored. There are just a few occasions when checks are not focused enough on whether pupils' achievement is improving.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for the Reception children is good and is well led and managed. Good teaching means that children achieve well and this sets them up for future success. Children are working beyond the goals expected in all areas of learning by the time they start in Year 1. The emphasis put on promoting the children's personal and social development successfully enables them to settle happily and builds their self-confidence. Children who are learning English do well in extending their speaking but sometimes make slower progress in their early writing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that more-able pupils and those learning English as an additional language make the progress of which they are capable in their writing.
- Ensure that managers more rigorously monitor the impact of initiatives to improve pupils' achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children are working beyond expectations by the time they start in Year 1. They do particularly well in their personal, social, emotional and mathematical development. Children's good progress in the Reception classes is built on securely in Years 1 and 2. Standards are well above average by the end of Year 2, as they have been over the past few years. Pupils of all ages make very rapid progress in mathematics and demonstrate a very good capability in calculation and solving problems. Pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills are all at a high level for their ages. Pupils' performance in writing in 2007 dipped, with fewer gaining the level beyond that expected for their age than in previous years. Current assessments indicate that standards are set to rise again this year, but more-able pupils and a few who are learning English as an additional language should be doing better. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in all years because the assessment of their needs is accurate and they receive good support and guidance.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are well prepared for the future because of the standards they reach in their work and their good range of social skills. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Reception children quickly learn that working together brings benefits for everyone. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance and the enthusiasm with which they talk about what they do. They behave very well. This creates an atmosphere of friendliness and concern for others in which pupils thrive and gain confidence. The excellent relationships between pupils from different ethnic groups, ages and backgrounds make the school a happy community. Pupils display a maturity and sense of fair play beyond their years. This is seen in the way in which they organise themselves into groups to play games at break and lunchtimes. All year groups, including Reception children, make good use of play equipment to keep active in the fresh air at lunchtime. They are mindful of their own and others' safety in play and respect each other's space. The new school council is starting to make a good contribution in shaping decisions about school improvement and has influenced for example, the promotion of healthy snacks and packed lunches.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching engages pupils' interest and leads to their positive attitudes to learning. The emphasis put on following children's ideas and enabling them to learn independently in the Reception classes means that children persevere and are excited by challenges. Adults provide plenty of praise and encouragement for all age groups and so children's confidence blossoms. The calm atmosphere reflects teachers' high expectations of behaviour. Pupils speak clearly and confidently because adults ensure that they have a good vocabulary to express their ideas and that these are taken seriously. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language make good progress in speaking because their needs are fully taken into account. Teachers in all year groups have a very firm grasp of how to build pupils' skills in mathematics. The level of challenge is high for pupils of all abilities and progress is very rapid as a result. In writing, teaching

throughout the school does not always build in the necessary level of challenge for more-able pupils or extra guidance for pupils who are learning English as an additional language. The involvement of parents in their children's learning, through reading diaries and learning logs, boosts pupils' progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is firmly based on practical experiences. This helps to ensure full engagement and equally good achievement of boys and girls. Planning for pupils to learn about how to stay fit and healthy is successfully woven into lessons. The diversity of pupils' cultural backgrounds is celebrated well in, for example, music, art and dance. The curriculum is well adapted for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and this ensures their good progress towards their targets. Advice from outside agencies is well used to achieve this. The practical nature of activities has been boosted to engage boys' interest and this is working well. Some opportunities are missed for more-able pupils to use and extend their skills in writing across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good level of daily care by the staff means that pupils are happy and feel safe. The procedures for safeguarding children are secure. Parents say that they appreciate the lengths the staff go to in helping their children to adapt to new routines when they start school. Children in the Reception classes readily ask for help if they need it because they trust the adults at hand to provide it. The pupils say that they know adults will help them if they need any help with their work or face problems. The good guidance for the teaching of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities through individual planning means that these pupils are fully included in all activities and make good progress. There are a few times when the support for pupils who are learning English as an additional language is not fully effective in promoting their skills in writing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The staff enjoy their work and work well as a team, with a shared commitment to ensure the best for the pupils. The school has a clear direction for improvement. Arrangements for the professional development of staff link well to its plan for improvement. The school has the right priorities and a good record of achieving what it sets out to do. Initiatives to improve attendance, teachers' questioning and pupils' ability to solve problems have all met with success. These indicate the school's good capacity for further improvement. Through monitoring data, the school has identified that small numbers of pupils who are learning English as an additional language have not made progress equal to others, particularly in writing. Adaptations to teaching to resolve this have been made over the past year, but have not been checked to see if initiatives are working. Current assessments show that there is still a problem for a few pupils. Governors are well informed and so play a strong part in helping the school to improve. The staff have forged strong links with parents that benefit children's learning at home.

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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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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?	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	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

19 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Overdale Infant School, Eastcourt Road, Leicester LE2 3YA

Thank you for welcoming us and being so keen to talk when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you. You have a good school and we can see why your parents are pleased that you go to there. It is a happy place and your lessons are fun. This is what we found was best about your school.

- You do well in your work and you are all particularly good at mathematics and reading by the end of Year 2.
- Good teaching means that you enjoy school and there are lots of exciting things for you to do.
- Your behaviour is brilliant. Even when there are no grown-ups around, you make the right choices over what to do. Well done!
- Everyone gets on very well together and you are friendly and help each other.
- We are glad that you eat healthy food, drink plenty of water and enjoy keeping fit.
- The grown-ups take good care of you, listen to your problems and give you extra help if you need it.
- Your school is well run by the people in charge. They know what they need to do to make the school even better for you.

We noticed how good many of you are at writing and have asked your teachers to expect those of you who are particularly quick to learn, to do even better in this area. Those of you who use more than one language, do really well with learning to speak English, but we think you could do with a bit of extra help with writing.

The grown-ups work hard and sometimes they try new things because they want the best for you all. We have asked them to make sure that they check that their new ideas are working well.

Your teachers are right to be proud of you. Make the most of your time at Overdale by continuing to have fun and working hard.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Crane Lead inspector

Annex B



19 September 2007

Dear Pupils

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The grown-ups work hard and sometimes they try new things because they want the best for you all. We have asked them to make sure that they check that their new ideas are working well.

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Yours sincerely

Barbara Crane
Lead inspector