

Orchard Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122722
Local Authority	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LA
Inspection number	314374
Inspection date	15 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Roger Fry

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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	325
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tim Brown
Headteacher	Mr Robert Cook
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2004
School address	Chapel Street Kirkby in Ashfield Nottinghamshire NG17 8JY
Telephone number	01623455939
Fax number	01623459868

Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector in one day.

The inspection focused on three main areas. Firstly, pupils' attendance and how the school seeks to improve it. Secondly, an investigation into the differences in attainment between boys and girls to see if boys are achieving well enough. Thirdly, whether pupils' progress in mathematics is good enough. Other aspects of the school's work were also inspected briefly. Sufficient evidence was found to indicate that the school's evaluations of its work are substantially accurate. Where appropriate these evaluations are included in this report.

Description of the school

Orchard Primary and Nursery School is larger than average. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds and all speak English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is below average. The proportion known to qualify for a free school meal is also below average. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is lower than that expected nationally.

The school has gained: the Active Mark Gold for Physical Education in 2005, accreditation for pupils' Emotional Health and Well-being in 2006, The Gold Award for Physical Education (PE) and Sport in 2007 and the Playground Partnerships Award in 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Orchard Primary and Nursery School provides an outstanding education for its pupils. The headteacher and staff lead the school most effectively and have built successfully on the strong foundations that already existed.

In relation to lower than normal attainment on entry to the school, pupils' achievement over time is outstanding. Consequently, over the past three years, overall standards in English, mathematics and science have been significantly higher than in schools nationally at the end of Years 2 and 6, and they continue to be so this year. This is because pupils of all abilities reach demanding targets. For example, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make exceptional progress and most reach the expected national standards in Year 6. Pupils' progress in mathematics is not significantly different from that in other core subjects, even though overall standards are marginally lower. Pupils make exceptional progress in English, mathematics and science, because the school is extremely well organised and teaching excellent. Indeed, pupils' standards of work and progress in science are a key strength of the school. There are high levels of expertise in the teaching of science and pupils find much of the curriculum particularly interesting.

The provision for design and technology and information and communication technology (ICT) has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Standards in these subjects securely meet national expectations and are at times higher. Standards are rising because subject co-ordinators have worked to good effect to raise the profile of both subjects, to improve resources and to sharpen teachers' skills. Standards in PE are also high. For example, all Year 6 pupils last year could swim 25m or more, because there is an extensive programme of swimming lessons from a young age.

Parents have noticed how well their children are performing. Of those who replied to the inspection questionnaire, virtually all agree that Orchard Primary has exceptional qualities. Typical of their comments is: 'Over this time (in school), I have been very pleased with my child's progress'.

Leadership and management are excellent. When the school decides to adopt a new policy, all work together to see it through successfully. Another key reason why the school is so successful is that subject co-ordinators are experts and they organise their responsibilities very effectively. Teachers have investigated how well boys and girls perform. Their analysis shows that there is only a small gap in boys' and girls' performances, which is closing. Governors also play their part by making checks on pupils' progress and by asking the school to justify what it is doing and why. This approach gives the school an exceptional capacity to improve further.

Pupils' standards and progress reflect the high quality of the teaching. Teachers present information in many interesting ways. In a mathematics lesson in Years 3 and 4, pupils had a series of questions and answers to match up to solve problems. They found this interesting and responded extremely well. Teachers consolidate ideas in pupils' minds very well indeed and model, for example, what a good sentence looks like or how to answer a problem in mathematics. In this way, pupils have a lead to follow and can then apply their knowledge with the certainty that they are doing the right things. Teachers have high expectations, such as that work should be well presented.

One pupil said: 'This is a friendly school'. Pupils bring a great sense of goodwill to school, a desire to be part of everything and an enjoyment of learning. Teachers foster these qualities

very effectively by involving pupils in many aspects of school life. The school council is active. It helps to set school rules and also to enforce them. This aspect is an exceptional feature, as pupils are showing a growing capacity to regulate aspects of their own school. Members of the council care greatly that their school is a happy place where everybody can get on really well. In this way, the school prepares pupils extremely well for their future lives.

Parents comment: 'Orchard is an extremely positive school, where the care of its pupils is at the heart'. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They behave extremely well and make the most of what the school offers them. The collection and distribution of harvest gifts for the community recently was highly successful and included produce from the school's garden. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of how to stay healthy and know that exercise is very important. The curriculum is good. The school has begun to teach some lessons in topics. Pupils enjoy this approach greatly and several mentioned how interested they are in lessons, such as those about the moon landing and the sinking of the Titanic. However, subject co-ordinators recognize that close checks need to be made as the topic approach develops to ensure that the National Curriculum is taught as well as previously and that pupils' knowledge and skills develop in a proper sequence.

The headteacher, administration staff and teachers have worked continuously to improve attendance. Recent figures show that attendance has risen above the national average. The bigger success is in improved punctuality. Hardly any pupils are late, because the school has made it clear to all families what the rules are.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Adults look after children extremely well and they feel secure, safe and settle quickly into new routines. Children's excellent behaviour reflects the strong personal, social and emotional programme. Children respond very well to the outdoor area, where they have opportunities to find out about things independently. Children learn the key skills that they need to be able to read, write and use numbers exceptionally well. The teaching consistently reinforces their knowledge of letter sounds in many interesting ways. Young children respond extremely well to the teaching, enjoy learning very much and make rapid progress. By the time they leave Reception, most have reached the standards expected of five-year-olds and many exceed them. Their progress is particularly strong in language activities, which are a major focus for Foundation Stage teaching.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers monitor the new curriculum closely for its effects on standards of pupils' work and that it fully meets the National Curriculum.

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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?	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	2
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	2
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?	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?	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	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

16 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Orchard Primary and Nursery School, Chapel Street, Kirkby in Ashfield, NG17 8JY

It was good to meet so many of you and to listen to your views. Special thanks go to the school council and to those of you I joined at lunchtime. This letter is to give you a flavour of what is in my full report.

Here are some of the excellent features of your school.

- You make a brilliant start to your schooling in Nursery and Reception.
- You make outstanding progress with your work in Years 1 to 6 and leave the school with above average standards.
- The headteacher and teachers organise the school extremely well for your benefit.
- You enjoy school very much because teachers and other adults care for you so well and help you to learn.
- You enjoy the great range of extra-curricular activities.
- You have an excellent knowledge of how to keep fit and healthy.
- You work hard and get on exceptionally well with one another.
- The school council is working really well and so are the playground peacemakers.

Your teachers have noticed that there is one area that needs attention, and I agree:

- that they keep a close watch on the new way that you are learning in topic lessons so that you experience the full National Curriculum and maintain your high standards of work.

I hope that you will all keep on working hard and improving what you do.

Yours faithfully

Roger Fry

Lead inspector