

Offenham CofE First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116835
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	326457
Inspection date	2 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Jenny Batelen

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	All-through
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	103
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	17
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Hazeldene
Headteacher	Denise Oates
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2000
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Myatt Road Offenham Evesham WR11 8SD
Telephone number	01386 442038
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Age group	4–10
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small school is situated in a village on the outskirts of Evesham. Most children come from the Offenham area, with a small number coming from further away. There are four classes with two year groups in each class. There is provision in the mornings to support the teaching of separate year groups, particularly for literacy. There is provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception class. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Offenham CE First School is a good school. The pupils' great enjoyment of their life in school is evident at all times, attendance is good and their behaviour is excellent. Pupils look out for each other, ensuring the safety of all in the school. A parent spoke of feeling that they are 'part of a large family due to the caring atmosphere'.

Children enter school from a variety of settings, and a secure induction process and early observations ensure that children quickly settle and are supported to make good progress in their learning and development. Children enter the Reception class with skill levels in line with national expectations and make good progress throughout the school so that, by the time they leave in Year 5, most pupils are achieving above national expectations for this year group. This is because of good teaching, the excellent knowledge that staff have of each child and the appropriate support they put in place for learning to take place. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported, which enables them to make good progress. It is not always clear in planning how the needs of all pupils will be addressed in the lesson.

The personal development of pupils is good. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and have great confidence that adults and other pupils in the school will help them if there is a difficulty. They understand the need to keep themselves healthy and how to go about this. Pupils' enjoyment of their time in school helps them to achieve well and be well prepared for the next stage in their education. They help determine how their school community works together through class decisions and the work of the school council. The care given to all pupils is good. They are helped to make good progress because of the way the staff know all pupils well and their interests and needs. Safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements.

The extensive out of school clubs support a good curriculum, which is stimulating and varying, as exemplified by the use of the extensive school grounds through Forest Schools' activities and the learning of French. Literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) are well developed across the curriculum. Similar use of cross-curricular work to improve skills and knowledge in mathematics is inconsistent.

The good leadership and management throughout the school has enabled the school to make good improvement, particularly in raising standards. The thorough and accurate self-evaluation involving all stakeholders helps support the good capacity to make further improvements. The school's work to encourage community cohesion is good as pupils and staff work well together in school and their local community.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides all children with a secure and enjoyable introduction to school in a well equipped and safe environment. The phase is well led and managed, with very good relationships with parents. The small and varying size of the class from year to year means that the skill levels on entry to Reception vary from year to year, but generally they are in line with the levels typical of their age. Children make good progress, particularly in writing and linking sounds and letters, and most children reach slightly above average standards by the end of the year.

Regular and accurate assessment of children's progress is used in planning to meet individual children's needs, but these assessments are not easily shared with other staff due to the storage arrangements. Regular conversations with parents, including 'How to help your child at home' meetings, support parents in working with the school in the development of their children's skills. There is a good blend of adult-led and independent child-initiated learning, regular phonics sessions and good use of the outside environment, all of which ensure that the children make good progress. The various activities link to the theme of the week, as seen when children 'dug for fossils' in the sand tray and used magnifying lenses to explore their 'finds'.

Arrangements to support children's welfare are good. They are helped to understand how to be healthy through hygiene routines, healthy snacks and plenty of physical activity. Children worked well together, demonstrated good speaking and listening skills, and had a good awareness of appropriate social behaviour.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate the improvement of standards by using assessment to improve the match of work and challenge for different ability groups.
- Raise pupils' achievement in mathematics by increasing its use across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress from their entry to school and, by the end of Year 5, achieve above national expectations for this year group. Small cohorts mean that results from year to year can vary, but there has been a rising trend over time reflecting the school priorities to raise standards.

The school has developed comprehensive assessment and tracking systems and these reflect the improvements made, particularly in writing, where standards at Key Stage 1 and in Year 5 are now above average. Currently, the school is also looking to reflect this improvement in mathematics, where standards are just below average at Key Stage 1 and progress through Years 3 to 5 is not as brisk as in English.

Aspirational targets are set and achieved by the majority of pupils. Individuals who are not making enough progress, or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are identified early and support put in place to enable these pupils to achieve their expected levels.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good. The 'value' themes that form the basis for assemblies is reflected throughout the school in displays and in the way pupils behave and discuss the value. Cultural understanding is developed well through teaching about other countries and religions and involvement in charity appeals, and is now being broadened through the links with a school in Belarus. The behaviour of the pupils is excellent. They support and are respectful of each other and of the staff, and spoke of how this value of respect and reverence was not 'just for school'.

Pupils lead healthy lives and understand the need to eat healthily and to exercise 'in order to concentrate'. Pupils know how to keep safe. Pupils greatly enjoy their time in school and they speak very enthusiastically of the many good things about school, including relationships and

the 'Friends Meeting Place' in the playground which supports this. The school is at the heart of the local community and the pupils participate regularly in events, including singing at weddings. The school council has influence over various aspects of school life and pupils know that the council is a way for their opinions to be voiced.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good across the school. The very good relationships between adults and pupils encourage pupils to develop independence in expressing themselves, as shown when Year 4 pupils discussed the writing skills needed in preparing explanatory texts. Good questioning and ongoing assessment ensure that learning is enjoyable and that pupils make good progress in their learning. Marking has improved considerably and is now effective in raising standards, by showing pupils how to improve their work. Praise and clear learning points are given and pupils have the opportunity to comment. Pupils are clear about their targets and what they need to do to achieve these targets, and they spoke positively of how marking and targets help them improve their work. Teaching assistants work well with the teachers and are particularly effective in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress. Good use is made of ICT to increase the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the lesson. The varying needs of mixed-age classes are well planned for, although planning is not always specific to the needs of different ability groups, which results in inconsistent levels of challenge.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is stimulating and varying and meets all statutory requirements. Appropriate priority is given to the core subjects and ICT, the latter being greatly supported by the ICT suite, which enables all pupils to achieve good standards in ICT. There is good provision for literacy across the curriculum and, appropriately, the school has identified mathematics as a priority for cross-curricular development as it is not yet effective enough in raising achievement. The promotion of personal development is a strength of the school and the speaking and listening skills of all pupils are of a high standard and support their future progress. Pupils spoke of the excellent provision for out of school clubs as one of the 'best things' about the school. These enable pupils to develop a variety of interests and skills. Parents also praise the 'excellent after school activities, sporting and otherwise' run by staff who 'go the extra mile'. High quality music provision enables pupils to have instrumental tuition, participate in a pyramid orchestra and to achieve a high standard of singing.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good quality care for all pupils. Staff are committed to ensuring that pupils enjoy their time in school, achieve well and are safe. Parents speak very positively of the 'excellent provision' of the walking bus, hot lunches and the 'Wake and Shake' sessions contributing to pupils' healthy lifestyles. Systems and procedures for health and safety meet the necessary requirements. All pupils are helped to raise their own standards through consistent marking, the process of setting targets and the opportunities to evaluate their own work. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given useful guidance to help them achieve

well, although planning is not sufficiently specific in identifying the next steps in learning for each ability group.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management have made good improvement to the school since the last inspection. There is a clear direction from the headteacher and the new senior management team have accepted their increased responsibilities with enthusiasm. This means that the school now has a much better picture of itself and of what it needs to do to improve further. Self-evaluation is accurate, appropriate priorities are identified in the school development plan and success measured against the outcomes.

Challenging, but realistic, targets are now being set to raise standards. The monitoring of teaching and learning is effective and contributes to the raised achievement, as strengths and points for development are highlighted to ensure good quality teaching. School leaders work successfully to ensure there is good racial harmony and equal opportunities for all in the school. There is good deployment of resources and the school has successfully addressed staffing difficulties caused by a shortfall in the budget. The governing body has a range of skills and experience, is able to support and challenge the school, and so is well placed to make a good contribution to further improvements.

While the promotion of community cohesion is good, as yet there are insufficient links between pupils and people in other parts of the world.

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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?	2
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?	2
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?	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	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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 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

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?	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

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

3 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Offenham CE First School, Offenham, WR11 8SD

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and taking part in your lessons and your assembly. We think you go to a good school and this is what we found out.

- Your headteacher and all the adults in the school care a lot about you and work hard to make sure you enjoy school, learn well and are kept safe.
- You work hard in your lessons and think that your teachers are kind and helpful.
- Your teachers help you to make good progress and reach standards that are above those expected for your age.
- You behave very well and look after each other.
- You have lots of interesting clubs after school, which you enjoy taking part in.
- You contribute a lot to your village community.
- You know about healthy lifestyles and are able to make good choices about how to stay healthy.

We have asked your teachers to do two things that, with your help, will assist in making your school even better:

- plan work to make sure that all of you are challenged to do the very best you can
- make sure that you have opportunities to develop your skills in mathematics in all parts of the curriculum.

My best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Batelen

Lead inspector