

Oxford Grove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105160
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	336437
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Linda Thomas
Headteacher	Mr Paul Kelly
Date of previous school inspection	6 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons or parts of lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, records of meetings, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 164 parent and carer questionnaires were received and analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how successfully leaders are working to raise standards, particularly in reading and writing, by the end of Year 6
- if teaching is of consistent quality throughout the school
- the effectiveness of action taken to improve attendance.

Information about the school

This average sized school has Early Years Foundation Stage provision in Nursery and Reception classes. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special education need, is above average. The most common of these special needs are moderate learning and speech and communication difficulties. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is high and some of these are at an early stage of learning English. The school has gained a number of awards, including Healthy Schools status and the Activemark.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school provides a caring and friendly setting in which to learn. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear vision for school improvement and together provide focused educational direction. Staff and governors have a shared commitment to raising standards and a strong team ethos is evident. Leaders and managers know the school's strengths and weaknesses and this enables them to prioritise areas for development. This is seen in the targeting of improvement in attendance, which was low. The school has worked closely with the educational welfare officer and the parents and carers of pupils who did not attend regularly. This has proved successful and attendance is now average.

Pupils make satisfactory progress and by the end of Year 6 attain average standards in English, mathematics and science. This represents satisfactory achievement from their starting points on entering school. The school has worked successfully over the last year to raise standards in reading by providing a wider range of reading material and making guided reading sessions more focused on developing individual pupil skills. Training has been given to develop staff expertise in teaching writing and this has led to increasing numbers of pupils making good progress in this aspect of English. Nonetheless, the school rightly acknowledges there is more to do, particularly in terms of extending pupils' vocabulary to enrich their creative writing and providing more opportunity to write purposefully across the curriculum. In mathematics, pupils are not adept at using their calculation skills to solve number problems in new situations.

The main reason that progress is satisfactory rather than better is that teaching and learning are inconsistent. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve and do not always use assessment information effectively to suitably challenge pupils of different ability. The role of the recently formed middle management team in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning is not fully developed. This leads to teachers not being sufficiently accountable for the progress their pupils make. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and this contributes significantly to the harmonious atmosphere evident throughout the school. They have positive attitudes to their learning and enjoy their activities. A wide range of enrichment activities adds interest and variety to the curriculum. The care and well-being of pupils is at the heart of the school's work and this is much appreciated by parents and carers. Pupils say they are looked after well and feel safe and secure in school.

Self-evaluation is accurate and enables the school to identify and target the correct areas for development. The school's plans reflect what it needs to do to consolidate success and secure further improvement. Governors are supportive of the school but are not proactive in holding leaders and managers to account for its performance. Essential

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systems are established sufficiently to enable leaders and managers to take the school forward. This indicates that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards, particularly in writing and mathematics by:
 - extending pupils' vocabulary to enrich their creative writing and providing more opportunities to write purposefully across the curriculum
 - improving pupils' ability in applying their mathematical calculation skills in new situations to solve real life number problems.
- Iron out inconsistencies in teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring teachers always use assessment information effectively to set challenging work that matches the abilities of different groups of pupils
 - raising teachers' expectations so that all are fully aware of what pupils can achieve
 - making sure teachers are fully accountable for the progress their pupils make.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - improving the skills of middle managers in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning and taking action to bring about improvement
 - developing the expertise of governors in holding the school to account for its performance.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils are interested in their work and eager to do well. They are enthusiastic and maintain concentration for lengthy periods. They particularly enjoy practical activities. This was evident in a science lesson for pupils in Year 6 in which they were using role play to create a variety of food chains. Pupils enjoy books and read well. They lack a wide vocabulary to enable them to enrich their creative writing. Pupils have secure mathematical calculation skills but are not proficient at using these skills in problem-solving activities in new situations. They competently use information and communication technology to support their learning in other subjects. There is no significant difference between the achievements of different groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language make the same progress as other pupils because of the extra support they receive. Pupils are polite and considerate towards others. They are respectful of the traditions and beliefs of people from backgrounds different to their own. Their excellent behaviour promotes a very positive relationship with the local community. Pupils make a good contribution to school life by willingly taking on responsibilities, such as being a member

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of the school council. They know and understand many of the important factors that affect the different aspects of their health. This is shown by the way pupils are adopting healthy lifestyles by eating healthily and taking regular exercise. Pupils are soundly prepared for the next stage of education and their future lives.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers manage classrooms well, so they are calm and friendly places in which to learn. Secure subject knowledge enables teachers to ask relevant questions to probe pupils' knowledge and understanding and take their learning forward. Relationships are good and give pupils the confidence to give answers, even when unsure if they are correct. They know their contributions will be valued. Teaching ensures that pupils are usually engaged in their work and little time is lost. At times, lessons are too teacher directed and pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to explore ideas for themselves. Some teachers do not have a high enough expectation of what pupils can achieve and do not always provide work that is sufficiently challenging; this limits pupils' progress. Teaching assistants are soundly deployed to support pupils, including those with special

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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educational needs and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sports and music clubs, enrich the curriculum. Good use is made of visitors and visits to extend pupils' skills and widen their horizons. The school's commitment to providing a variety of good quality sporting experiences is reflected in it gaining the Activemark. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to refine and extend their writing skills by writing purposefully across the curriculum. The programme for personal development is good and is shown in pupils' good progress in this aspect of their learning.

The school provides a safe learning environment for individuals and groups of pupils. Rigorous child protection procedures and risk assessments are in place. Staff are aware of the steps to take if they have any concerns about the well-being of a pupil. The effective support for vulnerable pupils plays an important role in fostering their learning and development. Good links with outside agencies, including the educational psychologist, ensure extra support for individual pupils is readily available when needed.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders, managers and governors embed ambition and drive improvement in a satisfactory way by focusing the school on priorities. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by middle managers lack sharpness. The school promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination well. It has relevant information about different groups of pupils and effectively checks their performance across the curriculum and their contribution to school life. All safeguarding requirements are met and arrangements are regularly reviewed. The school actively promotes community cohesion. The impact of its work is felt strongly within the school and pupils from different backgrounds get on noticeably well with each other. The school has a good relationship with parents and carers.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start school with skill levels that are below those expected for their age. They make good progress and achieve well across all areas of learning and on entry to Year 1 attain average standards. Induction arrangements are effective in enabling children to quickly settle into everyday routines. Staff work well as a team and relationships between adults and children are good, which has a positive impact on the progress children make. Adults use assessment information well to set children tasks that are interesting and matched well to their individual abilities. Occasionally, the emphasis in activities is on what children are to do rather than what they are to learn. Children are encouraged to make choices for themselves and this makes a good contribution to their development as independent learners. They enjoy their activities and are keen to learn, as was seen when they were excitedly digging in a tray of snow to uncover and identify hidden letters of the alphabet. Children collaborate well in pairs and small groups, taking turns and sharing fairly. Good leadership has rightly identified the need to develop the outdoor area to further support children's learning, particularly in writing. Good quality care places strong emphasis on children's well-being. Parents are appreciative of the way they are kept fully informed about the progress their children make.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

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Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to inspection questionnaires were positive about the school's work and the efforts of all staff. Two parent comments were typical of many: 'I am very happy with Oxford Grove and would not want my child to be anywhere else.' and, 'The school has a very caring and child-centred focus.' A very small minority did not agree that their children were making enough progress. Inspection evidence shows that pupils make satisfactory progress. Nonetheless, inconsistencies in teaching and learning mean that occasionally some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oxford Grove Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 164 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 241 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	87	53	75	46	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	115	70	49	30	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	77	47	81	49	6	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	76	46	73	45	13	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	89	54	70	43	5	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	83	51	70	43	11	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	77	47	86	52	0	0	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	69	42	83	51	5	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	61	37	88	54	9	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	78	48	76	46	6	4	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	53	32	102	62	3	2	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	78	48	78	48	6	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	89	54	69	42	4	2	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



15 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oxford Grove Primary School, Bolton, BL1 3EJ

Thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the many interesting things you do. Yours is a friendly school that helps you make satisfactory progress and reach average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time you leave.

What we found out about your school

- Your behaviour is excellent and makes a good contribution to the welcoming and happy atmosphere in the school.
- You enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as being a member of the school council.
- Attendance has improved and now meets the national average.
- Adults look after you well and make sure you are safe, both in and around school and on visits.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to help you do better.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Improve your writing skills and your ability to use what you already know in mathematics to solve number problems in new situations.
- Make sure teaching always makes you think hard and make good progress.

All of you are a credit to your school and can help it improve further by continuing to try your best in your activities.

Yours sincerely

Mr Melvyn Hemmings

Lead inspector

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