

Queensway School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122996
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314448
Inspection dates	15–16 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Malcolm Johnstone

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paddy Quinn
Headteacher	Miss Sarah Jakeman
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2004
School address	Queensway Banbury OX16 9NF
Telephone number	01295 251631
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is about the same size as most other primary schools. Most pupils are from White British families. There are small numbers of pupils from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds and very few of these are at the early stages of English language acquisition. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and numbers are increasing. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The headteacher has been in post since September 2007.

The school has a Northern Language and Communication Resource Base (NLCRB). This base serves pupils from the North of the county who have statements of special educational needs relating to language and communication difficulties. There are currently seven pupils in the base. They are included on the school roll and in National Curriculum test results. The base was not inspected.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school is providing a satisfactory education. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory but shows more marked improvement over the past year. There have been periods of staffing instability in the recent past and this has had a negative impact on standards and achievement. Leadership and management are satisfactory. In the short time since joining the school, the headteacher has provided clear and decisive leadership. She is supported well by the deputy and new subject leaders. They have high aspirations for the pupils and, together with intensive support from the local authority, have achieved much in a short time. More needs to be done to embed new initiatives securely across the school and to focus monitoring rigorously upon their impact on standards and achievement. Self-evaluation is good. It is based securely upon a wide range of performance data that has helped to identify areas of underachievement and target support where it is most needed. As a result, teaching and standards are improving and pupils' progress is accelerating. There is a more stable senior leadership team and teaching staff. These tangible outcomes indicate good capacity for further improvement.

Standards and achievement are satisfactory for pupils of all backgrounds and abilities. In the 2007 National Curriculum tests, standards were well below the national average in English, mathematics and science and too few pupils reached the higher level. Good teaching in Year 6 is improving standards and pupils' achievements. These pupils have made good progress in making up lost ground since the beginning of the year. Nonetheless, standards at the end of Year 6 remain below the expected standard in English, mathematics and science. Standards and achievement in other year groups are at least satisfactory and reflect year on year improvements as the impact of better teaching, more challenging targets and intervention strategies become more apparent. The school is now building more successfully on the excellent start children make in the Foundation Stage.

The curriculum, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most classes have had a new teacher since the beginning of this academic year. The mostly good teaching seen during the inspection confirms the school's own evaluation. However, there is still some satisfactory teaching and in these lessons, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Lesson activities generally meet the needs of most pupils but on some occasions there is not enough challenge in the work for the more able pupils. There is a good range of enrichment activities in the curriculum. The staff have made a good start in extending opportunities to link subjects and to provide more investigative work in mathematics and science. They recognise that there is still more to do to ensure that these are consistent features in the curriculum.

This is a happy, friendly and welcoming school appreciated by almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire. There was a very high degree of satisfaction in all aspects of the school's work. 'I have noticed a marked improvement in the school over the past year,' was a comment echoed by a number of parents. Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils are aware of their responsibilities, enjoy learning and their behaviour and attitudes to learning are good at all times. Pastoral care and guidance is good and the school is making effective efforts to strengthen pupils' satisfactory academic guidance. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. They make a good contribution to the school and local community.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision is outstanding, enabling children to make a flying start to their education. As one parent commented, 'the children are happy and relaxed and learning seems fun to them.' Children enjoy the stimulating environment, behave well and make good progress in all areas of their learning. They enter the Reception Class with a wide range of pre-school experiences. Most enter with skills and abilities that are well below those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy, and in their mathematical development. Teaching is consistently good and on occasions, it is outstanding. Even so, because of the very low starting point, a minority of the children do not attain all the expectations for pupils entering Year 1. Planning is excellent and based securely on a strong and relevant curriculum. This provides a good balance of adult led and structured play activities, both indoors and outdoors. The good teaching of early letter sounds and excellent use of storybooks provides a secure base for pupils' good progress in reading. Assessment is excellent and helps the teacher to match activities successfully to the varied needs of the children. The school has plans for home visits to extend links with parents still further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that even more of it is good or better and ensure that there is greater consistency in challenging the more able pupils.
- Extend links between subjects to add further excitement to learning and provide more investigative work in mathematics and science.
- Embed the well chosen initiatives in the current school improvement plan securely across the school and focus monitoring rigorously upon their impact on standards and achievement.

A small proportion of 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

From a well below average starting point, achievement is satisfactory overall. The school is addressing successfully the pockets of underachievement and low standards from the past three years. Current standards are below average at the end of Year 2 and 6 but are improving. Pupils are beginning to make more consistent progress as the impact of the mostly good teaching begins to take effect. Pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation and their ability to apply their basic skills in mathematics and science to investigative work are weaker aspects of their work. In all subjects, not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels in national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6. There has been good improvement in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) since the previous inspection and standards meet national expectations. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress which accelerates when they receive small group support in literacy and numeracy. The small numbers of minority ethnic pupils achieve as well as other pupils and are well represented in the upper ability groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils respond well to the school's good opportunities for personal development. Assemblies and lessons that deal with subjects such as tolerance, working together, friendship and conflict have a good impact on pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils are confident that adults will deal effectively with any isolated incidents of bullying. Through work in religious education, geography and history, pupils gain a good knowledge and appreciation of worldwide communities. These good aspects of their personal development, together with the basic skills they attain, prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their learning. School councillors represent their peers effectively on the school council and pupils are proud to have supported a variety of charities. Pupils new to the school say how quickly they make friends and are welcomed. Attendance is in line with national averages and has been for a number of years.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils' satisfactory standards and achievement are the result of satisfactory teaching over time. There are clear signs of improvement and during the inspection, a significant amount of good and occasionally outstanding teaching was observed. This is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. Relationships are good and effective use is made of ICT to support learning. Classroom assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those who have learning difficulties. Teachers share learning intentions with the pupils and model group activities successfully. As a result, pupils understand each stage of their learning. Assessment and tracking systems and the use of the information that they provide are developing well. There are, however, some inconsistencies in the use of day-to-day assessment, usually when work for the more able is not challenging enough. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to self-evaluate their work using clear success criteria that help them to measure how well they are doing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is suitably broad and there is an appropriate focus on literacy and numeracy. The staff ensure that it meets the needs of most pupils well, particularly those who have learning difficulties. There is scope to build on recent initiatives to develop a more exciting and investigative curriculum, particularly in mathematics and science. There is good continuity from the Foundation Stage to Year 1 so that the level of work provided meets the needs of the children who have not yet reached all the expectations for their age. The curriculum is successful in promoting pupils' personal, social and emotional development. There is a wide range of good enrichment activities. For example, pupils have opportunities to learn French and to participate in sport, the arts and music. Residential visits, specialist visitors and visits into the community add a further effective dimension to the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

There is a clear commitment to the pastoral care, guidance and support of all pupils. The vast majority of parents support this view and pupils say that there is always someone to listen and help if they have a problem. There are good arrangements for regular risk assessments and appropriate child protection procedures. Pupils with learning difficulties and the very few children in the Foundation Stage at the early stages of learning English receive good support. Academic guidance is satisfactory. There are new initiatives to refine academic targets for pupils and to ensure marking has more developmental comments. There is evidence that these are becoming an integral part of the teaching and early signs that they are beginning to improve pupils' progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and senior leadership team are highly committed to improving pupils' standards and achievement. There is a good school improvement plan containing ideas gathered from the views of parents, staff, governors and pupils. It has an appropriate emphasis upon how actions will raise standards. This is a vital element in the clear, well thought out strategic direction of the school. The key subject leaders have quickly identified the right priorities for development using a good range of performance data and monitoring observations of teaching and learning. This is beginning to have a demonstrable impact on learning. Links with outside agencies are good and help support vulnerable pupils effectively. Governance is satisfactory and improving. Governors say that they are now receiving more 'user friendly' information about pupils' standards and achievement. This is helping them develop their role in holding the school accountable for the education it provides.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 disabilities make progress	3

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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the 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

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?	3
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	3
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

29 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Queensway School, Banbury, OX16 9NF

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed the time we spent with you in lessons and the opportunities we had to talk with you. We know from seeing you around the school and in lessons and from what you told us that you enjoy coming to school. This is because you try hard in your lessons and take part in the interesting visits and clubs. We were very impressed with how well you behave in lessons. It was great to see how well you all get on together even when it was raining and you had to stay indoors at playtimes. You know about healthy eating and how to keep fit and healthy and what to do to keep yourselves safe. You told us that there is always an adult who will help if you ever worried about anything.

Your school is satisfactory and it is getting better. This is because the headteacher, governors, teachers and their helpers are working very hard to bring about improvements. It was good to see that you are now making much better progress because the staff are finding new and interesting ways to help you learn. The children in the Foundation Stage are doing really well and their teacher and classroom assistants are giving them an excellent start to school life. In order to help all of you to do as well as you possibly can we have asked the school to:

- help you do even better in English, mathematics and science
- make sure that all the work in lessons matches your needs, especially for the more able pupils; we have also asked them to plan more exciting investigations for you to explore in mathematics and science
- there are lots of new and exciting things happening this year and we have asked the headteacher to make sure that these continue and to check how well they are helping you to improve.

We know that with your help the headteacher and all who work at the school will make your school even better.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Johnstone

Lead Inspector