

# Gateway Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123016
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327831
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Earish

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	217
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Squadron Leader Mark Sewart (acting)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Gay Hennessy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 July 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Netheravon Close Carterton OX18 3SF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01993 842189
<b>Fax number</b>	01993 842595

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average-sized primary school. Well over three quarters of the pupils are from service families stationed at a nearby RAF base. This means that the number of pupils who enter and leave the school other than at the normal time is very much higher than average. The proportion eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above that found nationally. The largest group consists of those with moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is broadly similar to national figures. The school has achieved the Healthy School Award and the Activemark. It has more recently received an International School Award in recognition of its work in International Education. Currently, there are unprecedented variations in the number of pupils on roll due to the rebuilding of staff quarters at RAF Brize Norton, overseas postings and the impending relocation of all the service personnel from RAF Lyneham.

## 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 where pupils achieve well. Pupils in all classes are eager to learn, enjoy coming to school and behave well. The quality of pastoral care is exceptionally strong. One parent, representing the views of many, wrote, 'As an RAF family we feel the school is very understanding of our way of life. When my husband is deployed to Afghanistan for four months I know I will have the school's support with any changes my child may go through. They understand the ups and downs of military life.' The school is about to launch a website where parents, including those on active service, can log on and monitor their children's progress.

Good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a good start to their education. Most children are working at levels that are appropriate for their age by the start of Year 1. Despite the high mobility, pupils attain above average standards overall by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6. Achievement and progress are good. The school presents a complex picture due to the substantial turnover of pupils. In any one year group over half of the pupils could be new to the school, either returning from schools elsewhere or preparing to leave. However, detailed analysis of the performance data for different groups of pupils and a scrutiny of their work show they generally make good progress from their starting points at the school and achieve well. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are making good progress against their targets. This is because teaching assistants ensure that gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding are quickly and systematically addressed.

Achievement is good because teaching and learning are of good quality. This is because teachers are skilful at helping pupils to understand what they are expected to learn, grouping pupils carefully, varying the activities and choosing the best methods to use. However, teachers sometimes spend too much time introducing tasks and fail to fully utilise the pupils' well-developed skills at working on their own or with a partner. This means they do not always learn as fast as they could.

Another factor supporting the pupils' good achievement is the interesting curriculum that captures their enthusiasm for learning and eagerness to find out more about the world around them. Teachers are constantly looking for innovative ways of making links between subjects to make learning interesting and challenging. However, more remains to be done, including increasing opportunities for writing across the curriculum. The range of school clubs and activities is good and adds much to the pupils' enjoyment and enthusiasm for school.

Care, guidance and support are good and the pastoral aspects are outstanding. The seamless teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures good support for pupils with moderate and other learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These pupils are fully included in all aspects of the life of the school. Academic guidance and support is good overall. There are good systems to track individual pupils' performance so that teachers can quickly identify underachievement and deal with it. However, the systems for tracking groups of pupils who attend the school for varying periods are less well developed. Consequently, some of these groups have less guidance on the next steps in their learning.

Personal development and care are good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and about the importance of diet and exercise. They treat each other with respect, behave well and help each other. They make a good contribution to the community, through participating in local and national events, charity fund-raising and decision-making through the school council and Eco committee.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and staff are personally committed to building effective partnerships between the school, the home and the community. The promotion of equal opportunities is strong. The most important areas for improvement have been accurately identified and appropriate actions are being taken to tackle the issues. The school has rightly recognised the need to increase the influence of subject area leaders on the quality of learning across the school. A good start has been made at developing their skills at matching accurately subject areas to the needs of individuals and groups. However, more remains to be done to ensure that pupils always learn as fast as they can. The school's good track record at including all learners and dismantling their barriers to learning means there is a good capacity for further improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of education in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children start school with below average skills, especially in communication, language and literacy and number. They make good progress and achieve well because teaching and learning are of good quality. Most children start Year 1 with abilities similar to those expected for their age. They behave well and thoroughly enjoy the variety of learning opportunities organised for them. Teachers ensure there is a good balance between the activities chosen by the children and those designed by the adults. Children are encouraged to make choices and grow in independence as they get older. Letters and sounds are taught systematically and adults use every opportunity to develop children's speaking and listening skills to good effect. Observations and assessments of the children as they work are detailed and helpful. Adults are sharing these assessments so that activities can be better adapted to meet children's individual learning targets and guide their learning. The setting is well lead and managed. Children's welfare is promoted extremely well. Adults are extremely good at supporting vulnerable children or those who need extra attention. Families really appreciate the help and support they receive to guide them through difficult times, for example when a parent is posted away on active service.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Sharpen the use of assessment information to develop a clearer picture of the differential rates of progress made by different groups of pupils who attend the school for varying periods of time.
- Increase the influence of subject area leaders at monitoring the quality of learning to sustain pupils' rapid progress.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The school sets challenging targets for pupils, including those with learning difficulties, and most meet them. From below expected starting points, by the end of Year 2 standards are above average overall. The weaker subject is writing which is just above average. Standards are above average overall by Year 6. The most recent national tests show that, compared with mathematics, a much higher proportion of pupils reached and exceeded the expected levels in English and science. The school's tracking data shows that pupils in the current Year 6 are attaining higher standards in mathematics.

Progress and achievement are good. The substantial number of pupils arriving and leaving and staying for different periods of time as well as those returning and then leaving again presents

a very complex picture indeed. A sampling of pupils' work and a very detailed analysis of the differential rates of progress made by different groups of pupils during their time at the school shows they make good progress and achieve well from their starting points at the school. Those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mostly to do with reading and writing, are also making good progress and achieving well. This occurs because they receive good quality help.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions, are good because the school has put considerable efforts into building a caring and respectful community. Parents appreciate the strong emphasis on nurturing pupils' personal development. One parent wrote, 'we have two children at the school...both have matured and developed with confidence under the care of all the teachers.' Pupils form good relationships with adults, and with each other, and have positive attitudes to learning. Consequently, behaviour is good. They greatly enjoy their education because 'teachers help us learn and make it fun' with many exciting activities that enrich their lives in school. Pupils are well aware of the importance of healthy eating and staying safe. This has been recognised through the award of the Activemark and Healthy School Status. Pupils participate fully in the good range of sporting and after school clubs and activities. Members of the school council and the Eco committee take their responsibilities very seriously and are very aware of the balance between personal rights and responsibilities. Pupils' good levels of basic skills and their well-developed team working skills prepare them successfully for the next stage of their education. Attendance is above average and is further confirmation that they enjoy coming to school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers ensure at the beginning of lessons that pupils have a clear understanding of what they must do and achieve by the end of each session. They plan effectively to meet the needs of all learners in the mixed-age classes and work closely with teaching assistants. Consequently, pupils of all abilities have positive attitudes to learning and achieve well. This is particularly effective for those pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and is helping to accelerate their progress in reading and writing. Pupils are usually given challenging activities which help them to develop their thinking and express their ideas. In a Year 6 literacy lesson, for example, pupils were engaged in lively discussions in order to empathise with characters in a novel they had been reading. They asked probing questions and used a good range of dramatic techniques to develop further their understanding of the character's motivations and actions. Occasionally, however, progress slows because teachers spend too much time introducing tasks and do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to be involved or use their well-developed skills at working independently or in groups. Pupils are increasingly involved in assessing their own learning and teachers often give them good written and verbal feedback on what they need to do to improve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a good range of activities for its pupils. The curriculum is being adapted to make it even more challenging, relevant and exciting by linking subjects together thematically to increase the pupils' enjoyment of their learning. However, the school recognises that more remains to be done. For example, the teachers are exploring different ways to extend pupils' writing across subjects. A particularly good feature is the way in which it meets the needs of pupils of different abilities and ages within the mixed-age classes. There is a strong commitment to developing pupils' creativity, and the school is working successfully towards the Artsmark accreditation. For example, the school has been involved in the Oxfordshire Art Project linked with schools in Baltimore, USA. This culminated in an exhibition of artwork at the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford and an exchange of work with their American partner schools. The curriculum for pupils with moderate and other learning difficulties and/or disabilities, set out in their clear individual education plans, is good. Enrichment is effective and includes a good range of extra-curricular activities - numerous sporting, musical and cultural activities that support pupils' personal development well. The school has worked hard to give International Education a high priority to increase the pupils' awareness of ethnic diversity. Activities include an International Week, an African project and International Club which meets after school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school is a safe, secure environment in which pupils feel happy and well cared for. Pastoral care is outstanding and the school works exceptionally well with parents and outside agencies to ensure pupils' well-being and progress. Robust systems safeguard children and promote a good level of health and safety. As a result, pupils and parents have confidence in the staff and the school. Academic guidance and support is good overall. The school has made a good start at helping pupils understand exactly what they need to do to improve their work by setting them individual targets to achieve and involving them in their own assessment. There are good systems to track the performance of individual pupils, and teachers quickly identify underachievement and deal with it. However, the school does not have a sufficiently clear view of the progress made by pupils who attend for varying periods of time. This is because its systems for tracking the progress of these pupils do not provide the necessary detail.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leaders at all levels are good at promoting equal opportunities and eliminating discrimination through raising the pupils' expectations of what they can achieve and providing interesting and challenging activities for them. Detailed and accurate self-evaluation and monitoring of teaching and learning by the senior leadership team has resulted in an improvement plan of good quality to support these aspirations. A key feature of this plan is to increase the influence of subject area leaders in monitoring and evaluating quality of learning for all groups of pupils across the school to accelerate further the rate at which pupils make progress.

Governance is good. The governors have good knowledge and understanding of the issues facing the school and provide good leadership and levels of challenge. The governors are increasingly involved in the strategic management of the school.

Community cohesion is of good quality. The school has reached out well to the wider community in very many ways, for example through working with the RAF to support families with a mother or father on active duties abroad. This has a very positive impact on the children's schoolwork and the stability and well-being of families.



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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?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 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**

01 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gateway Primary School, Carterton, OX18 3SF

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we came to inspect your school. You go to a good school and receive a good education. Here is a list of some of the many good things about it.

- You work hard at school and make good progress.
- Your behaviour is good, and you told us that you really enjoy school and we could see that you do!
- Your curriculum is good and there is a splendid range of out-of-school clubs and activities that you all thoroughly enjoy.
- You are taught well, and when you find work hard you are given the right sort of help.
- You are knowledgeable about healthy eating and lifestyles. I hope you will continue to eat lots of fruit and vegetable and take lots of exercise!
- You enjoy taking on responsibility and representing your classmates on the school council.

All of the adults in your school want it to be even better. To help them to do this we think that there are two things to do next.

- Your teachers are going to find new ways of keeping track of the progress made by those of you who attend the school for varying periods of time. This will help them find out if they can improve the way you learn.
- I would also like those teachers in charge of subjects to find out more about the different ways they could check how well you are learning. This will help them to make your work even better than it is.

You can all help by continuing to work hard and by listening carefully to your teachers' advice. We are sure that you are ready for this challenge!

Yours faithfully

John Earish

Lead Inspector