

Windmill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123047
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	340267
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Christine Pollitt

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Anna Hemphill
Headteacher	Mrs Lynn Knapp
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They saw 31 lessons taught by 16 teachers. They also held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, parents, groups of pupils and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at documents including the school development plan, safeguarding and welfare arrangements and records of pupils' progress. Inspectors also analysed questionnaires from 88 pupils, 23 staff and 165 parents.

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

- the success of strategies to support the raising of attainment in mathematics since the last inspection
- the impact of the new leadership team in raising achievement of all groups of pupils especially in writing
- the effectiveness of strategies to improve behaviour.

Information about the school

This is a large primary school where the large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a small minority of pupils from other ethnic groups. There is an average number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils have a range of difficulties mostly relating to moderate learning problems. The school has several awards, including Healthy School Status. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of two Reception classes.

Windmill Primary School Before and After School Club operates from a classroom in the school. This is run by a private contractor and 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school where all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, make good progress in their academic work and personal development, so that they are well prepared for their future lives. This is because teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and the new leadership team are having an increasing influence on raising pupils' achievement. Assisted by the support and challenge of the highly effective governing body, they have a clear view of the school's strengths and have put in place effective strategies to address any weaknesses that are identified. The staff team is equally committed to further improvement. Consequently, the school has good capacity for sustained improvement.

It is evident from the questionnaires completed by parents, pupils and staff that they are proud to be part of Windmill Primary. They recognise that it is a well-led and improving school. As one parent of older pupils wrote, 'The school exudes a positive and friendly atmosphere. There is a wide range of academic, sporting and social activities and everyone, pupil or parent, is encouraged to join in.' The inclusive and caring environment nurtures pupils' personal and social skills. The school's Healthy School status is well deserved, as a commitment to healthy living permeates its work. This is evident from the Reception children who enjoy very active outdoor learning to older pupils who enjoy healthy snacks at break times. The superb new gymnasium and dance centre further supports healthy lifestyles. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using new technologies, for example, and behave well both in lessons and around the school. They willingly take on responsibilities and are keen to give their views on how the school can improve, for example by contributing to designs for the outdoor learning area. The multicultural, multi-faith nature of the school helps pupils develop empathy and respect for others. They understand there are others less fortunate than themselves and regularly raise money for a range of good causes. Attendance is average largely due to a small minority of parents who take holidays during term time despite the best efforts of the school to discourage this.

Although children start school with skills and understanding typically below those expected of four-year-olds, reading, writing and calculation skills are well below those expected for the age group. Pupils make good progress overall and by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, almost half are working at the highest level in English and mathematics. However, pupils' progress is not yet consistent across all year groups and some could be doing even better. While improvement targets for English and mathematics are set in every class, these are not always well understood by pupils nor shared regularly with parents. Parents would like to be more involved in their child's

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learning and as one Year 6 pupil said, 'Sharing our learning diaries with our parents would help us all get better.' Although teachers mark work regularly with positive comments, they do not always make clear to pupils what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils are doing well because the teaching is good and the curriculum is mostly adapted well to meet their needs. However, in a few lessons challenge is limited, especially for higher-attainers. These pupils say their work is sometimes too easy, which means their progress is not always as rapid as it could be.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good teaching to accelerate pupil progress and raise attainment by:
 - planning challenging activities to match the needs of all pupils, especially higher-attainers
 - ensuring that pupils fully understand their learning targets in English and mathematics and sharing them with parents
 - ensuring teachers' marking clearly shows pupils what they need to do to improve their work
 - improving attendance rates by working with parents to reduce the number of holidays taken in term time.

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

Pupils say lessons are exciting, they have lots to do and their work is interesting. The quality of presentation in pupils' written work is high and shows the accelerated progress they have made. This owes much to their growing confidence and self-esteem as learners. This is partly a result of increasing opportunities for discussions with partners and in groups during lessons. Consequently, pupils make good progress in developing their speaking and listening and problem solving skills, and their writing. Pupils enjoy activities such as role play and engage effectively with each other to develop their ideas for writing. In one lesson, pupils imagined they were Roman children, which resulted in very inventive story-writing. In another class, pupils worked very effectively in pairs to discuss strategies to solve everyday mathematical problems which they completed at a good pace. In other lessons, they displayed good information and communication technology skills as they worked independently on computer programs.

Pupils take great pride in their school and willingly take on many roles including being sunshine friends and house captains. Incidents of unkind behaviour are rare and pupils respond well to the individual support they are given to deal with their feelings. They are enthusiastic about the rich cultural experiences delivered through the curriculum, such as artwork and learning to play instruments. They are thoughtful and reflective, which was apparent during a whole-school assembly as they considered their thoughts about 'courage'. Pupils have a voice in school developments through discussion groups,

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an active school council and the Eco committee. The combination of all of these attributes, and their above-average attainment in English and mathematics, results in pupils who are well prepared for their future learning.

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	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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Respect and enjoyment of what others have to offer, regardless of their differences, is important at this school. This is apparent in the way pupils and adults work so effectively together in lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally strong and they work hard to make learning interesting. New technology supports whole-class teaching, and techniques such as 'response partners' are successfully used to actively involve all pupils during lessons. Information from regular assessments is used well to organise pupils into groups or sets for mathematics lessons. Questioning is used well to challenge pupils to recall and apply what they have learnt and to help them understand whether they have been successful.

The high quality of the school's care is evident in its good support for vulnerable pupils, including its provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The

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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progress of these pupils, and those at the early stages of speaking English, is tracked very effectively; they receive very effective support in the classrooms from teachers and a skilled team of teaching assistants. Some pupils encounter particular challenges, which can be barriers to their learning and well-being. The school effectively matches additional support and care to their needs, for example by using the learning mentor or links with other agencies. The school knows that provision for gifted and talented pupils is only satisfactory and have clear improvement plans in place to address this. Procedures to support pupils as they move from one year to the next and especially on to the next school are thorough and help them progress confidently. Those pupils considered vulnerable receive particularly good support at this time.

The new curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to develop their creativity and makes meaningful links between subjects. This is having a positive impact on achievement. Feedback from pupils and staff show it is already boosting pupils' enjoyment. As a parent of an older pupil commented, 'My son often comes home buzzing about the topics that he is studying.' The school has identified that the next stage is to better match these activities to pupils' individual needs.

Pupils' enjoyment of their education is greatly enriched through visits and visitors and the wide variety of clubs on offer in sport and music in particular. Indeed, music is a great strength of the school. Specialist provision ensures high-quality teaching of music. Many pupils enjoy singing in the choir, playing instruments and becoming accomplished musicians.

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?

School leadership is steered very successfully by the headteacher, who sets high expectations and has created an efficient and thorough system of auditing pupils' progress and the quality of the school's work. Senior leaders and governors share the same expectations and show similar determination to bring about improvement. They take part in rigorous monitoring and honest self-evaluation, so have an accurate picture of what the school does well and clear plans in place to improve. Leadership is good at embedding ambition and driving improvement so that all pupils reach their potential. The development of systems to track how well pupils are doing, and actions taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning, are having a positive impact on the progress pupils make. Staff identify pupils who may be underachieving and quickly put

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in additional support.

Statutory requirements are met, and are promoted well by governors, including the school's duty of care and safeguarding for every child, especially the vulnerable pupils, which is of good quality. Staff are vetted in accordance with up-to-the-minute guidance from central government and the local authority, and record keeping is robust. Prompt action is taken if risks or concerns are identified. While the school has some remaining work to complete to raise the challenge for higher-attaining pupils, it promotes pupils' equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well. It is successfully narrowing the gap in performance between different groups of pupils.

The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is good. The school has forged secure partnerships with parents, local schools and others to further strengthen the pupils' education. Its local links are a model of good practice. As one parent of a younger child commented, 'The large number of activities and community events really help to build strong community in the area.' Curriculum opportunities and involvement in fund-raising enables pupils to gain a good understanding of the lives, cultures and beliefs of people overseas. The school has conducted an audit and has plans to engage with an even wider range of groups beyond the immediate community.

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
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

Procedures for starting school are so effective that when children join the Reception classes, they quickly become confident and eager learners. Their welfare needs are met very effectively. Children genuinely enjoy learning and discovering through play because

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adults encourage them to make their own independent choices. They behave very well, play harmoniously together and are considerate of each other as they explore the world around them. Children make good progress in their learning because there is an appropriate balance between activities directed by adults and activities chosen by the children. The range of activities indoors, and especially outdoors, is good with some well-focused group teaching sessions.

Leaders have secured very effective working partnerships with parents and other providers. They have planned the well-resourced new classrooms to provide a stimulating environment where children can develop their skills in all areas of learning. While staff accurately record children's achievements and use these to plan the next steps in learning, they do not share the information regularly enough with parents to involve them sufficiently in their child's learning progress. Sometimes, opportunities are missed to challenge the most-able pupils even further. Nevertheless, when children move onto Year 1, they have mostly achieved their early learning goals.

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

There was a high response to the questionnaire. The overwhelming majority of returns were positive in all aspects, indicating a high level of support and confidence in the school. A number of parents and carers made additional comments about the improved behaviour and the good support provided by the teachers and their assistants.

Inspectors agree with these positive comments. One in four who made comments were unclear about the progress their children are making or had concerns about the amount of progress made by more-able pupils. Although children generally make good progress, they could do even better and inspectors have agreed actions with the school to address these issues.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Windmill 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.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	113	66	47	28	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	110	67	51	31	1	1	2	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	66	40	90	55	7	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	84	51	75	45	5	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	90	55	71	43	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	66	40	81	49	14	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	85	52	76	46	2	1	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)	71	43	72	44	2	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	78	47	70	42	5	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	62	38	89	54	3	3	4	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	84	51	71	43	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	126	76	38	23	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	110	67	55	32	1	1	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.



24 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Windmill Primary School, Headington, OX3 8NG

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed your lessons, talking to you, reading your questionnaires and hearing your choir and orchestra perform. You say you really enjoy your lessons, particularly mathematics, writing and art. As a result you make good progress in your learning.

This is a good school with many good features. Some of these are listed below.

- You behave well, work hard, and are keen to do well.
- You know very well how to keep yourselves safe, active and healthy.
- All the adults in the school care about you and make sure that you are safe.
- Adults work hard to make sure you have good opportunities to achieve well.

Your headteacher and all the staff are doing a very good job and they want to make things even better for you. We have identified four things we think might help.

- We have asked your teachers to make sure you fully understand your learning targets in English and mathematics and then you can share them with your parents.
- Some of you said that you sometimes find the work too easy, so we have asked the teachers to check that activities are always interesting and challenging.
- Although teachers regularly mark your books, they do not always clearly show you what you need to do to improve your work. So, we have asked them to make sure their comments are clear and easily understood.
- Some of you have too much time off school, which means that you miss important work. We have asked the school to work with your parents to make sure that you have your holidays when the school is closed.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Christine Pollitt

Lead inspector

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