

Oldfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111230
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	325323
Inspection dates	10–11 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Diane Auton

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	204
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	Mr M Spooner
Headteacher	Mr P Choi
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Green Lane Vicars Cross Chester Cheshire CH3 5LB
Telephone number	01244 981772
Fax number	01244 321919

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average-sized school serves a residential area of mainly owner occupied housing. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds with a small proportion from other heritages. A few pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is smaller than that found in most schools. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) education is provided in the Reception class. Most pupils have previously attended the Oldfield Pre-School, run by private providers on the school site, which was not part of this inspection.

The school holds the Healthy Schools Award, the International Schools Award, the Activemark, the Eco Bronze Award and the Parenting Kite Mark.

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 school, with several outstanding features. An ethos of self-respect and care for others is central to its happy and effective learning community. Pupils thrive in this supportive environment. This is shown in their good academic progress and in their outstanding personal and social development.

Pupils' achievement is good. From typical starting points on entry to Reception, pupils progress well in Key Stages 1 and 2 and reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. High quality support and well managed provision ensure that vulnerable pupils, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning to speak English as an additional language achieve well in relation to their abilities and starting points. The school's careful tracking of pupils' progress is helping to ensure that achievement is consistent. Expectations are high and areas for improvement are identified and dealt with well. For example, effective action was taken in the last school year to improve boys' attainment in writing. In 2008, however, inspection evidence shows that, although overall standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were high, the proportion of pupils who reached the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics was below average. Further improvement is now required to ensure that all of its most able pupils, in Key Stage 2, achieve as well as they possibly can in all of the subjects.

Pupils develop excellent social skills and moral values in this caring school. Their spiritual development is fostered very well through regular opportunities for reflection in assemblies and lessons. Significant opportunities are provided to support their cultural development and prepare them for life in a multicultural society. The school's good international links enable them to become involved in projects that put them in direct contact with their peers in schools across the world. Parents note how this helps build their children's self-confidence and gives them extremely good knowledge and understanding of the wider world and global issues. Pupils are active fund-raisers for local charities and show awareness of the needs of others. A strong focus on healthy living, ecological awareness and community involvement ensures that pupils are confident, sociable young citizens, very well prepared to move on to the next stage in their education.

The quality of teaching is good and helps all pupils to receive effective support. Teachers are constantly evaluating the school's excellent curriculum and seeking out ways to make it even more vibrant and stimulating. Pupils benefit significantly from the wide range of high quality learning experiences provided for them. Assessment is thorough. In some classes, pupils receive good feedback on their achievements and progress. However, the quality of marking is inconsistent across the school as it does not always provide the pupils with the clear guidance they need in order to improve their work.

Excellent pastoral care ensures that pupils are happy and secure in school. Parents have great confidence in the school. 'Our children regularly come home bursting with enthusiasm to share with us the things they've learned today.' and 'The school environment is so lovely, warm and caring.' are typical comments, demonstrating how highly parents value all that the school provides.

The headteacher provides effective leadership. He sets an ambitious agenda for excellence and the staff team and proactive governors share his vision and work with him towards its achievement. Targets for improvement are accurate and challenging. Action plans are strategic

and creative. These factors, combined with the complementary skills and talents of the other senior managers and subject leaders, give the school good capacity for continued improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children join the Reception class with skills at expected levels for their age. They settle in quickly and become active learners. They make good overall progress across the areas of learning and outstanding progress in their personal and social development. Daily sessions focusing on letters and sounds are helping to boost early literacy skills well, enabling the children to approach reading and writing activities with confidence. The quality of teaching is good. The curriculum is planned well with indoor and outdoor activities, well matched to children's needs, which provide interest and fun. Moreover, the outdoor area is used effectively to promote children's social development as well as their skills across all the learning areas. Children interact well with each other and enjoy warm relationships with the caring staff. Vulnerable children and those with additional learning needs are supported well. Children's progress is observed and assessed systematically and additional support is given promptly to those who require it. Positive relationships with parents are established from the start and parents are kept informed about their children's learning. Good links with the on-site Pre-School and other local early years' education providers help to ensure children's smooth induction into school. Transition to Key Stage 1 is also supported well. Children enter Year 1 with skill levels that are above expectations for their age group.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality and consistency of marking to ensure that pupils are given clear guidance on how to improve their work.
- Raise the standards and achievement of the more able pupils in Key Stage 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are above average in all subjects and have been so for the past two years, reflecting the good progress pupils make in Years 1 and 2. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have been above average for most of the past six years, although they dipped to broadly average in 2005 and 2007. Inspection evidence shows that overall standards at the end of Year 6 in 2008 were above nationally expected levels, the result of a whole-school drive for improvement in all subjects. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics was below average, however. The school's detailed records show that most pupils, throughout the school, made good progress towards challenging targets in the last school year. They also show that pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to reach above average standards. Inspection evidence, including pupils' work and lesson observations, confirms this picture of standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning to speak English as an additional language make good progress in this inclusive school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' outstanding personal development is seen in their excellent behaviour and attendance. The school's emphasis on praise and valuing each individual ensures that pupils grow in

self-esteem and form very good quality relationships with staff and with each other. Their spiritual, moral and social development is excellent. They have outstanding awareness of their own and other cultures, fostered through the curriculum and involvement in international projects. They take on responsibility with great interest and enthusiasm and collaborate effectively with staff and each other, for example as very active school councillors and road safety officers. In these and many other roles they contribute extremely well and knowledgeably to the welfare of the school community. These important life skills are developed exceptionally well and this, together with their good skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy, means that pupils are prepared extremely well for the future. They have excellent awareness of issues of personal safety and healthy lifestyles. The school's close links with local high schools help to prepare pupils well for their transition to secondary education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good. Pupils are enthusiastic learners because most lessons are interesting and stimulating and because teachers give them a clear understanding of the purpose of their learning activities. The school gathers information from regular assessment and uses it effectively when planning its provision. It employs a good range of support strategies to meet the needs of the less able pupils and those who are learning to speak English as an additional language. Pupils enjoy frequent opportunities for working in groups or with a partner. This helps them to develop their ideas and grow in confidence as learners. In most lessons, effective teaching ensures that the level of challenge is appropriate and the pace of learning is brisk. Occasionally, activities do not provide enough challenge for the more able pupils and this slows their progress. Behaviour in lessons is extremely good and pupils apply themselves to their activities very well. Teaching assistants work effectively in partnership with class teachers to provide additional support for those pupils who require it.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides a vibrant and innovative curriculum that engages pupils' interests very successfully and contributes extremely well to their personal development. Excellent provision is made for developing pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology. Opportunities are increasingly being taken to integrate aspects of the teaching of other subjects, with a focus on supporting the development of key skills across all subject areas. Many high quality experiences to enrich pupils' learning are regularly provided, including visits, residential trips for pupils in Key Stage 2 and specialist input from artists, musicians and sports professionals. Involvement in international projects has brought virtual link-ups with other children in schools across the world and opportunities to visit partner schools abroad and to welcome reciprocal visitors to Oldfield. Pupils enjoy learning French and Spanish. Good quality, inclusive sporting opportunities are plentiful and contribute well to pupils' health education. Well attended after school clubs provide for a range of interests and are greatly enjoyed by pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are extremely well cared for and they are happy and secure in school. They are confident that adults are readily on hand to help with any problems that may arise. Pupils who have additional learning needs are supported very well and the school liaises effectively with external agencies to promote their progress and well-being. The school complies fully with statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils. Health and safety requirements are met and pupils' awareness of these and of ecological issues is promoted extremely well. Partnerships with parents are developed very well through regular communications between home and school and through parent workshops. Parents value the clear expectations for homework, saying that the tasks for pupils are interesting and enjoyable. The school tracks and measures progress very carefully and the use of individual learning targets is being developed well in some classes. The quality of feedback given to pupils through written marking, although sometimes very good, is not consistent across the school. Where it is less effective, pupils are not guided clearly to the next steps in their learning or informed about how well they have succeeded towards meeting their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher's clear vision for taking the school forward is shared wholeheartedly by governors and staff at all levels. Systems are in place for evaluating how well the school is doing and subject leaders and senior staff assist well in ensuring the quality of provision. Whole-school targets are aspirational and leaders identify and plan appropriate actions to achieve them. The strong team ethos enables staff to develop and share their skills and to be confident curriculum innovators. The supportive governing body holds the school to account, acting as its critical friend. Community cohesion is addressed very successfully through the school's outstanding range of partnerships that promote pupils' well-being, through its contribution to community activities and events and through its very well developed international links. The leadership has correctly identified the need to ensure consistently high standards at the end of Key Stage 2, especially for the more able pupils. The school has started to implement strategic actions to address this issue, although it is too early to evaluate their impact.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
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?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

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

Inspection of Oldfield Primary School, Chester, CH3 5LB

Thank you for the lovely warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school. We really enjoyed our visit and the conversations we had with you. As you know, we came to see how well the school is doing and how you are all getting on with your learning. This is what we found.

- You are being given a good education at Oldfield. We think you go to a lovely school and I know you think so too.
- You work hard and you reach good standards. Well done. Keep it up and carry on enjoying learning!
- You are taught well. The staff make your lessons very interesting and enjoyable and they make sure you have the help and support you need.
- We think you have a wonderful curriculum at Oldfield. This is helping you to develop so many excellent skills and we could see how much you enjoy all your learning activities.
- The school is well led and the headteacher and the staff are always on the lookout for ways to make it even better!
- The adults in school look after you and care for you extremely well. Your behaviour is excellent and you are polite and caring young people. All of this means that your school is a happy place to be in.

I have asked the headteacher and the staff to work on improving the way your books are marked, to be sure that you are all given clear advice on what you need to do next to improve your work. I have also asked them to make sure that the more able pupils in Key Stage 2 achieve as well as they possibly can.

With my very best wishes for the future.