

# Othery Village School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123691
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	314671
<b>Inspection date</b>	3 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Martin Kerly

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	46
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jim Hughes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pam Hesketh
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 February 2003
<b>School address</b>	Othery Bridgwater TA7 0PX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01823 698464
<b>Fax number</b>	01823 698464

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects: the pupils' achievement, provision in the Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching and how effectively the school checks its own performance. Evidence was gathered from observations around the school, discussions, analyses of assessment data and a scrutiny of the school's working documents. Other aspects of the school were not inspected in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The number of pupils attending this very small school has declined steadily in line with local demographic changes. It reduced from three to two classes at the start of this term although pupils continue to be taught in three distinct groups for much of the morning. Nevertheless, almost all lessons involve pupils from more than one, and sometimes as many as four, year groups. Pupils come from a rural and relatively isolated area. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is almost twice the national average, including some who have transferred to this school. The attainment on entry to the school is exceptionally wide but overall is below that usually found. The accommodation has recently been substantially remodelled and up-dated. The school has just received the nationally accredited Healthy School award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school. In the past two years it has undergone a substantial transition in accommodation and, more significantly, in its raised expectations of pupils and staff. One parent summed this up by saying, 'It has come from being a cosy village school to something much more ambitious for the children, whilst keeping its family atmosphere.'

Pupils of all abilities achieve well. Many begin with low levels of attainment, especially in speaking and listening. In the Foundation Stage, children make at least satisfactory progress and some achieve well, although they have relatively few opportunities to learn through independent play in a class shared with older pupils. The satisfactory rate of progress is maintained in Years 1 and 2 and then accelerates in Years 3 to 6, where it becomes particularly strong. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are identified early. These pupils benefit from carefully focused support programmes with lots of one-to-one attention from teachers and their assistants. Many of them catch up by the end of Year 6 and attain standards close to national expectations. Other pupils, including those who are more able, are usually suitably challenged and some exceed national expectations by the time they leave the school. Achievement is good rather than outstanding because, although teaching is good, activities are not always sufficiently matched to the particularly wide range of abilities in the mixed-year classes. Standards by the end of Year 6 fluctuate from year to year, reflecting the different characteristics within each very small year group. Despite a fall in 2007 to below average in English, the longer term trend in standards is upwards. Overall, standards are broadly average and more frequently above than below average, particularly in science. Pupils currently in Year 6, who were well below the national average when in Year 2, are on track to meet their ambitious Year 6 targets, although standards in English are again expected to be weaker than mathematics and science.

All pupils are exceptionally well known to the staff and this contributes to their good personal development and well-being and to the effective care, guidance and support they all receive. Pupils enjoy school, especially the additional activities and visits, and their attendance is above average. They behave very well in lessons. Most are sensible outside although sometimes a few are a little boisterous. Pupils have an exceptional awareness of the importance of keeping fit. They all go swimming every week and very high proportions are involved in sporting activities after school, for example cross-country running. The school rigorously implements all the statutory procedures designed to safeguard the pupils who, in turn, have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Many pupils contribute to running the school with 'job squad' duties and others are school councillors. They also play their part in the wider community in events such as the 'Othery Street Fayre' and entertaining the 'Over 60s'. The school's strong emphasis on basic skills, including the much improved access to computers, equips pupils well for their next stage of education and adult life. Teachers assess their pupils' progress accurately. When marking and talking about their work, they provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve. Small class numbers and teaching the same pupils for several years help teachers to respond to the exceptionally wide range of abilities in each class. Much of the time they do this well, by carefully matching activities to different needs and effectively deploying assistants to work with specific individuals or groups. However, in some lessons, too much time is spent with all pupils working on the same task. This slows the pace of learning for those who find the work too easy as well as for others who are struggling. The remodelled accommodation has significantly improved the range and quality of curricular experiences, particularly for the older

pupils. These include the new computer suite, library and cooking area. Physical education has been strengthened by the creation of more space for gymnastics within what remains a very small hall. There is a good range of visits and residential trips, including to urban Bristol, and these, along with the 'activity week', help extend pupils' understanding of Britain's cultural diversity beyond their local area. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The good leadership and management are heavily dependent on the headteacher's clarity of purpose and direction and her commitment as both a class teacher and leader. One parent commented, 'This headteacher has made such a difference.' The school is developing high expectations of pupils. Joint activities with other schools are providing pupils with extended experiences and promoting teachers' professional development. The headteacher has established effective ways to assess pupils' learning and clear systems to track their progress and set challenging targets. This is helping to raise standards, particularly in the older years. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They are becoming increasingly involved in strategic decision making and beginning to consider how they can hold the school to account. Whilst the school has an accurate view of its overall performance, the methods used for monitoring each aspect are frequently informal and are not systematic enough to provide detailed information about any minor inconsistencies in practice. The school has a good record of recent improvement, and is clear about the main things it needs to do next, making it well placed to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

Provision in the Foundation Stage is in transition as a new team of part-time teachers work together to embrace the increased opportunities provided by the improved accommodation. They are establishing common systems for planning and for assessing the children's progress. The small group of children in the Foundation Stage are taught in a class with older pupils, often with the effective support of a teaching assistant. They settle well into school and quickly begin to make at least satisfactory progress in all areas of learning. They enjoy the activities planned by adults, such as baking cakes in the new 'Grey Lake' room. However, the school recognises that the children have relatively little free access to the newly developed outdoor areas or the adjacent hall and few opportunities to learn through independent play. This limits the overall quality of their experiences and their ability to begin to think and act independently.

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

- Raise standards further, particularly in English, by matching work throughout lessons more closely to the pupils' exceptionally wide range of abilities.
- Set up and implement more formal and rigorous systems for monitoring the performance of all aspects of the school.
- Develop more opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage to choose what to do and when and where to play in and out of doors.

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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?	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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

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

### 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

<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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Othery Village School, Othery, Somerset TA7 0PX

Thank you for welcoming me to your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you and seeing some of your work as I visited each class. I am pleased to be able to tell you that, for lots of reasons, yours is a good school. These are some of the highlights:

- You work hard and make good progress with your work, especially as you get older. Many of you do particularly well in science but some of you need more help with your English.
- You like most of your lessons because the teachers plan lots of interesting things for you to learn. They also arrange exciting visits and special events that are very good, for example the trip to Bristol.
- You behave well and many of you help to care for one another and do useful jobs around the school.
- You know how important it is to stay fit and lots of you are really keen to take part in sport, such as cross-country running. 'Wake and shake' is a great way to start the day with everyone taking part, even some of your parents!
- Everyone who works in the school knows each one of you very well and they work together to make sure you are safe. There is always someone to help you if you have a problem or if you find your work difficult and need extra help.
- The headteacher has introduced many new ideas to keep improving your school. The recent building and decorating work has made things much better for you and the staff.

I have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work together on three things to make the school even better. They are:

- To help you make even more progress in lessons, especially in literacy, by making sure that throughout lessons you are all given things to learn about which are neither too hard nor too easy.
- To set up more regular checks on how well everything is going in the school and what needs to be changed.
- To think of more ways the youngest children in Lapwings class can choose what to do and where to play indoors and outside.

I know you will want to help your teachers as they continue to work very hard to make Othery Village School an even better place to be.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Kerly, Lead inspector

8 October 2007



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