

# North Kidlington Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123025
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314459
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sean O'Toole

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	248
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Anthony Leake
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Ann Battersby
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	Benmead Road Kidlington OX5 2DA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01865 372607
<b>Fax number</b>	01865 842279

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school admits pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds. Although most pupils have White British heritage an above average proportion have minority ethnic backgrounds. A very small proportion are at an early stage of speaking English. An average percentage have widely varying special needs although most of these pupils have been identified with moderate learning difficulties or behavioural and social needs. The school has experienced significant staff changes in recent years including the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Following a period of decline when pupils made insufficient progress the new headteacher has brought rapid change, resulting in improved and now satisfactory achievement. Standards are now average. Pupils speak very positively about the school. They enjoy coming, behave well and relish opportunities to take responsibility such as organising the 'Fun Club' for younger pupils. Their mature attitudes, friendly relationships and keen interest in extra activities contribute much to making the school a happy and purposeful place. As one new entrant said, 'This is a really friendly class, everyone has made me welcome.'

The vast majority of parents are delighted with recent changes. One commented that in the past the office blinds were always closed. She went on to say, 'The open blinds have sent a message that the school is a welcoming place, where staff are approachable and will listen to us.' This renewed engagement of parents has brought benefits to the learners. Parents receive good information about how to help their children, especially in reading. A few raised concerns about mixed-aged classes and the impact on more able learners. Although staff plan for the different ages and abilities in the classes, this work is not challenging enough. There is an over-reliance on worksheets in some subjects that hamper pupils' progress in applying basic skills.

Leaders and managers have a clear picture of the school's work and have well-focused plans to tackle any shortcomings. Their success has been evident in the way that pupils' progress in reading and writing has improved in recent months. Other successes that show the school's good capacity for improvement have included better identification and support for those with behavioural or moderate learning difficulties and as a result, these pupils make good progress. There has been some improvement in the boys' performance but teachers do not always use strategies, such as practical activities, to motivate and inspire them. The staff have made a start in providing more creative activities and on making links between subjects, but more remains to be done to enhance pupils' learning.

Staff know the pupils well and encourage them to keep fit and healthy. Pupils enjoy physical exercise and have taken a lively interest in the recent competition to design a healthy lunch box. Their interest in the wider world is reflected in their enthusiasm for charitable fund-raising, participation in local sports competitions and opportunities to perform at musical and dramatic events. These activities help to prepare pupils for the future and stimulate cooperation and consideration for others. Staff provide good care and support. The headteacher has given them the confidence to take risks and this has helped to improve teaching and learning, and as one teacher said, 'to believe that all can achieve.'

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children start school with a range of skills, knowledge and understanding which are at the levels expected for their age. They improve their personal, social and emotional development quickly, form firm friendships and become confident in working together. Overall children achieve satisfactorily. They make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world through an interesting range of local visits and experiences that are then acted out in role-play. There is a regular programme of assessment. However, the information is not always used to pinpoint the next steps in learning for individuals and this means that the progress of

the more able is not as brisk as it should be. When they start in Year 1 most are working at the levels expected for their age. Strengths in the teaching include good relationships and a strong focus on care and children's well-being; these qualities inspire confidence in parents. As one wrote, 'It's good to have daily contact with the staff who deal with issues directly and sensibly.'

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Provide a wider range of activities to stimulate boys' interest and improve their performance.
- Make sure that teachers set sufficiently challenging work, especially for the more able, and rely less on undemanding worksheets.
- Provide more creative opportunities and develop links between subjects so that pupils can apply their basic skills more effectively.

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**

Standards dipped following the previous inspection but have begun to improve and are now average in English and mathematics by the time the pupils leave the school. This improvement has been achieved through determined leadership by the headteacher who has left no stone unturned in setting challenging targets for staff and pupils. Consequently, achievement is now satisfactory. Although boys are now working at appropriate levels for their age they are not as successful as the girls. More able pupils make satisfactory progress but sometimes their work, especially in mathematics, is not demanding enough. Conversely, the different groups of pupils with moderate learning difficulties and those with behavioural and social needs make good progress because the work is pitched at just the right level to move them on. Those at an early stage of learning English receive good support from staff and much encouragement from their classmates. As a result, they quickly learn to communicate and enjoy joining in all activities.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils behave well and show much respect for others. They say that bullying is rare and feel comfortable approaching the staff with any worries. They are tolerant and caring and show much concern for those who need extra support. One girl said, 'While we are here we learn to help others and enjoy finding out about different religions and cultures.' Pupils have good awareness of moral and social issues and are keen to support charities, learn about other cultures and celebrate their own and others' achievements. They enjoy working together effectively and thrive on opportunities to take responsibility, such as acting as buddies in the playground, designing brochures for new entrants and making suggestions to the school council. Pupils know the importance of keeping fit and healthy and respond enthusiastically in physical activities. Pupils feel secure in school and this is raising their levels of confidence and enjoyment of learning. So, it is hardly surprising, as one parent observed that, 'The children are always happy and my son rushes in the morning to get there first.'

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Relationships between staff and pupils are good. As one parent observed, 'There is a level of enthusiasm amongst staff and pupils working together to achieve joint goals.' Lessons are well planned and prepared and, in some, there is a good balance of activities. However, many pupils are disappointed that there are insufficient practical activities because, as one said, 'We enjoy doing things because it helps us to learn.' Sometimes lessons lack sufficient challenge and the pace drifts so that the momentum of learning slows. This is especially the case where staff rely too much on worksheets that limit opportunities for pupils to explore ideas. There is a good focus on meeting the needs of vulnerable groups with well-targeted work such as in developing reading skills. Adults are good at helping those who lack concentration and the use of praise and rewards to promote good behaviour. Marking has improved much recently and often includes guidance for pupils on how to improve.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

Pupils are enthusiastic about extra-curricular activities and participate eagerly in sport, music, dance, drama and cookery. They enjoy opportunities to discuss sensitive issues in their lessons in personal, social and health education that contribute much to their positive attitudes. Pupils also say how much they enjoy trips and special occasions such as visits by theatre groups. The school has focused well on raising standards in English and is now starting to develop links between subjects. Currently, there are insufficient opportunities for creative and practical work and this adversely affects the interest levels among pupils, especially boys.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

'The staff are very approachable and deal with any issues swiftly, confidentially and professionally,' said one parent. Indeed the pupils' well-being lies at the heart of the school's work. Systems to ensure pupils' safety are managed robustly. Significant improvements to the outdoor equipment and refurbishment of classrooms are illustrations of a renewed focus on the children's well-being. Support for those with profound physical impairment is excellent. Assessment has now been firmly rooted in classroom practice. Staff increasingly use this information to guide pupils on ways to improve their work.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 2

The headteacher has made an impressive start in building an effective team and in setting ambitious targets. The result has been rapid improvement in standards and achievement and good advances in the quality of teaching and assessment. The headteacher has the confidence of staff, parents and governors and led the school out of a period of underachievement. There is a strong sense of purpose and a determined drive to raise standards further as reflected in the well-crafted strategic plans. Challenging goals are set for staff and pupils. Staff are keen to see further improvements in setting work that is more demanding for brighter pupils. The

work of subject leaders needs further development especially in promoting more creative links between subjects. Governors provide good support although their role in evaluating the school's work is at an early stage.

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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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	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?	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?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

22 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of North Kidlington Primary School, Kidlington, OX5 2DA

Please see attached.

**Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.**



25 February 2008

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of North Kidlington Primary School/ Kidlington/OX5 2DA**

Thank you for telling us about your school and making us feel welcome. We really enjoyed listening to you talk about your work and it was lovely to see how much you have improved. Your school is now satisfactory but there are several good features. We really enjoyed seeing how well you take responsibility. It was good to listen to the school council's ideas about how to improve the school. We were very impressed with how sensibly the older pupils ran the 'Fun Club'. I wish I could have joined in your game of throwing javelins.

These are some of the good things about your school:

- ☺ you are getting better in reading and writing
- ☺ you enjoy helping each other
- ☺ you are kind and thoughtful and behave well
- ☺ your headteacher has really helped the adults working with you to improve the school
- ☺ the staff help you to feel safe, secure and happy.

We have asked the teachers to help the school to get even better. Sometimes the work set for you is too easy and not always as interesting as it should be, especially for boys. We have asked the teachers to give you more challenge and to find ways to help you to learn by doing things. You can help by always trying hard and by doing your best. Several of you told us that some subjects aren't very interesting so we have suggested that the staff find ways to change this.

We hope that you will always enjoy coming to school and that your work continues to get better.

Best wishes

Sean O'Toole  
Lead Inspector