

Scotch Orchard Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124101
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	314808
Inspection dates	1–2 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Cookson
Headteacher	W Horden
Date of previous school inspection	18 March 2004
School address	Scotch Orchard Lichfield WS13 6DE
Telephone number	01543 510740
Fax number	01543 510743

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Scotch Orchard is similar in size to most other primary schools. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A few pupils from minority ethnic groups are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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 pupils with a caring and friendly environment in which to learn. The overwhelming majority of parents are supportive of the school and are pleased with the experiences provided for their children. One parental comment is typical of many: 'My children are very happy at the school. Any concerns have always been listened to and acted on in an appropriate manner, ensuring their welfare at all times.'

Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. As a result, by the end of Year 6, they attain standards in English, mathematics and science that are broadly average. This represents satisfactory achievement in relation to their starting points on entry to the Nursery class. The main reason pupils make satisfactory progress rather than good progress is that the teaching does not consistently challenge them to achieve to their full capability. For example, teachers do not always use assessment information about pupils' abilities to set work that effectively meets their individual needs. This is particularly the case in writing, which is a weaker aspect of pupils' performance in English. Teachers set pupils targets for improvement in writing but do not always provide sufficient guidance to ensure they know how to reach them.

The headteacher provides focused educational direction and a clear vision for school improvement. All involved with the school share this vision and a good team ethos is evident. Leaders do not monitor pupils' progress or teaching and learning rigorously enough and information gained is not always used effectively to bring about improvement. A significant minority of parents express concerns about the way the school communicates information to them, commenting, for example, that it is sent at the last minute. Leaders acknowledge they could make improvements and are exploring ways of doing this. The school has satisfactory capacity to make the changes necessary to improve further.

Pupils' personal development is good and is exemplified in the way they behave well and show much enjoyment in coming to school. They make a good contribution to the school community, such as being a member of the school council, and to the wider local community. They are adopting healthy lifestyles well, showing a good understanding of the need to eat a healthy diet and to take regular exercise. They also have a good understanding of how to stay safe, for example by using the internet responsibly. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, which ensure a good atmosphere in lessons.

A good range of enrichment activities enlivens the satisfactory curriculum. Pupils say they particularly enjoy the Thursday afternoon group sessions in which they can work with pupils from other classes on a variety of stimulating projects. Good links exist with others, such as professional sports coaches, to extend pupils' skills further. Strong pastoral care and support underpins pupils' good personal development, but the guidance to support their academic development is not as effective. The school has good links with outside agencies to provide extra support for individual pupils when required. Parents are very pleased with this aspect of the school's provision.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children start in the Nursery with skills that are broadly as expected for their age. Satisfactory progress throughout the Nursery and Reception classes means that by the time they start in Year 1, most children are working securely within the goals that are set for their age. They do

best in their personal, social and emotional development because of the warm and supportive atmosphere. Children develop positive attitudes to learning and feel secure. Skills in early writing develop more slowly at times because activities that children choose for themselves are not always sufficiently stimulating. Staff provide a satisfactory range of activities to support children's learning. Careful planning successfully raises their awareness of different cultures. Opportunities to be spontaneously creative, for example in role-play in the outdoor environment, are limited by the lack of a designated space and resources. Leadership and management are satisfactory and ensure that the right priorities are identified and worked upon.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers always plan work that challenges pupils of different abilities effectively, particularly in writing.
- Ensure leaders check teaching and learning and pupils' progress more rigorously to enable them to take effective action to bring about improvement.
- Use assessment information more effectively to set challenging targets and make sure pupils know how to reach them.

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

Children make satisfactory progress in the Nursery and Reception classes and reach average standards on entering Year 1. This satisfactory progress is maintained throughout the rest of the school. As a result, pupils attain broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 2 and average standards in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, but their progress is inconsistent because of a lack of sufficient challenge for them at times. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to refine and practise their writing and numeracy skills in other subjects. Similarly, there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop their investigational skills in science by carrying out practical scientific experiments. The extra support provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to make satisfactory progress. Pupils whose first language is other than English also make satisfactory progress because of the extra support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are keen to start the day. They say that they have plenty of trusting, caring and loyal friends. Pupils enjoy school a lot and this is reflected in their above average attendance. They display a good level of consideration for others, for example quickly seeking help for anyone injured in the playground. They behave well and show a good sense of self-discipline. Bullying is rare but pupils are clear about what to do if it happens. Their good contribution to the school community means that they help it to improve. The school council, for example, is investigating how to set up a healthy tuckshop. They raise money for charities and to improve the playground equipment. Pupils develop basic skills in literacy and numeracy in a satisfactory way and are prepared soundly for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The staff have consistently high expectations of behaviour and this means that classrooms are calm. Combined with pupils' positive attitudes, this creates a good climate for learning. There are good relationships between adults and children in all parts of the school. Teachers use information and communication technology well to provide variety in the introductions to, and ends of, lessons to engage pupils' interest. They gather information on each pupil's progress at frequent intervals. However, teachers do not always make the best use of the information gained to adapt work to meet pupils' different abilities and provide the right level of challenge. Marking does not consistently give good quality advice on what pupils need to do next to improve their writing. The guidance given to pupils on how to evaluate for themselves how well they are doing and how they might improve is at an early stage of development. Teachers give pupils good opportunities to air their ideas in lessons and this benefits their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum supports pupils' social and emotional development particularly well through carefully planned programmes. Pupils' multicultural awareness is promoted effectively through a range of subjects such as art and music. A good range of extra activities support the curriculum and pupils take part enthusiastically. The residential visit over five days for pupils in Years 5 and 6 has a real impact on their geographical understanding. For example, because of their experiences, they confidently explain how eddies created by currents create meanders in rivers. Planning for pupils to use and extend their skills in mathematics and literacy in other subjects is developing but there are still missed opportunities to weave together pupils' learning. Outdoor learning for children in the Foundation Stage is limited because of a lack of space and resources.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Safeguarding arrangements are rigorous. For example, all staff are trained in child protection procedures and know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil. There are thorough risk assessments in place for activities in and around school and on visits. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school. They also say they feel confident in talking to an adult if they have any worries. The good links with other agencies provide valuable extra support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those pupils whose first language is other than English. There are satisfactory procedures for checking the progress that pupils make in English and mathematics. However, teachers do not use the information consistently to plan work that is sufficiently challenging for pupils of different abilities or to guide them to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Self-evaluation is accurate and enables leaders to identify and prioritise the correct areas for development. For instance, the school has recently introduced a variety of strategies to raise

standards in writing by improving pupils' skills in sentence structure, spelling and punctuation. Leaders plan professional development well to give a good balance between the individual needs of staff and whole-school priorities. They carry out their responsibilities diligently and with enthusiasm. The school works well with other providers, such as the local authority, to meet these needs. The procedures for monitoring teaching and learning and pupils' progress are not sufficiently rigorous. Governors are supportive and willing to ask relevant questions about the performance of the school but this is not having sufficient impact on raising the quality of teaching and learning. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

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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	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 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	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?	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	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 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

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

6 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Scotch Orchard Primary School, Lichfield WS13 6DE.

Thank you for the really friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the things you do. Yours is a satisfactory school. It helps you to make satisfactory progress and reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are average by the end of Year 6.

What we found out about your school.

- You enjoy coming to school and your attendance is good.
- It is a very friendly and happy place in which to work and play.
- You are adopting healthy lifestyles well and show a good awareness of how to stay safe.
- The curriculum is made interesting by the Thursday enrichment afternoons, after-school clubs and a wide range of visits and visitors.
- You behave well and are kind and respectful to others.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory but you are not always given work that makes you think hard.
- Adults look after you well and make sure you are safe in and around school and on visits.
- You are keen to learn and you collaborate well with other pupils.
- You make a good contribution to the school community, such as by being a member of the school council, and to the life of the wider community.
- Leaders of the school are working hard to make it better. What we have asked your school to do now.
- Help you reach higher standards, particularly in writing, by making sure teachers always plan work that makes all of you think hard.
- Ensure leaders check teaching and learning and your progress more carefully so they are clear about how to bring about improvement.
- Make better use of information about your progress to set challenging targets and make sure you know how to reach them.

We hope you keep on enjoying your learning and being kind to others.

All my best wishes for the future

Melvyn Hemmings Lead inspector

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- Make better use of information about your progress to set challenging targets and make sure you know how to reach them.

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Lead inspector