

Orchid Vale Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131378
Local Authority	Swindon
Inspection number	315796
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Hancock

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	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clinton Ricketts
Headteacher	Debbie Kalyinka
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Torun Way Haydon End Swindon SN25 1UG
Telephone number	01793 704003
Fax number	01793 709129

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2008
Inspection number	315796

© 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 two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school, funded by private finance initiative, opened in September 2006. It has an attached nursery, is smaller than the average sized school and serves the local community. Numbers have significantly increased during the last year. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with a small percentage from minority ethnic families. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has increased significantly and there are a few pupils with English as an additional language. The school has achieved Eco School Silver Award, Healthy School Status and Active Mark Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'Orchid Vale is a lovely community school which always takes children's needs into consideration. The staff make every day new and exciting', is a parent's accurate description of this good school. The headteacher, staff and governors are dedicated to continuous school improvement. Much has been achieved since the school opened in September 2006. The leadership and management are good. The headteacher, ably supported by the assistant headteacher, provides good leadership which has resulted in improved standards and provision. The school's self-evaluation is thorough. The school has successfully targeted mathematics during the last year to bring about improvement to standards but there are currently insufficient opportunities for pupils to write independently and so improve their standards in writing. The school's plans to develop and refine the role of senior leaders so that they can take a more proactive part in monitoring school performance are well founded. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching and a broad and enriched curriculum that stimulates their interest and enjoyment of learning. However, there are a few lessons where pupils are not fully challenged. As a result, they are not doing as well as they could, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Good provision in the Foundation Stage helps children make good progress and prepares them well for Year 1. The school provides good care and support for pupils. It has created a caring, safe environment where everyone feels valued. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils behave well and show great respect for each other. The school is having a very positive effect on pupils' growth towards being well-rounded young people. It is well placed to build on its many successes and move forward positively.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle quickly and are safe and well looked after in the caring environment. Children soon make new friends, work confidently and behave exceptionally well. Good teaching, a well-planned curriculum and effective use of resources, including interactive whiteboards, help children achieve well in all the areas of learning. Staff plan a good balance of activities between those that are adult-led and those the children choose. Children love exploring these, working very sensibly at all times. Effective teamwork ensures that all staff are clear about what they have to do to help each child succeed. Individual needs are identified early and the right help is given to ensure children's good progress. The accommodation is very stimulating and well resourced and the outdoor areas provide attractive spaces where children can play and learn independently by exploring and extending their skills. Staff check that children try everything that is planned and intervene effectively to guide their learning. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most are on track to attain above average standards in all but their writing. The temporary leadership arrangements are satisfactory but not all staff have a clear enough understanding of entry data and this sometimes hinders the ability to gauge children's progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for all pupils to write independently.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in Years 3 and 4, so that lessons consistently challenge all pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils have made good progress in their time at the school. Children enter school with standards broadly in line with those expected for their age. Younger children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well due to consistently good teaching. Standards are broadly average in the current Year 2, but higher in mathematics than in reading and writing. This is because a high proportion of pupils in this class have learning difficulties and a few pupils have English as a second language, which slows their rate of progress. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4, but expectations are too low for these pupils to achieve well. In Years 5 and 6 pupils achieve well. As a result, standards in the current Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science, including a high proportion of pupils expecting to reach the higher Level 5. Pupils' achievement has improved in mathematics because of increased intervention strategies, such as booster groups and setting of pupils for mathematics in Years 3 to 6. The school rightly identifies the need to draw on this success to support further improvement in writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their good attendance shows they enjoy being at school. They behave well and show kindness and care towards others. For example, older pupils supervise younger ones during the 'huff and puff' sessions. Through community events, such as music festivals, pupils work successfully with others. Many visits and visitors help pupils to understand their cultural heritage well. They regularly celebrate the different cultures represented in their school but have a limited understanding of the diversity of multicultural Britain and how this affects their lives. A good programme for personal, social and health education helps pupils understand their role in society as they grow up. As a result of complaints from nearby residents, pupils organised a litter pick. They regularly organise fund raising events to support charities such as 'Street children in Goa'. School council members are involved in decision making, for example on purchasing playground equipment. Pupils understand that eating healthy food is important and many select healthy lunches. They take regular exercise through various sports clubs and many walk to school. They know how to stay safe, understand the dangers of drugs and who to go to if worried. Pupils' good personal development and good progress in their academic skills prepare them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

During the inspection the quality of teaching varied from satisfactory to outstanding. Teachers use a variety of teaching styles that enthuse and motivate pupils. High quality relationships secure good discipline and contribute to a positive climate for learning. Activities build successfully on prior learning and are mostly well matched to pupils' different abilities. However, in some lessons, the pace is slow and expectations are too low, particularly for pupils in Years 3 and 4. This has a negative impact on pupils' attitudes and achievement, and they learn too slowly. Marking is used well to suggest to pupils how they might improve their work and they all have individual targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported,

together with those pupils speaking English as an additional language, and so make good progress. Teaching assistants often play an important role in this facet and other aspects of the school's work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well structured to help pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress. Teachers are beginning to link work across subjects through themes that help pupils make better sense of their learning. The use of information and communication technology is a strength in supporting both teaching and learning. Following consultations with pupils, there are good opportunities for pupils to organise their own learning through 'independent learning weeks' and thus explore projects they find particularly interesting or challenging. Pupils say they really enjoy practical activities where they feel they learn more effectively. Excellent use is made of the wildlife area to develop pupils' understanding of the natural world. Good additional activities, including more investigations and problem-solving tasks, have helped to raise standards in mathematics. Opportunities for pupils to write more independently are currently hampered by over-use of worksheets in some classes. Appropriate activities are planned to help pupils with specific learning needs achieve well. A good programme for personal, social and health education successfully supports pupils' personal development. An extensive range of visits, visitors and numerous activities out of school hours adds excitement to pupils' learning and gives them ample opportunities to develop their skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care arrangements are good and the school responds quickly and effectively when problems arise. Pupils feel they are listened to and parents know that staff take good care of their children at all times. Child protection, health and safety and safeguarding procedures are all secure. Pupils who have specific social, emotional or educational needs are supported very sensitively, with external agencies consulted where necessary. Children are supported very well when they first start school and prepared well for secondary education.

Pupils' progress is monitored and tracked well to set appropriately challenging targets and identify early those who may be falling behind or need specific help. Individual targets are proving particularly effective in raising the aspirations of older pupils who frequently evaluate their own work and identify areas where they could improve. Other pupils are not always as sure as to what they have to do to make improvements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The strong leadership of the headteacher drives the work of the school and she has been instrumental in the significant gains made since the school opened in September 2006. She has high expectations to ensure all pupils achieve their best and are happy and safe. She continually explores ways to improve the quality of education and receives good support from the assistant headteacher. They work effectively together and have created a good team spirit among the staff. As a result of the significant rise in pupil numbers during the last year, the school has wisely begun to delegate more responsibility to new senior leaders, so that they

take a greater share in monitoring school performance, to bring about further improvement to provision. The quality of the school's self-evaluation is good. It clearly identifies areas for improvement, including the monitoring of teaching and learning and revising the curriculum. This has improved the quality of teaching and pupils' enjoyment of school. The school has been successful in improving standards and achievement in mathematics by good intervention strategies and has appropriately identified the need to provide more writing opportunities across the school to improve pupils' writing standards. Most parents are positive about the school and their views are regularly sought and considered. One comment, typical of many was 'Orchid Vale has a great feel about it. I love the values, beliefs and respect for others which the school promotes well.' Governance is good. Governors are knowledgeable and hard working. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement because they are becoming more involved in the strategic monitoring of the school, and acting as a critical friend.

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	NA
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	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?	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	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

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	3
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	2
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

28 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Orchid Vale Primary School, Swindon, SN25 1UG

Thank you very much for welcoming us into your school. We really enjoyed our time with you and looking at your work. We were impressed with how polite and friendly you all were. You are right to be proud of your school, as it is a good school.

What we particularly liked about your school:

- You behave well, work hard; your headteacher and staff are effective in helping you learn and you make good progress.
- Teachers generally provide interesting lessons and help you enjoy school and do well in your work.
- You are well looked after and that helps to make you feel safe.
- You get on well together, show respect for everyone and know how important it is to help and look after others.
- You know the importance of eating healthily and enjoy regular exercise.
- There are plenty of things to do outside lessons and many of you join clubs and other activities, which is good.

These are some things we have asked the school to do to make it better:

- Teachers are to provide you with more writing opportunities so that you can improve your writing.
- Teaching and learning in some lessons should be improved, particularly in Years 3 and 4, to provide you with more challenge so that you can improve your work.

Best wishes for the future.

Ian Hancock Lead Inspector

28 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Orchid Vale Primary School, Swindon, SN25 1UG

Thank you very much for welcoming us into your school. We really enjoyed our time with you and looking at your work. We were impressed with how polite and friendly you all were. You are right to be proud of your school, as it is a good school.

What we particularly liked about your school:

- You behave well, work hard; your headteacher and staff are effective in helping you learn and you make good progress.
- Teachers generally provide interesting lessons and help you enjoy school and do well in your work.
- You are well looked after and that helps to make you feel safe.
- You get on well together, show respect for everyone and know how important it is to help and look after others.
- You know the importance of eating healthily and enjoy regular exercise.
- There are plenty of things to do outside lessons and many of you join clubs and other activities, which is good.

These are some things we have asked the school to do to make it better:

- Teachers are to provide you with more writing opportunities so that you can improve your writing.
- Teaching and learning in some lessons should be improved, particularly in Years 3 and 4, to provide you with more challenge so that you can improve your work.

Best wishes for the future.

Ian Hancock
Lead Inspector