

Onslow Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125067
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315138
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Anthony Green

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sian Boden
Headteacher	Mrs Lyn Jennings
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2004
School address	Powell Close Onslow Village Guildford GU2 7DD
Telephone number	01483 532726
Fax number	01483 453068

Age group	4-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is about average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils who do not speak English as their first language is average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is also average. The school has a higher than average number of pupils who join or leave during the year. This was especially so in 2006, when the school intake also had a higher than average number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has gained the national Activemark, Healthy Schools Award and Investor in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'We can't think of a better place to send our children to school. Onslow has a great atmosphere and really cares for the children. Every member of staff we've come across has been polite, very approachable and obviously enjoys being part of the school. It is led extremely well.' This perceptive comment from a parent is typical of the overwhelmingly positive support for the school. This is a good school. The very effective headteacher has been extremely successful in creating a culture where pupils thoroughly enjoy school and achieve well.

Among significant strengths are the curriculum and pupils' personal development and well-being. Pupils achieve well because of an extremely varied curriculum, that interests and motivates them, and because of good teaching. From a generally average starting point, they make good progress and reach standards that are above average by the time they leave. In the past, pupils have not achieved as well in the higher levels of writing, as they have in reading and mathematics. The school has recently introduced more opportunities for pupils to base their writing on meaningful activities and the higher levels are now being achieved.

The quality of teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and resourced. Pupils are well managed and so there is a calm atmosphere in lessons. There are very good systems in place to identify and support the needs of pupils who are gifted and talented, who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including speech and language or behavioural difficulties, and who speak English as an additional language. Consequently, all groups of pupils make good progress. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously but there are inconsistencies in the way marking informs pupils of their future targets.

Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They have first-rate attitudes to learning. They thoroughly enjoy talking to visitors about their work and are very proud of their achievements. They have an excellent understanding for their age about staying safe, living healthily and the need for regular exercise.

Pupils know that staff listen to them and act on their suggestions. The school forum has an excellent impact on the life of the pupils. For example, their ideas were used to develop the playground and the large sandpit and to decide on which charities to donate to. One pupil said, 'If there is a problem then the school forum can solve it, because we are working together'.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, very ably supported by her newly formed senior management team, has shown drive, determination and focus to raise standards and improve achievement. All staff fully share her vision and consequently support her well. Governors have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and hold the school to account well for the standards achieved. Although there were no major issues at the time of the previous inspection, the school has not been complacent and has continued to make good improvement. It has good capacity for further improvement and represents good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is well managed and effective. Children enter Reception with a wide range of knowledge, skills and experience, which are generally in line with those expected for this age. Due to good teaching, children achieve well in the six areas of learning. Most children achieve, and many exceed, the expected levels by the time they are ready to enter Year 1.

Progress in children's personal and social skills is particularly good due to established routines, good relationships with staff and consistently high expectations. Children behave well and any difficulties are managed successfully and positively. Although standards in writing have not been as good as other areas, they improved last year, largely because there were more opportunities for children to use and practice their early skills independently. Standards in mathematics have improved because there is a greater emphasis on practical tasks. Children enjoy a broad range of interesting and engaging practical activities, which have been particularly beneficial to their mathematical development. Whilst the balance between adult-led and child-chosen tasks inside is good, opportunities to play in the pleasant outdoor area are more limited.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase further the proportion of pupils who attain higher standards of writing.
- Ensure consistency of marking across the school, in order to inform pupils of their next stage of learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and achievement is good. Children make good progress in Reception and are well prepared for entry into Year 1. The good progress continues and by Year 2, standards are above average overall. All pupils, including those who need additional support, those who speak English as an additional language and the more able, achieve well, especially in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make good progress in information and communication technology (ICT). The school identified writing for the more able pupils as an area for development and this is now being addressed well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Due to the way the school values the presence, opinions and contribution of all pupils, their personal development and well being are outstanding. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils accept and respect each other, valuing the diversity of life. Relationships throughout the school are very warm and positive. Pupils behave well and enjoy school greatly. Attendance is above the national average. Pupils have a good understanding of, and commitment to, health through energetic play, a cookery club and eating sensibly. They are extremely aware of the need to keep themselves and others safe, for example by looking after each other in the playground and listening carefully to teachers on school visits. They are well prepared for later life and learning through good levels of achievement, confidence, care of others and very positive attitudes to work and learning. As one pupil said about work, 'Don't worry if it looks hard, have a go and keep trying your best'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The curriculum has been adapted extremely well to make learning relevant, enjoyable and engaging. Pupils are well managed, quick to do as they are asked and eager to learn. Consequently, they are motivated and respond positively to the tasks set. However, in some

lessons, the time spent on the carpet during the lesson introduction can be too long, which prevents pupils quickly getting down to their work. Teachers and support staff make good use of questions to engage and assess pupils. Good use is made of 'must' do, 'should' do and 'could' do, in lessons as a means of encouraging pupils to reflect and explain their thinking and to set their own challenges to achieve. All groups of pupils make good progress because of the good support they receive from teachers and well-informed teaching assistants. Guidance for extending pupils' learning is less well developed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum and other activities are outstanding. The excellent links between subjects increases motivation and enjoyment. For example, Year 2 pupils were observed very enthusiastically using the internet, to research Mexican recipes and ingredients prior to a cookery lesson, for a topic about Mexico. This also gave superb support for reading, writing and ICT skills. These links have a positive impact on the progress pupils make. Well planned opportunities for pupils to discuss with partners, and to act out their ideas in role-play areas, are now helping them to develop imaginative and expressive language needed to develop their writing further. The excellent emphasis on personal, social and health education has led to the outstanding personal development of all pupils. An excellent range of lunchtime and after school clubs, visits and visitors, including a specialist music teacher and a sports coach, supports well pupils' academic and personal development. As one parent commented, 'there's never a dull moment and my child can't wait to get to school and take part in all the lessons and the extra-curricular activities'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All pupils are valued, cared for and supported well. Procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety are very thorough and robust. The early identification and effective support of any learning or social difficulties contributes well to the good achievement and outstanding personal development of all. The extremely strong partnership between teachers, teaching assistants, parents and outside agencies successfully helps pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. For example, families who speak no English on arrival are given excellent support, especially by the headteacher, to ensure that they are welcomed and that their child is quickly settled into school and makes good progress. Individual education plans and statements are concise, well focused and effective. Where necessary, pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well through the very accessible, visual and practical curriculum and working in small groups. The relatively new introduction of success criteria is effectively helping pupils focus on achievement in lessons. However, marking is inconsistent and does not always show pupils how they can improve their work or develop their learning further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Under the very purposeful leadership of the headteacher, there is a very strong commitment by teaching and non-teaching staff to ensure that the school runs smoothly for the benefit of all pupils. The school development plan is well focused on raising standards and all staff are involved in its writing. Subject managers are well informed.

However, newer managers have not yet had the opportunity to monitor the teaching of their subject. Governance is outstanding. Governors are extremely well informed and bring a significant range of skills to the school. They closely monitor and evaluate performance and provide very good challenge and excellent support.

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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?	1
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	2
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?	1
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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1
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	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	1
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

27 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Onslow Infant School, Guildford, GU2 7DD

Thank you, on behalf of the other inspector and myself, for your very friendly welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to so many of you and hearing about your work. You told us that you go to a good school and we agree. Here are some of things we especially liked.

- You work hard in lessons and are successful in your work.
- Your thoughts and ideas are valued by all staff and so you contribute well to the way the school is run. We were very impressed by the ideas of the School Forum. The sandpit area is lovely.
- Teaching is good, which is why you all do so well in your work.
- The work planned for you is very interesting. It is made even better by the visits you go on and the visitors who come into school to talk to you and to teach you.
- You are very well cared for by all staff and you feel safe.
- You understand the need to stay healthy through regular exercise and healthy eating.
- The school is very well led by your headteacher, senior staff and governors.
- Your parents told us that they are really pleased that you go to such a good school.

Even in a good school, there are things that can be improved. We have asked your school to:

- ensure that teachers continue to give you interesting ideas to help to develop your writing
- ensure your teachers' marking helps you to understand more about what you should do to improve your work.

We wish you every success in the future and hope you carry on making Onslow School such a happy place to learn.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Green

Lead Inspector