

Offham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118308
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	339189
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Madeleine Gerard

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Begbey
Headteacher	Mr G Webster
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' attainment over the last three years, tracking data showing the progress pupils are making, the school's improvement plans, and 106 responses to the questionnaire sent to parents.

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

- Pupils' progress in writing through the school.
- The school's effectiveness in identifying and tackling key areas for improvement.
- The impact of the curriculum and the care, guidance and support that the school provides in securing strong outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

Offham is a smaller than average primary school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average. Most of these pupils have speech, language and communication difficulties or need additional help to settle in class. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than that found nationally. The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is much lower than average and very few are at an early stage of learning English. There have been a number of staff changes during the last year. The school has achieved a number of nationally recognised awards including Eco School Status and the Healthy School Status. Some senior leaders were absent during the inspection as they were leading a Year 4 and 5 visit to France.

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

Offham Primary is a good school, which serves its community well and is highly valued by pupils and parents. It has a caring atmosphere within which pupils develop into confident and responsible individuals. Pupils enjoy school very much, as reflected in consistently high attendance and as confirmed by parents. One parent wrote, expressing the views of many, 'My child absolutely loves going to school.' Pupils feel safe and secure and respond with good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. They are friendly and polite and keen to take on responsibility. Regular fund-raising, involvement in charity projects and close links with the local parish help pupils make a strong contribution to the school and wider community. This supports their good spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Many parents made a point of writing to express their appreciation for the work of all the staff.

Children join the school with a range of skills and capabilities, but generally attainment on entry is at the expected levels for their age. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Opportunities to visit the school before they begin and well-established routines help children to settle quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage. One parent typically wrote, 'Our child has settled very well into the school and seems happy and confident.'

Regular monitoring of the school's provision by leaders and managers is successful in ensuring that the quality of teaching is consistently good. As a result, pupils learn well and make good progress through the school. Attainment is above average. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and all groups of pupils make similar progress. Accurate self-evaluation generally ensures that priorities for development lead to improvement and consequently the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement. Recent initiatives to bring about further improvement in science and mathematics have been well selected, as pupils' rising attainment in these subjects shows. However, the school's systems to keep a regular check on some other aspects of its work are not always as effective. This means that some areas for improvement, such as timetabling inconsistencies, are not picked up as swiftly as they should be to make sure they are consistently good. The curriculum ensures pupils have a wide range of interesting work to do and contributes well to their enjoyment of school and their positive personal development. French, music, themed weeks and a wide range of clubs are particular highlights. All pupils are fully included in the life of the school. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils are well cared for and well supported, including the most vulnerable. Pupils' understanding of themselves as part of the school and local community is good. However, their appreciation of those who live in other national and global communities is not as consistently well developed.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the effectiveness of all aspects of the school's work is consistently good by developing the skills of leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, in checking all aspects of the school's provision.
- Ensure that work to promote community cohesion in national and global contexts is consistently as well planned as that at school and local levels.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and many exceed the goals expected by the start of Year 1. Throughout the school pupils enjoy their learning and achieve well. For example, good learning and progress were observed when pupils in Year 3 used recordings of native speakers to practise their pronunciation of parts of the body in French. The school's own tracking data and pupils' current work in books show rates of progress through the school are good. Attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science. Recent improvements to provision in science and mathematics have resulted in a steady rise in standards in national tests. In 2009 provisional test results in mathematics were the highest for the last five years. Pupils who need additional help to settle to their work and those with speech, language and communication difficulties make good progress as a result of the support they receive. Behaviour observed in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils feel safe and are confident that adults will help them should any problems occur. Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves fit and healthy as the school's success in achieving the Activemark and the Healthy School Award show. Good gains in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development enable them to appreciate the achievement of others and show care and consideration for one another. They make a good contribution to the life of the school and to the local community. Older pupils enjoy looking after the younger children at break time. Charity fund-raising develops pupils' awareness of those less fortunate than themselves. The school choir sings for local elderly residents and the eco committee are proud of their responsibility to look after the school wildlife and courtyard gardens.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	2
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Pupils enjoy opportunities to work together in groups and to discuss their learning in pairs. This promotes pupils' good social skills. There are good links between subjects and teachers plan a variety of engaging tasks for the pupils to do. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson on journalistic writing, pupils watched film footage of Roger Bannister running the four-minute mile and wrote a newspaper article on the event. In classrooms good-quality displays are used effectively to support pupils in their learning and make clear to pupils how to move up to the next level in their work. Pupils know their targets, and marking in books is used well so that pupils know what they should do to improve their work. Good assessment systems enable the school to check how well pupils are making progress. Although teachers generally have high expectations of what pupils can do, information from assessments is not always used to ensure that work is suitably challenging for all pupils so that they make even swifter gains in their learning. Around the school photographs of recent curriculum events, such as book week, record the interesting activities pupils have enjoyed. There is a good variety of visits to local places of interest and older pupils are particularly enthusiastic about residential visits to a farm, to France and skiing in Austria. Extra-curricular clubs including computing, choir, fencing and multi-skills, are popular. Well-judged changes to the curriculum in science and mathematics have successfully raised standards. Recent changes to the way writing is taught in order to increase attainment have not been in place long enough to show their impact.

Pupils who need extra help are well supported by skilled additional adults so that they make good progress. Good links with a wide variety of outside agencies, local primary

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and secondary schools and teacher training institutions promote pupils' learning and well being, and support training for staff development.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school tackles discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity well. Leaders and managers work closely together and as a strong team with staff and governors. Leaders, managers and governors take an active part in monitoring the quality of teaching and pupils' learning in order to bring about improvement and embed ambition well. Priorities for development are successfully tackled. For example, enhanced opportunities for pupils to do practical tasks, together with increased visits and visitors to the school to support pupils' learning, have been effective in improving pupils' progress in science. Action has been successfully taken to raise attainment and rates of progress in mathematics, including a week of themed activities and additional targeted support for pupils. However, systems for the governing body and the school's leaders to measure the effectiveness of the school's work are not always rigorous enough to ensure that all aspects are consistently checked. For example, not all classes have sufficient physical education every week, and effective use is not always made of the outdoor environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage to develop children's skills in all areas of learning. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Pupils' understanding of themselves as part of the school and local community is strong. However, their awareness of those who live in communities other than their own in Great Britain and around the world is more limited. Procedures to safeguard pupils' health, welfare and safety are satisfactory. The school works well to harness the support of parents and carers. For example, guidance on the school's website and workshops for parents to explain how mathematics is taught help parents to support their children's learning at home.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good links with parents and with other early years providers help children settle quickly in the Reception class. Good leadership has ensured that changes in staff have been well managed. The children are happy and adults ensure their welfare is well promoted. Staff work successfully to establish positive relationships and create an environment where children grow in confidence and develop good personal and social skills. They take turns and share resources well. A good balance between tasks directed by adults and opportunities for children to choose activities for themselves ensures they develop basic skills as well as independence. Visitors to the school enhance children's learning. For example, as part of a project on hospitals, children enjoyed meeting a nurse and ambulance crew who talked about how they care for and help others. Records of continuous observation are kept and assessment information is used well to plan the next steps in children's learning of basic skills. Parents appreciate the guidance they receive about how literacy and numeracy are taught and how they can help at home. The school has plans to develop the outside spaces. Nevertheless, the use of the outdoor area is limited and this restricts opportunities for children to develop their skills in all areas of learning outside.

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

All parents who responded to the questionnaire are confident that their children enjoy school and that the school ensures that their children are safe. The overwhelming majority are happy with their children's experience of school. A few parents expressed concern that opportunities for physical education during the school week are sometimes restricted. Inspectors found that opportunities for physical education are generally good, including swimming and gymnastics, although weekly planning shows that some classes sometimes allocate less time than others to physical education lessons.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Offham 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 12 statements about the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	78	74	27	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	84	79	21	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	61	58	43	41	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	60	57	42	40	2	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	70	66	31	29	5	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	65	61	38	36	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	61	38	36	3	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)	61	58	34	32	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	56	53	43	41	7	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	55	52	42	40	5	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	45	50	47	3	3	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	73	69	31	29	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	77	73	26	25	3	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.



12 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Offham Primary School, Offham, ME19 5NX

Thank you for your very friendly welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed our visit and were particularly pleased to attend the Year 3 family assembly and hear about all the interesting work you have been doing. We also enjoyed hearing you all singing so well together.

Offham Primary is a good school. These are some of the good points about it:

- You like coming to school, attend extremely regularly and your parents told us they like the school too
- Your behaviour is good, you are keen to learn and you get along well with one another.
- The youngest children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- You enjoy all the interesting work teachers plan for you to do.
- You make good progress and the standards that you reach are above average.
- The staff make regular checks on how well you are making progress.
- Those of you who need additional help are well supported so that you make good progress.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe and healthy.
- All the adults work together as a team and look after you well.

To make the school even better, we have asked the school's leaders and the governors to check all areas of the school's work to make sure everything is always as good as possible. We would also like the school to make sure that you have more opportunities to find out about the lives of people who live in a wide variety of communities in this country and abroad.

Yours faithfully

Madeleine Gerard

Lead Inspector

The inspection team received 106 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 208 pupils registered at the school.

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