

Orchard Fields Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122994
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314447
Inspection dates	9–10 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Alison Grainger

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	402
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	63
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A Parsons
Headteacher	Mrs M Twydell
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Edmunds Road Banbury OX16 0QT
Telephone number	01295 263324
Fax number	01295 220261

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school draws most of its pupils from the housing estate in northwest Banbury on which it is situated. Most pupils are White British; about a fifth are from a variety of other ethnic backgrounds. A few are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also above average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The number of pupils joining or leaving other than at the normal times is higher than in most schools. The school has increased in size recently and it moved to new premises 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: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It provides a calm and safe environment that is appreciated by pupils and their parents. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive, supportive of learning, and ensure that pupils have an adult to whom they can turn should the need arise. As one parent commented, 'The teachers are helpful and my daughter gets along very well with all of them.' Children entering the Nursery, or joining at a later stage, are helped to settle in well and those in Year 6 are appropriately supported for the transition to secondary school.

Satisfactory provision means that, from low starting points in the Nursery, pupils make satisfactory progress to reach below average standards by the end of Year 6. The school recognises that progress has to accelerate if standards are to be raised. It is taking effective action towards this, such as the deployment of extra staff to target ability groups in mathematics in Year 6. It also knows that boys' standards in particular need to be higher. Girls often outperform boys on entry to the Nursery. At the end of Year 6 the gap between boys' and girls' standards has not closed and is wider than found nationally in reading, writing and in all areas of mathematics.

There are some strengths in the satisfactory quality of teaching. In particular, teachers manage pupils and activities well and lessons have a clear focus. However, progress is slowed because the work planned is not always sufficiently matched to all pupils' needs. This means that expectations of the more able pupils are not consistently high enough. Nevertheless, the curriculum meets requirements and includes appropriate support for those who find learning difficult. It is enriched by a reasonable range of visits, visitors and clubs.

Satisfactory pastoral support, together with appropriate attention through the curriculum to safe practices and healthy lifestyles, results in pupils' personal development and well-being being satisfactory. Almost all pupils behave sensibly in lessons and around the school and are friendly, courteous and polite. While pupils enjoy the social aspects of school and have mostly positive attitudes in lessons, the attendance rate is stubbornly low and has not improved since the last inspection. The school's efforts to work with parents to improve attendance, for example by reminding parents of the importance of good attendance, have not been effective. This is because the school is too willing to authorise absence rather than challenge parents about whether it is necessary. Poor attendance is a factor preventing standards from rising.

Satisfactory leadership and management have resulted in reasonable improvement since the last inspection. The recent move to a new building on a new site has been managed effectively. Self-evaluation identifies accurately the most significant areas for improvement. However, the analysis of how provision, particularly teaching, contributes to pupils' progress is not incisive enough. This means that the detail of what needs to be better in the teaching in each class, rather than in the school as a whole, is not identified sharply enough. Nevertheless, satisfactory improvement since the last inspection shows that the school has adequate capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The attractive, spacious and well-organised new accommodation provides a welcoming environment for children in the Nursery and Reception classes. Since the last inspection, home visits have been introduced to ease children's start in the Nursery and to increase parental involvement in children's learning. The school reports that these visits have been successful in

encouraging more parents to support their children in developing early reading skills. Overall, children's welfare, learning and development are supported satisfactorily during their time in Nursery and Reception.

Children's achievement is satisfactory although standards on transfer to Year 1 are below expectations in all areas, including personal and social skills. The school recognises that if standards are to rise in the school as a whole, rates of progress need to be better in Nursery and Reception. Some important changes have been made to support improvement, including the deployment of an additional teacher in Reception, and a sharper focus on the development of communication, language, literacy and calculation skills. While real impact of these developments is yet to be seen, the new accommodation and resources are already supporting a good balance of indoor and outdoor activities.

There are good opportunities for children to choose activities for themselves. The activities led by adults, and the guidance they give to children during play, are not well enough matched to the next steps individual children need to take in their learning. As in the later years in the school, this means that children who learn quickly or easily are not always challenged sufficiently. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is satisfactorily led and managed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards, particularly those of boys in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Ensure that teaching is always closely matched to all pupils' needs and that expectations of the more able pupils are consistently high enough.
- Work closely with parents to improve attendance.
- Carefully analyse the influence of provision, particularly teaching, on pupils' progress and ensure that effective action is taken for improvement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory although standards across the school are below average. When children begin in the Nursery their knowledge and skills are lower than expected for their age and standards remain below average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Even so, there has been some improvement in standards since the last inspection, particularly in writing by the end of Year 2 and in science by the end of Year 6.

Although boys make acceptable progress, the gap between boys' and girls' attainment is wider than found nationally. In Year 6 last year, for example, all the girls reached at least the level expected for their age in reading and writing and most did so in mathematics. In contrast, a below average percentage of boys reached this level. The lower results of boys can to some extent be explained by there being a lot more boys than girls with learning difficulties. Last year the high turnover of pupils also had an impact on the boys' results as a result of additional boys with learning difficulties entering the school. The school recognises, however, that its own tracking data show girls moving on more quickly than boys in reading, writing and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. This is reflected in the school's calm and orderly atmosphere and in the positive relationships. Starting in the Nursery and Reception, pupils show care for one another and those from different backgrounds mix happily. Staff report improvements in behaviour since the school relocated to its new premises. Whilst behaviour is satisfactory, there are also examples of good behaviour in lessons, around the school and in large gatherings such as assemblies. Pupils willingly respond to opportunities for responsibility. They make a reasonable contribution to the community through the school council. However, expectations of pupils' capability to show more initiative and independence in lessons, and of taking on more responsibility about the school, are too low and this slows their progress.

Pupils have an appropriate understanding of how to keep fit and healthy through diet and physical exercise and most put this into practice. They enjoy playing outdoors and engaging in activities such as football. They feel safe at school. Pupils' satisfactory academic progress and personal skills prepare them adequately for their future lives. However, poor attendance reduces the extent to which some pupils are prepared for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Whilst teaching is satisfactory, some strong features are evident across the school. Lessons are well organised and conducted in a calm and supportive atmosphere. Pupils are always told the purpose of the lesson and activities are explained clearly. As a result, pupils know what they are aiming to achieve and why tasks have been set. Teaching assistants are usually appropriately deployed to support small groups. There are some examples of good support for pupils with learning difficulties. In a Year 4 English lesson, for example, the teaching assistant worked on a focused task with a small group of pupils with learning difficulties while the class teacher helped pupils to evaluate how well they were developing skills in taking notes.

However, teaching is not always closely enough matched to all pupils' needs. Too often pupils of different ability are expected to know, understand and be able to do the same things at the end of a lesson or series of lessons. In particular, this means that the more able pupils are not always challenged fully and this slows their progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Some relevant links are starting to be made between different subjects. For example, pupils use computer and literacy skills to help their learning in a topic on 'Travellers' in Year 4. A strong focus on practical and investigative work in science helps boys as well as girls to succeed and this results in standards in this subject being higher than in English and mathematics. Both boys and girls respond positively to the hands-on opportunities provided in information and communication technology, a subject in which learning opportunities have improved since the last inspection. However, in other subjects, there is not enough practical and active learning, for example to motivate and engage boys.

An appropriate range of support and booster groups help pupils who need an extra push or who find learning difficult in English, mathematics and science. However, there is not enough focus on challenging the more able pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties are nurtured and supported well. The school is successful in helping pupils who have had difficulties in other schools to settle and stay in this school. Appropriate attention is given to ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties and those new to learning English are given adequate support. However, there is not enough attention, through the pastoral support provided or in lessons, to developing all pupils' independence, initiative and responsibility. Secure attention is given to health and safety and child protection. The site manager and his team ensure that the new building and outdoor environment are kept scrupulously clean and safe.

Academic guidance, through marking and targets, is inconsistent but satisfactory overall. Some good practice is emerging on which the school can build. In one Year 3 class, for example, pupils have been well involved in setting literacy and personal targets. In Year 5, pupils are responding positively to opportunities to give feedback to each other on their writing. The school has not yet found an effective means of working with parents to ensure good attendance. Too many absences are authorised and not questioned.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management at all levels have ensured a smooth move to a new building and have brought improvements in behaviour. As a result, the school is a settled, calm and orderly community. Satisfactory promotion of community cohesion is evident, for example, in the strong links with the adjacent children's centre, in the work with outside agencies, and in the promotion of positive relationships among pupils of all backgrounds.

There is a commitment to raising standards. Some positive developments are taking place in the increasing responsibility of co-ordinators for checking pupils' progress and implementing new initiatives. The success of this is evident, for example, in improved results in science for both boys and girls and the recent gradual improvement in writing standards by the end of Year 2. Overall, however, leadership is maintaining satisfactory provision rather than developing it to a good level. This is because there is not sharp enough use of all sources of evidence to really analyse how, precisely, provision, particularly teaching, might be improved in specific year groups and classes. The governing body rightly recognises that its role in challenging senior leaders needs to develop. Currently, governors are supporting but not sufficiently helping to drive the school forward.

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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?	3
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

22 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Orchard Fields Community School, Banbury, OX16 0QT

Thank you for helping us and making us feel welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed visiting your lessons, looking at your books, and talking with you. We think that you are very lucky to have such a lovely new building and site. You must really appreciate it and notice the change! We saw that almost all of you behave sensibly all of the time. This helps to make your new school building a calm and safe place to be.

We found that your school is giving you a satisfactory education. You are making satisfactory progress with your work. You know how to keep fit, healthy and safe. You help your school by taking on responsibilities such as those of playground friends and through your school council. The adults ensure that you are kept safe at school and we saw that you get on well with them as well as with each other.

We have asked the adults to do these things in particular:

- increase your progress so that you reach higher standards, especially boys in English and mathematics
- make sure that the teaching is always at the right level for each of you and that those of you who learn quickly have hard enough work
- work closely with your parents to improve your attendance
- look very carefully at how well they are helping you to learn in each class and to make any changes necessary to help you to learn better.

You can help by always behaving well and by doing your best and making sure that you come to school everyday. Thank you once again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Alison Grainger

Lead Inspector