

Offmore Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135052
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	319604
Inspection date	27 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Joyce Cox

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	426
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phillip Caldwell
Headteacher	Janet Wheeldon
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Wordsworth Crescent Kidderminster DY10 3HA
Telephone number	01562 753 934
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the effectiveness of the school's initiatives to raise standards in writing and mathematics
- how well teachers use assessment information to match pupils' various abilities
- the impact of leadership and management at all levels in improving standards.

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation; the school's assessment records; observation of the school at work; discussions with staff, parents and governors; and an analysis of parental questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, are not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This much larger than average primary school opened in September 2007 on the site of a previous first school. Pupils from permanently closing first schools also joined the new school in 2006 and 2007. An increase in the number of pupils resulted in the relocation into temporary classes of a sizeable number of Key Stage 2 pupils. This has significantly reduced the amount of outdoor playground space. It is anticipated that a new school will be built in 2010.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the school provides part-time education for three-year-olds in its Nursery. Most of these children transfer into the Reception unit. The majority of the pupils are from White British family backgrounds.

The school achieved a Healthy Schools and Activemark Awards in 2007, a silver status award for its Eco-club work and an International Schools Award. A privately-run before- and-after-school club has been operating on the school site for the last 12 years. It also opens during the school holidays.

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. There are particular strengths in the strong pastoral care, the numerous extra-curricula activities and in the pupils' good personal development. Virtually all the parents are extremely supportive of the school and are very pleased with the way their children are cared for. One parent captured the views of many in commenting, 'This is a warm and friendly school, the staff are very approachable and the headteacher is always ready to offer support in any matters arising. I wouldn't wish to send my child anywhere else.' A very small number of parents expressed concerns regarding behaviour but the inspectors found no cause for concern during the inspection. Understandably, a few parents felt anxious regarding the many staff changes in recent times. However, the majority share one parent's view that, 'We feel that the school has handled the disruption caused by the reorganisation with the minimum of impact to the pupils' education.'

Achievement is satisfactory. Children in the EYFS make satisfactory progress from starting points which are similar to those expected for their age when they enter the Nursery. By the time children enter Year 1, standards are broadly average. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the rest of the school and standards overall are average by the end of Year 6. Standards are above average in science. Through an effective analysis of data, senior leaders have recognised that reading standards are higher than those in writing and mathematics. Initiatives including enhancing curriculum opportunities to raise pupils' achievement in these areas are starting to have a positive impact. In the 2008 Key Stage 1 teacher assessments pupils attained above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics indicating that these pupils had made good progress. The school's tracking data show that standards attained by the current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are on course to exceed those of 2008. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory.

The school is currently undergoing a full review of its curriculum. Staff are increasingly making interesting links across subjects, thus making pupils' learning more meaningful, stimulating and enjoyable. There are particular strengths in music and art and design. The thriving school choir performs locally several times a year and all Year 3 pupils learn to play the recorder. Visits by local artists, musicians and poets, numerous after-school clubs, and opportunities to learn Spanish and French and take part in exciting international days serve to broaden pupils' experiences. This in turn extends their knowledge of both the local and global community.

Pupils say they enjoy school a lot and this is reflected in their good attendance. They say they would not want to change anything apart from having more heating in the temporary classrooms. They are kind and considerate in their dealings with each other and play sensibly and safely in their small playground. Behaviour is good and pupils like being class and Eco councillors and house captains, and discussing ways to improve the school. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to stay safe and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They participate enthusiastically in the daily activate sessions and enjoy attending the many sporting events. Pupils leave the school with good personal skills and average standards in basic skills, which ensure they are soundly prepared for the next stage in their education.

Pastoral care is a strong feature of this friendly school. Relationships between adults and pupils are good and pupils feel able to talk to any member of staff if they have a problem. Consequently, they feel valued and secure. Safeguarding and equalities legislation are all in place and rigorously monitored. There are effective systems for monitoring pupils' progress

but the resulting information is not yet consistently used by all teachers to match work to pupils' differing abilities. There is a marking policy but not all staff use this to guide their current practice.

Pupils have good attitudes towards their work. They say they enjoy learning because lessons are interesting and their teachers are kind. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although some good teaching and learning was observed during the inspection. This good teaching is not sufficiently widespread to ensure that all pupils make the best progress possible. There are variations between classes and subjects, reflecting the newness of teachers to the school, the wide range of previous experiences and variations in expectations. Some teachers are beginning to use assessment effectively to identify pupils' individual needs, plan learning and set challenging targets but this is not yet consistent practice throughout the school. The team of talented teaching assistants provides effective additional support to teachers and pupils.

The headteacher is a good leader with a clear vision and has sensitively and calmly supported the pupils and staff during the protracted reorganisation. Staff morale is high and they are united after some very turbulent times, and all are committed to raising standards and achievement. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The rate of school improvement has been lessened due to prolonged illness and changed circumstances amongst middle management. However, staffing is now more stable. All the staff are committed to promoting equality of opportunity, including those pupils with particular needs and those who join the school at different times of the school year. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily in the way it has succeeded in establishing a safe and happy learning environment for all the pupils since the reorganisation. It has developed satisfactory links with the local community and raised pupils' awareness of the wider global community through its international links. The use of data, by senior staff and governors, to check the school's performance is beginning to improve. As a result, the leadership team is starting to adopt relevant strategies to bring about improvements in order to raise standards and achievement. This is illustrated by the recent successful improvement to the way writing is taught. Although the headteacher has a very accurate view of the school's strengths and areas to improve, the school's self-evaluation is satisfactory and there is a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. This is because the monitoring of teaching and learning, especially at middle management level, lacks consistency and there is not therefore a sufficiently sharp enough focus on improvements needed to accelerate pupils' progress. The governing body is very new. Governors are very supportive and their monitoring role is improving.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress and standards are average in all the areas of learning at the start of Year 1. Good emphasis on the development of basic skills, such as phonics, helps children's early reading and writing skills develop well. Interesting role play areas such as a yellow submarine in the Nursery and a pirate ship complete with gangplank in the Reception unit promote children's language skills effectively. There is a good balance between activities led by adults and those that children choose for themselves. Parents speak very highly of the EYFS provision and especially like the way their children settle quickly and happily. This is because the care and attention given to children's welfare are good. As a result, they make good progress in their personal development. The outdoor learning area in the Nursery is excellent. Children have great fun in their 'Forest School' where they cheerfully design and build sailing boats, climb trees, make structures with logs and cook around the campfire. Staff

are brilliant play partners and these enticing activities successfully develop children's confidence in risk taking in a safe way, and they also learn to form positive relationships with each other. Boys are especially keen to work in this exciting environment, which makes a noticeable difference to their personal and language skills.

Inspectors agree with the school that despite a number of strengths, overall effectiveness is satisfactory. The rate of children's learning is good in the Nursery and satisfactory in Reception. This is because of considerable staff turbulence in the Reception unit, which until last year had no stable staffing structure. This has clearly inhibited the successful establishment of policies and procedures and consistent strategies in teaching and learning. The Nursery teacher has considerable expertise and experience and leads the EYFS well; she visits the Reception unit regularly and there are high expectations for both staff and children. The provision in the Reception unit is improving rapidly as staff become more experienced and confident.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment data more effectively to ensure that work in lessons is consistently well matched to each pupil's needs.
- Ensure senior leaders and subject leaders rigorously monitor teaching and learning and standards to help good progress become the norm.
- Develop the effectiveness of academic guidance and the use of targets across the school to raise pupils' awareness of what they need to do to improve.

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.

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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 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

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

28 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Offmore Primary School, Kidderminster, DY10 3HA

You will probably remember that we visited your school recently and I am writing to let you know what we found out. Before I do, I would like to thank you for the warm welcome you gave us. You are all very polite and friendly. A particular highlight for me was seeing how much the Nursery children enjoyed themselves in your brilliant Forest School. A special thank you to the head boy and head girl who did such a great job of showing us around.

We agree with your headteacher that the school is satisfactory. We also feel it is improving after a difficult time.

Here are some of the things we found out.

- You enjoy school, feel safe and your behaviour is good.
- Teachers help you to make satisfactory progress in your work.
- There are a good number of clubs and exciting visits.
- You have good relationships with your teachers and you work hard for them.
- You go to a caring school. Everyone has your best interests at heart and wants you to be safe and happy and to do as well as you can.
- The headteacher is a good leader and staff are working hard to make sure the school gets even better.

We have asked the school to do three main things to help it improve further:

- help teachers to plan work that is just right for you all and is not too easy or too hard
- check teaching more carefully to make sure that it is good in all lessons so that you all do well and reach even higher standards in your work
- make sure you understand how to improve your work.

You can help your teachers by always working hard and behaving well.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joyce Cox

Lead inspector