

Orchard School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134185
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	328848
Inspection dates	8–9 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Natalia Power

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)	208
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	37
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Kerry
Headteacher	Miss Amanda Lavelle
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Oxford Road Sidcup DA14 6LW
Telephone number	020 8300 4878
Fax number	020 8309 9343

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	8–9 September 2008
Inspection number	328848

© 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

This one-form entry primary school is slightly smaller than is usually expected. Mobility is higher than average and there are more girls than boys at the school. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The majority of pupils are from a White British background, and the rest come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds with Black African pupils forming the next largest group. The number of pupils with statements of educational need and the percentage with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties, and a smaller number have speech, language and communication difficulties. The proportion of pupils for whom English is not their first language is higher than average. The school achieved the Healthy Schools Award, the Inclusion Mark and the Basic Skills Quality Mark. A new headteacher has been in place since April 2008.

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. Under the new leadership of the energetic headteacher it is beginning to improve rapidly. The 2008 test results at the end of Year 6, in which pupils did better than their national counterparts in English, reflect the school's determination to accept no excuses for underachievement. Parents overwhelmingly support the school and appreciate the changes, which the headteacher is bringing about after a period of staff turbulence. One commented, 'The school has come through a lot of change in terms of staffing over the past 12 months. Despite this everyone has come across as positive and enthusiastic!'

The school cares for its pupils well and their personal development is good. The mission statement, 'Aspire to achieve, Believe in yourself, Care for each other', is strongly reinforced and reflects the school's success in promoting inclusiveness. Care, support and guidance are good. The considerable number of pupils who join the school at different stages are given immediate support. The school council produces a booklet providing helpful advice, and the effective 'buddy' system helps new pupils to integrate quickly. Pupils' needs are diagnosed early and measures put in place, to enable those at an early stage of language acquisition and pupils with learning difficulties to make progress in line with others. One parent commented, 'My child's difficulties were spotted very early by various teachers, and they took time and effort to help him.'

Within this safe environment pupils grow into well-behaved and considerate young people, and this was put clearly by one pupil who said, 'I like the way everyone treats each other'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and the school satisfactorily promotes pupils' understanding of the world around them, the nation and the local community. Their enjoyment of their education is satisfactory as seen in their improving attendance.

By the end of Year 6 in the 2008 tests pupils reached broadly the standards expected for their age. Pupils make sound progress. After a satisfactory start in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), pupils' progress slows in Years 1 and 2, and standards in Key Stage 1 are below average. The school is aware of the dip in standards in Years 1 and 2 and is putting in place measures to strengthen teaching and increase challenge for these pupils, and these are beginning to have an impact. Overall fewer pupils reach the highest levels than is the case nationally, though there are signs of improvement in the 2008 Year 6 test results, especially in English. Nevertheless, pupils are not always given sufficiently challenging targets to encourage them to do their very best, and work is not always effectively tailored to the needs of high attaining pupils.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There is a tendency for pupils to be passive in lessons, which can be too teacher-led. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to engage in visits to places they are currently learning about, and there is an exciting programme of clubs and activities. Generally, pupils are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of schooling, but teachers do not always use information and communication technology (ICT) to extend learning in a range of subjects across the curriculum.

The leadership team is currently not at full strength, due to staff changes. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future and has a realistic understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school works in effective partnership with parents, and outside agencies, including businesses who contribute to the attractive outdoor learning areas. There is a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter the Nursery with attainment on entry which is below national expectations, especially in the skills that lead to literacy and numeracy. Staff have established good induction procedures, which give children a calm beginning. One parent of a child with additional needs said, 'My child's induction could not have been better.' Parents commend the warm relationships between staff and children. Arrangements for safeguarding are good, welfare has a high priority and staff identify children with additional needs promptly. Inclusion is a strong feature of the EYFS, helped by the good links with other professionals and the collaborative relationships with parents. Learning takes place outside as well as inside the classrooms, and there is a rich, well resourced mix of activities and trips. Children behave well, and show real interest and enjoyment. Teachers and support staff help children to learn satisfactorily and to develop well. Staff use many formal and informal opportunities to assess individuals' progress but this does not always translate into planning, so that more able children do not always have work that challenges them. Children make satisfactory progress overall in the Foundation stage. They make good progress in personal development, but they do not make enough progress in reading and writing and this holds children back in Key Stage 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to raise standards for all pupils, particularly those in Years 1 and 2, and to challenge higher ability pupils with more demanding work.
- Use ICT more effectively to support learning in all subjects across the curriculum.

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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

2008 test results at the end of Year 6 showed that pupils exceeded national expectations in English and met them in science but were below average in mathematics. Currently standards are broadly average and, from pupils' starting points, achievement is satisfactory.

With more boy-friendly activities in the curriculum, boys achieve broadly in line with girls. The school's strong focus on welcoming new pupils ensures that those who enter the school at different stages make progress in line with others. This is also true of pupils from heritages other than British and those for whom English is not their first language. Pupils with learning difficulties make progress in line with others because their needs are quickly diagnosed and catered for.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is a friendly, harmonious school, where pupils say that 'children are kind'. Pupils are cooperative and enjoy working in a group and helping each other. Community responsibilities are eagerly claimed, whether it is to be a 'buddy' for a new child or a member of the Green Team, clearing litter that blows into the grounds. Older pupils are proud of their involvement in the design of their school building. Pupils learn the school values of caring for others, aspiring

to achieve, and believing in yourself from a very young age. Most have a good grasp of how to stay safe and healthy. Attendance is improving because of concerted efforts by the school and a new zero tolerance of holidays in term-time. However, it is still just below the national average and this is having an impact on pupils' achievement.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and this reflects the rate of pupils' progress. In all classes relationships are good, and teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of behaviour. In turn, pupils respond by listening and participating attentively. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly. However, not all provide sufficient guidance on how pupils can improve their work. Teachers make clear what pupils are expected to learn in the lesson and revise with them what has been learnt at the end. However, pupils do not always take an active part and are expected to sit on the carpet for too long answering teacher-led questions. Some groups are well catered for with special work to help them catch up with others. However, teachers do not always provide sufficiently demanding work for higher-attaining pupils, and as a result these pupils are not sufficiently challenged to produce their best work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school has made its curriculum more engaging by introducing topics that combine humanities with the arts and this has widened pupils' experiences. Pupils particularly enjoy the visits and visitors that are part of this change. Some of these topics are successful; however, others do not match pupils' abilities and it is not always clear how pupils' skills are developed or how topics interlink. Older pupils are enthusiastic about the practical learning they do in mathematics and many pupils enjoy French from Year 3. While the school encourages literacy across the curriculum, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to use ICT, so that pupils do not systematically develop the full range of skills and know how to apply them.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are cared for and supported very well. Safeguarding procedures and attention to health and safety are rigorous. Pupils with additional needs or English as an additional language are identified early and extra help put in place so that they make as much progress as others. The school offers support to the whole family and this is enhanced by the use of multi-agency meetings. Pupils understand a consistently applied behaviour system. They are delighted when they 'get to the top of the diamond' and receive a reward from the headteacher. Though pupils have effective group targets, they do not, at present have sufficient individual targets, except in English, where literacy targets are making a strong impact on their progress in the subject.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher is beginning to inspire a 'can do' attitude in the school, and this is already reflected in the recent improvements in standards at the end of Year 6. She is working hard to ensure that the school continues to move forward in a period of staff turbulence. Leaders and managers use data adequately to track individual pupils' progress and put in place effective support for underachieving pupils. However, there is still some way to go to ensure that higher-ability groups are effectively supported and challenged. The school acknowledges the need to concentrate its efforts on raising the overall quality of teaching and learning, and providing more challenging whole-school targets. Governors are ready to hold the school to account, and understand what has been achieved and what remains to be done. Leaders have taken satisfactory steps to promote improvement since the last inspection.

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?	3
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	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?	3

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	3
The attendance of learners	3
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?	2

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**

22 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Orchard School, Sidcup, DA14 6LW

You may remember that two inspectors recently visited your school. We started the day by being shown round by two pupils, and their pride in the school was echoed by many of you. Your school is giving you a satisfactory education and you are making progress that is not very different from pupils in the country as a whole.

We were impressed by how well behaved you were, and you told us that you feel safe and secure at school. You told us that most pupils are kind to one another. We agree that the school looks after you well and helps you to grow into happy, confident individuals who are ready to get on with others and help one another. We like the way you take an active part in the school and go out of your way to help new pupils.

We have asked your school to do more to help you all do better, especially those of you who find work quite easy. We have also asked your teachers to build on your enthusiasm for ICT by offering it in more of your subjects. Your headteacher is keen to see you do well, and all the adults are working hard to help you. They give you a curriculum that has many exciting opportunities for you to learn about different topics. They make sure that you know something of the world around you, as well as your own community. In turn, you can do your bit to help by making sure that you attend regularly. Make sure that you all work as hard as you can to get to the top of your class's diamond!

Yours sincerely,

Natalia Power

Lead Inspector