

Oxford Road Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109786
Local Authority	Reading
Inspection number	337374
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Janet Sinclair

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	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs V Barker
Headteacher	Mrs K Salter
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons and nine part-lessons, and scrutinised a sample of work, seeing eight teachers and several teaching assistants. They spent the majority of the school days observing learning. They also held meetings with governors, senior staff and groups of pupils. They carefully analysed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, including policies, the school improvement plan and records of pupils' progress. They considered the 127 responses from questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- rates of progress for all groups of pupils, particularly in writing and mathematics
- the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the extent to which teaching, the curriculum and pupils' involvement in their own learning impacts on raising standards and pupils' enjoyment
- the impact of leadership in raising standards and the success and sustainability of the initiatives put in place to bring about improvement.

Information about the school

Oxford Road is an average-sized primary school. The Early Years Foundation Stage caters for Nursery- and Reception-age children. There is a higher than average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, some of whom are at an early stage of learning English. There are 28 different languages spoken within the school. An above average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These are mainly moderate learning and speech and language difficulties. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is above the national average.

The current headteacher has been in post for two years. The senior leadership team have been appointed within this time.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It is led by an excellent headteacher who has developed a strong leadership and staff team that together have created a vibrant learning environment for pupils. The school has many strengths and some outstanding features, including the care and guidance pupils receive, the quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their contribution to the community. Parents are very supportive and are pleased that their children enjoy school and make good progress. Two comments sum up the views of most: 'I have the utmost confidence that my child's happiness and education matter to the school' and, 'the teachers are very caring and are supported by an excellent headteacher.'

Good induction and a supportive and caring atmosphere help children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle well into school routines and make good progress in their learning. However, the school recognises that children are not given enough responsibility for tidying up their resources so are not learning to take care of equipment or helping to keep their environment safe. Pupils make good progress across the rest of the school as a result of effective teaching and rigorous tracking, which ensures slow progress is quickly identified and remedied. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average. This is an improving picture, particularly in writing where the school has introduced a published scheme to good effect. There has also been a huge improvement in attainment at Key Stage 1 and this is very much due to the actions taken by the school to raise standards. Teaching is good and this is because interesting, well-planned lessons enthuse pupils, ensuring they are keen to learn and behave well. Relationships at all levels are excellent and this makes a strong contribution to effective learning. Sometimes more able pupils are not challenged enough through effective questioning or match of work and this hampers their progress. Assessment is good and pupils are involved through their targets and marking, which helps them to improve. However, the marking of some teachers is less rigorous than others so not all pupils fully understand what they need to do to improve. The curriculum is broad and balanced and well adapted to the varied cultures represented within the school. A good range of enrichment activities support the curriculum well. Pupils support each other extremely well within the school through, for example, their work as school councillors and student teachers. There are high levels of support for all groups, but particularly those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including vulnerable pupils, and those at an early stage of learning English. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and a strong commitment to raising standards further. This is shared by all staff who are fully involved in striving to provide the best possible education for the pupils. There has been good improvement since the

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last inspection. Teaching and progress are now good, standards are rising and pupils receive excellent care. This is due to the rigorous self-evaluation the school has undertaken and its determined approach to tackling areas of weakness. The school has demonstrated a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that assessment, targets and marking are used consistently across the school so that pupil progress is accelerated
 - providing greater challenge for more able pupils through more effective questioning and better match of work.
- Improve the Early Years Foundation Stage by ensuring children have greater responsibility for keeping their learning environment tidy so that they learn the importance of looking after resources.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils work hard and collaborate well in lessons, particularly as talk partners or when, for example, sharing their ideas for poetry reading to make it more interesting. They concentrate particularly well when practising their dance routines or playing the steel pans as an accompaniment to assembly. In one lesson, pupils appreciated opportunities to express their own ideas when writing their version of fairy stories, especially when they turned good characters into bad ones! They also apply themselves very well in mathematics lessons because expectations are made clear and they are supported well. These strategies have helped raise standards so that attainment is now average. Most have a good knowledge of where they are at in their learning due to the effective use of targets, assessing their own and others' work and responding positively to marking. However, some inconsistencies remain so not all pupils benefit fully. Although all groups of pupils achieve well as a result of careful monitoring of their progress, more able pupils do not always do as well as they could in lessons as questioning is sometimes insufficiently challenging to extend their ideas. This means that they do not always make the progress of which they are capable.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are welcoming and work and play harmoniously together. They say that they feel safe in school and confident of effective support should they need it; they find peer mediators very helpful in this context. Although a few parents mentioned bullying as an issue, pupils spoken to felt that there was very little bullying and that when it did occur it was dealt with promptly. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community. For example, the school council have worked hard to improve provision at lunchtime through their involvement in the local School Meals Project. As young teachers they help other pupils with their reading or look after Year 1 pupils at playtimes. They have an excellent understanding and respect for their different cultures and, as one pupil said, 'Our canteen is called the Global Caf☐☐ because of our different nationalities and we are very proud of it.' They

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are considerate and thoughtful of each other's contributions in lessons and around the school and work extremely well together.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are well planned and teachers make good use of resources. For example, in an English lesson, the teacher used a range of newspaper headlines ' some in different languages ' to ensure pupils got a clear idea of the various strategies that newspapers use to engage the reader. Excellent relationships at all levels ensure pupils are committed to their learning even when occasionally there is too much teacher talk and not enough effective questioning. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning through their effective interactions with small groups and individuals. Pupils who speak English as an additional language get good support both from specialist teachers and teaching assistants because all staff have a good understanding of their needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective, well-focused support in small groups to ensure they keep up. Occasionally, there is not enough support for more able pupils through clear match of work or effective

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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questioning and this hampers their progress.

The curriculum is well planned and there is good attention to cross-curricular links, particularly in literacy; the use of information and communication technology is developing well. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the many clubs such as tag rugby, football and hockey that they can attend and which contribute well to keeping them fit. The school gives exemplary support to its most vulnerable pupils and their families, including effective links with a range of outside agencies.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy has established a strong collegiate approach to leadership and management empowering subject leaders and senior staff to be fully involved in the school's effective self-evaluation and to have a rigorous focus on raising standards. Teaching is carefully monitored with clear guidance on areas for improvement and support through coaching, where needed. This has led to a high level of consistency in the quality of teaching. Careful analysis of data by senior staff and subject leaders ensures a good understanding of the next steps in pupils' learning and fully supports the school's drive to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination.

Partnerships are good, including the link with Madrassa, the Muslim after-school club, which enables pupils to gain a greater understanding of Islam. In addition, the links with the Reading Sports Partnership contribute significantly to pupils' sporting prowess. The school is a cohesive community, working closely with its neighbours and the wider national and international communities. For example, through 'Think Quest', pupils are sharing a drama project with a school in America. Governors are well informed and regularly challenge the school. For example, they asked for and were involved in a review of the provision for gifted and talented pupils. Systems for safeguarding pupils are good and systematically reviewed by senior staff and an allocated governor. There are good links with parents and carers and the school does much to encourage and support their involvement in their children's learning. For example, during the inspection, a Portuguese parent read a story to pupils in her own language.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start in the Nursery with skills and abilities that are well below those expected for their age, with many at a very early stage of learning English. They make good progress during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage but few attain the goals expected on entry to Year 1. Nursery- and Reception-age children work together in a large open and airy unit that meets their varying needs well. Teaching is effective because teachers organise a range of child-chosen and teacher-directed activities, which engage the children and promote good learning. For example, several groups of children enjoyed re-enacting and retelling stories such as, 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. Occasionally, questioning does not challenge children enough and this hampers progress. Children enjoy their small group phonic and writing work, which is accelerating their learning. They develop a good understanding of how to stay healthy through eating fruit and drinking plenty of water. However, they are not sufficiently involved in tidying up after they have finished with their activities so that there is often equipment left on the floor. Not only is this a safety hazard, it does not teach children to care for materials. Good use of the outdoor area gives children plenty of opportunities for exercise and imaginative play. All staff make ongoing observations of children's involvement in activities and these are used well to assess and track children's progress and match work to their individual and group needs. Good leadership is ensuring children across the Early Years make good progress in their learning and personal development.

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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

Questionnaires show that most parents and carers are happy with the school and what it provides. They consider that their children enjoy all that the school has to offer and are safe and well looked after, and the inspectors agree. The main concern was about the school taking account of their suggestions and concerns. The inspection team found that the school organises regular coffee mornings, information sessions and parental questionnaires and ensures that any actions taken as a result of these are communicated to parents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oxford Road Community 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.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	77	61	49	39	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	69	54	58	46	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	54	43	61	48	9	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	56	44	60	47	8	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	56	44	61	48	7	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	34	71	56	9	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	38	73	57	4	3	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)	35	28	65	51	7	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	34	73	57	6	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	36	66	52	8	6	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	30	63	50	11	9	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	51	40	62	49	7	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	46	60	47	4	3	0	0

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.



8 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oxford Road Community School, Reading RG1 7PJ

I am writing to tell you how much we enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for helping us with the inspection. We were pleased to learn that you enjoy school, especially your fun lessons and the many clubs you attend.

We judged that your school is giving you a good education and that it takes care of you extremely well.

Here are some other things we particularly liked about your school.

- Standards are improving and you are making good progress.
- You are well behaved, friendly and keen to learn.
- You make an outstanding contribution to the community.
- You have an excellent headteacher who has helped you to get even better at your work
- You are very thoughtful and caring towards each other and work extremely well as part of a global community.

These are the things I have asked your school to do to help you learn even more.

- Raise standards in English and mathematics by making sure teachers keep helping you to improve your writing, use your targets and mark your work carefully.
- Make sure that those of you who are more able are always challenged in lessons.
- Encourage children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to tidy up after themselves so that they learn to take care of resources.

You can help by carrying on doing good work. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Janet Sinclair

Lead Inspector

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