

Owler Brook Nursery Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107007
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	336785
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Jane Hughes

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	313
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms C Rawlings
Headteacher	Mrs L Goodhand
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation, assessment information, records of lesson monitoring, the school improvement plan, selected policies, pupils' work, 166 parental questionnaires and 16 staff questionnaires.

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

- the effectiveness of the school's senior leaders, governors and subject leaders in raising standards and pupils' achievement
- the standards pupils attain and their achievement, particularly in mathematics, reading and writing
- consistency of teaching for all ages and groups of pupils
- The effectiveness of procedures to promote pupils' attendance.

Information about the school

This larger than average school operates from a building provided by a private funding initiative nine years ago. More than four pupils in five speak English as an additional language. Sixty per cent of pupils are of Pakistani origin. Increasing numbers of refugees/asylum seekers, mainly from Eastern Europe, join the school at different times during the year. Fewer pupils than average have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Almost 35% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school has attained Healthy Schools' status and Activemark. At the time of the inspection, the substantive headteacher and deputy headteacher had been absent from school since August 2009. The chair and vice-chair of governors resigned at the end of the 2009 summer term. An associate headteacher, associate deputy headteacher, and chair of governors had been appointed in temporary roles, all from a local partner school.

The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises Nursery and Reception classes. There are 52 part-time Nursery places available each morning and afternoon. For the 2009/2010 academic year only, there are an additional 26 part-time morning and afternoon Nursery places available. A children's centre shares the same site but was not part of this inspection.

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

This is a satisfactory school. It has some good features. Its foremost strengths lie in pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, their good behaviour and the strong care, guidance and support the school provides. Equally, there is a very effective partnership with nearby schools and with the children's centre that operates from the same site. These links help to develop staff skills and also promote the benefits of education to parents and carers. The school works very hard to encourage parents to bring their children to school regularly, although manual recording systems inhibit the efficiency of this work. In addition, a few parents persist in taking their children on extended holidays abroad during term time.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and develop enthusiastic attitudes to learning. However, this early momentum is not sustained in Key Stage 1, where pupils' rate of progress slows to a satisfactory level. As a result, pupils do not attain high enough standards by the end of Year 2. This is particularly so in mathematics. This is because teaching, particularly in Year 1, lacks sufficient challenge, and pupils are not involved actively enough in their learning. Systems to assess and track pupils' progress are not developed well enough to help teachers to pitch lessons at the correct level.

The school's close collaboration with its partner school, brokered by the local authority, provides a strong steer to staff, pupils and parents and is helping the school to update effective practices. Through rigorous analysis linked to updated self-evaluation, the new associate leadership has identified appropriate priorities to improve the school's performance. There is a clear determination to strengthen the weaker areas of provision and practice. For example, the reorganised curriculum is already stimulating more interest among pupils in their learning, although more remains to be done. There is a clear strategy in place to address the weaker elements of teaching. Consequently the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. Staffing has been disrupted over the past year and this has had an adverse impact on the rate at which new procedures and practice have developed. Although staff relish the opportunity to take responsibility for school improvement, subject leaders do not monitor or evaluate effectively enough what is happening in their subjects, nor do they influence work across the whole school. The governing body takes a keen interest in the work of the school but, as yet, it does not offer sufficient challenge, rigour or support to ensure that the school moves on at a fast enough pace.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise attainment and pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - improving the quality of teaching and learning from satisfactory to good
 - ensure challenge for all, particularly pupils in Year 1
 - engaging pupils actively in their learning
 - developing further assessment and tracking systems to support pupils' next learning steps.
- Develop good leadership at all levels by:
 - securing a sustainable staffing structure
 - increasing the contribution of subject leaders to whole-school improvement
 - strengthening governance to ensure that the school is held to account through appropriate challenge and support.
- Improve levels of attendance by:
 - working in partnership with the community to highlight the key role of attendance in raising pupils' attainment
 - introducing computerised attendance to provide instant, accurate data.
- 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 achieve satisfactorily even though recent tests and pupils' work show that standards by the end of Year 2 are below average in reading and writing and significantly so in mathematics. This is because teachers have concentrated on improving pupils' literacy skills to the detriment of numeracy. This lack of focus on mathematics illustrates the impact of the identified lack of rigour in the school's monitoring and evaluation of whole-school performance. Standards are rising slowly year-on-year, following a decline three years ago. Groups of pupils arrive in school during the course of the school year and learn to speak English as an additional language. Effective and generously staffed bilingual support ensures that these pupils are well supported in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do as well as other pupils because their needs are identified early and individual support is put in place. Even so, the targets in their individual learning plans are often too general and do not help these pupils to make more rapid progress towards their goals. Recent changes to the curriculum are helping teachers to bring learning to life for the pupils and they say how much more they enjoy these lessons. Nonetheless, there remain too many occasions when pupils are passive learners rather than participating actively in their learning. Although they still behave well, they are not tuned in enough to teachers' messages and this slows their progress. Similarly, there is insufficient challenge in some lessons, particularly for pupils in Year 1, to ensure all groups of pupils move on quickly

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enough. Where teaching matches pupils' needs well, lessons are dynamic and pupils take a fuller part in their learning.

Pupils like school and say that it is a friendly place with little bullying. Almost all parents confirm this. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to stay safe, follow the rules and show respect and tolerance towards one another. The diverse make-up of the school community helps to ensure that pupils value differences and show an interest in other cultures. As a result, different groups of pupils play and learn sociably together. Pupils have a reasonable understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and make active use of the spacious and exciting outdoor environment. Older pupils happily seize rare opportunities to take responsibility, for example as they take turns to be playground monitors, a job they carry out with conscientious pride. There are very few procedures through which pupils may air their views or help to change school life. Pupils develop satisfactory skills in support of their future economic well-being. Despite the school's diligent procedures, more pupils than average are persistently absent from school. In part, this is due to the commendable way the school continues to register pupils, when it is known that they have left the school but their destination is unknown, in order to keep them on record for safeguarding reasons.

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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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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How effective is the provision?

Lessons are orderly and pupils listen carefully to adults. Relationship between teachers, support staff and pupils are good. Adults use praise to good effect to galvanise pupils into more proactive learning. However, systems to assess and track pupils' learning and progress lack detail, regularity and rigour. As a result, adults do not always expect enough from pupils and so pitch the level of work at too low a level. This means that pupils do not receive enough challenge to accelerate their learning.

Recently introduced creative elements within the now thematic curriculum are generating more interest among pupils, although the impact has yet to become fully evident in terms of pupils' outcomes. Adjustments to the timetable are helping to extend teaching time in order to meet pupils' needs more effectively.

The good arrangements for meeting the pastoral needs of all pupils, including those most vulnerable, enable all pupils to settle well into school life, no matter when they join the school. The school makes considerable efforts, for example, to help families settle into the area and, at times, even helps them with finding homes and furniture. Parents particularly appreciate the school's caring ethos. Typically, they describe the school's provision as, 'very supportive', 'very helpful in every way', and, 'brilliant'.

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?

The associate leadership team have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It is imbuing staff with ambition to ensure the school moves forward at a faster pace. The team has identified where teaching and learning need to improve in order to accelerate pupils' progress and so raise standards. For example, subject leaders are now required to monitor provision across the school in their area of responsibility. Specific training needs are identified and a coherent programme is developing so that teachers have the required knowledge to teach effectively across all subjects. For instance, handwriting skills are a current focus, as are elements of the mathematics' curriculum. There is a clear impetus for improvement at all levels in the school. Strategies to address these are newly in place and show small but steady improvements in overall performance so far.

The governing body does not hold the school clearly enough to account for its

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performance, nor does it offer sufficient challenge to the school. The associate chair of governors is beginning to attend to this. The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination satisfactorily, although more remains to be done to ensure all groups of pupils reach their potential. Safeguarding arrangements take priority and meet current legislative guidelines. At the time of the inspection, the school had robust systems in place to keep pupils safe. The school population reflects the great diversity of the local community and staff are very careful to ensure different faiths, cultures and social circumstances are given equal regard. Pupils learn about the work of local, national and international charities and support them through various fund-raising activities. The school liaises closely with the adjacent children's centre. Parents and community members express their appreciation at the many courses and opportunities on offer. For instance, several adults who now work in school developed their skills through adult and family learning courses at the centre.

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
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children respond very well to the lively start they experience in the Nursery and Reception classes and in particular to:

- ¿ the vibrant learning environment, both indoors and outside
- ¿ a wide range of interesting and colourful resources
- ¿ imaginative learning experiences planned by staff
- ¿ well-judged individual support and guidance
- ¿ high quality pastoral care.

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

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Staff are particularly good at preparing children to learn effectively. Almost all children speak English as an additional language when they join the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children learn and develop well because key workers ensure that children feel secure in small groups within this large setting. They monitor children's development carefully and record their observations regularly, thus building up a very clear picture of children's learning and development. This underpins the good tracking of children's progress and enables staff to provide appropriate levels of challenge in daily activities and so help to accelerate their progress. Children enter the Nursery with low skills and abilities, particularly their language, mathematical and social skills. Children make good, and sometimes, very good progress. Just over half attain the early learning goals for their age, including the higher attainers. Even so, communication, language and literacy skills are weaker than other areas of learning on entry to Year 1. Children delight in many of the fun activities teachers prepare for them. For instance, children in the Nursery were fascinated by the popcorn-making process. They gasped and giggled as the corn starting popping out of the machine and were able to work out that the individual kernels of corn had 'cooked' in the machine. Transfer arrangements are good when children move on to the next phase of their education.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Robust systems ensure children's welfare needs are carefully met. Parents feel very well informed about daily routines and adults' expectations of their children. They also know that they are welcome in school and many can be found working alongside their children at the start of the sessions.

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

Views of parents and carers

A large proportion of parents returned questionnaires to the inspection team. The vast majority of parents are overwhelmingly satisfied with the school. They report that the school keeps their children safe and that their children really enjoy school. They feel well informed about the progress their children make at Owlter Brook. A small number of questionnaires contained criticisms but these were individual matters and revealed no particular trends.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Owler Brook Nursery Infants' 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 166 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 313 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	89	54	38	23	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	98	59	32	19	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	74	45	52	31	2	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	67	40	58	35	2	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	79	48	44	27	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	69	42	55	33	4	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	77	46	47	28	3	2	0	0
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)	61	37	65	39	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	66	40	62	37	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	65	39	62	37	2	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	54	33	68	41	1	1	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	64	39	61	37	2	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	81	49	48	29	1	1	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.



16 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Owler Brook Nursery Infants School, Sheffield, S4 8HQ

Thank you for being so polite and cheerful when we inspected your school recently. I am writing this letter to tell you what we found.

Your school is a satisfactory school. It has some good features. These include how well all the adults look after you and how kind you are to each other. We all saw how well you behave too! Your school is a very happy place and lots of you told us how friendly it is at Owler Brook. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes enjoy a fun start to school life with lots of interesting things to do and learn. They play and learn very well and this helps them when they move into Year 1. Those of you who are in Years 1 and 2 also try hard but you do not always learn as quickly as you could. This is because you are not always given hard enough work to do. You all understand a lot about how to stay safe which is very important.

One of the reasons for our visit was to see what your school could do better. We have asked all the people who help to run your school to:

- make sure you do better and reach higher standards, particularly in mathematics in Years 1 and 2
- help all the adults who have special jobs to do them even better so that the school improves
- ensure that governors check carefully what is working well in school and what needs to be better
- help more of you come to school regularly.

Your families can help by ensuring you attend school regularly. You can help by showing them your work regularly so that they can see how much you miss when you are not at school.

We send you our very best wishes for the future.

Jane Hughes

Lead inspector

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