

Queen's Dyke CP School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123020
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314458
Inspection dates	30–31 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Rob Crompton

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	333
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Stuart McGinnes
Headteacher	Ms Carol Camping
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Burwell Drive Witney OX28 5JW
Telephone number	01993 704770
Fax number	01993 706423

Age group	4-11
Inspection dates	30–31 January 2008
Inspection number	314458

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average for a primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds with about 5% from different minority ethnic groups. A small number of pupils are at an early stage of acquiring English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good quality of education. The quality of teaching is good and pupils are making good progress in lessons. In recent years, pupils in Years 3 to 6 were not achieving as well as they should. The school has addressed this tenaciously with the result that pupils are now achieving well and are well on the way to meeting the challenging targets set for the next two years. The standards reached by Year 2 and Year 6 pupils have risen gradually over the last few years but are a little below average overall. Year 2 pupils reach the expected standards in reading and mathematics, but standards are below average in writing. By Year 6, standards in English are above average, whereas in mathematics they are below average. Too few pupils reach the higher levels in science because they do not do enough investigative work. Overall standards are a little below average.

The school's caring ethos makes it a welcoming place to be. As one parent commented, 'Significant efforts have been made to ensure that the school community is welcoming and inclusive'. Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well, feel safe in school and are secure in the knowledge that they are valued. Their progress is tracked carefully to spot where further support or additional challenge is needed. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and ensure they know the next steps in their learning. Teaching assistants contribute significantly to pupils' progress and well-being. Their skills are sometimes under-used, however, when teachers spend too much time introducing lessons to the whole class.

The curriculum supports pupils' academic and personal development well. They respond positively to the many opportunities to learn through hands-on experience, outings and visitors. Pupils have good opportunities to practise and consolidate their literacy, numeracy and computer skills across subjects. The school is aware that work in science does not provide sufficient opportunities for more able pupils to tackle investigative work.

Leadership and management are good. Central to the school's success in improving the quality of education is the drive of the headteacher. She has the full support of the leadership team and governors in a determined effort to raise standards. The school has demonstrated a good capacity to improve by enhancing provision and raising standards. The commitment of staff and governors, together with the strong partnership with parents, mean it is well placed to move further forward.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Staff in the Reception unit strike an effective balance between activities led by adults and those chosen by children. Adults monitor children's day-to-day progress carefully to help ensure that tasks have an increasing level of challenge. The qualified and experienced nursery nurse and teaching assistants play a major role in this. For example, they make careful notes of children's social and language development, writing verbatim accounts from their observations. Such careful assessment helps staff to build up a picture of children's emerging skills and to plan subsequent work. Effective teaching means that children make good progress, particularly in developing their social, language and number skills. The unit is well equipped. The outdoor space provides good opportunities for children's social and physical development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the standards in writing achieved by the end of Year 2.
- Raise the standards in mathematics achieved by the end of Year 6 so that they more closely match those in English.
- Increase the level of challenge for more able pupils in science by providing more investigative work.
- Ensure that lessons are structured to fully utilise the expertise of teaching assistants.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are broadly average by Year 6. As they start school, children's understanding and skills are below those typical of the age group. Although most make good progress, by the end of Reception, standards are generally below average. Pupils make good progress through Years 1 and 2. Standards reached by the end of Year 2 have risen steadily in recent years. They are average in reading and mathematics but remain below average in writing. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is also improving due to improvements in assessment, teaching and the curriculum. Good support for pupils with learning difficulties means they achieve well. For example, although over a third of pupils in the 2007 cohort had learning difficulties, standards in English were above average, reflecting good progress through Years 3 to 6 across the ability range. In contrast, pupils did not make the expected progress in mathematics or science. Achievement in these two subjects is accelerating but some more able pupils are not building well enough on their prior attainment, particularly in science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and levels of attendance are good. The school's emphasis on the development of social skills and good behaviour means that they feel safe in school and behave well. They are keen to contribute, both in lessons and through the school council. For example, the council's contribution to the behaviour policy is seen by its members to have reduced instances of poor behaviour. Pupils know the value of a healthy diet and exercise. Given pupils' independence and good communication and computer skills and their weaker numeracy skills, their preparation for future learning and economic well-being is satisfactory. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners is good. Pupils develop a strong interest in art, music and drama. They learn about a variety of faiths and traditions, but have limited opportunities to gain an informed awareness of cultural diversity in British society. This area of development is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

A successful drive to raise the quality of teaching means most pupils are now making good progress. Teachers use the school's detailed tracking records to identify how pupils are building on their previous learning and adapt lessons accordingly. Some teaching is outstanding and inspires pupils. Pupils are increasingly aware of what they need to do to improve because teachers provide good feedback in their marking. Comments such as, 'You used connectives

well. Remember to use capital letters', motivate pupils and raise their self-esteem as well as providing precise guidelines for improvement. Pupils are acquiring useful learning strategies by reflecting on their own progress and commenting on their classmates' work. However, in some lessons, too much time spent on introductions means that pupils' attention wanders as they find the ideas too easy or too difficult. Teaching assistants do not always play an active part during this time, which means their talents and expertise are under-used.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum offers many practical and creative opportunities for independent learning. However, not enough investigative work is undertaken in science to challenge the more able pupils. The local environment is used very well to provide opportunities to apply pupils' skills in a real context. Pupils have good opportunities to practise and consolidate their communication skills through drama and music. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively in a range of subjects. Opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills across the curriculum are increasing, following a comprehensive review of provision in the subject. The curriculum effectively promotes pupils' personal and social development. Pupils appreciate the large number of extra-curricular activities on offer and many clubs have waiting lists. Visits and visitors bring excitement and enthusiasm to learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, support and guidance is good. Support for the happiness and well being of learners is at the heart of school life. As a result, the provision for pastoral care and the attention given to each individual's emotional and social needs are carefully planned and carried through. One parent's comment, 'We are very grateful for the encouragement, patience and care shown...', reflected the views of the vast majority. Pupils' work is carefully checked to see the progress they are making. They are set clear targets and are able to ask for help if needed. Good provision for pupils with learning difficulties means they progress well towards their individual targets. The support and guidance for those identified as especially gifted and talented is not given the same attention to detail which means the school cannot be sure that they meet their potential.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership team is committed to raising standards and there is a clear vision for improvement. Staff work together as a committed team. They promote the aims and vision of the school to ensure pupils have high self-esteem and the desire to succeed. Self-evaluation procedures accurately identify the school's strengths and priorities. A successful drive to improve pupils' learning by raising expectations and enhancing the curriculum is paying dividends. The school is inclusive and encourages community partnership. Parents' positive comments reflect a good level of trust and confidence in the school's leadership. Governors are committed, supportive and provide appropriate challenge. Many are new to their roles and are receiving training to enable them to take further responsibility and hold the school to account. Subject leaders in English, mathematics and science monitor teaching and learning thoroughly and provide useful practical advice for colleagues. The school's record of accomplishment, together with the

common sense of purpose shared by all staff, means there is good capacity for further improvement.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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	3
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	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?	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	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

14 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Queen's Dyke CP School, Witney, OX28 5JW

Thank you for making us welcome during our visit. We were pleased with your good manners, and it was good to hear the way you speak to each other and to the adults you work with. We agree with you that Queen's Dyke is a good school. The atmosphere in school is friendly and we saw that you behave well in and around school. You enjoy learning in lessons and out of doors. You are justly proud of the wooded area that you use for finding out about plants and animals.

Your books show that you have pride in your work. The way you set it out and the care you take with drawings show that you are successful learners. This is also the case when you work on practical activities. You certainly enjoy drama and it was very interesting to see the way a Year 5 class responded to acting in role. The pupils cleverly showed different responses through words and gesture.

It was good to see the way in which you want to help your teachers, for example setting up rooms for activities like art and the hall for assemblies. You are well cared for by the adults in the school and this is shown by the improvements you have made in your work. While we have seen good work, we have suggested that younger pupils need to improve their written work while older pupils could do better in mathematics. Some pupils could reach higher standards in science. You can help by using the detailed guidance teachers give you and by working hard to reach your targets. We saw how much help you are given by the teaching assistants and they are doing a great job. We found that some pupils became a little restless during lesson introductions, so we have suggested that the teaching assistants could be more involved at these times.

Everyone is keen for you to keep on working hard and improving. The headteacher and other senior staff are doing a good job in helping the school improve. You can contribute too, by continuing to try your best.

We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Crompton

Lead Inspector