

Osidge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101356
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	276506
Inspection date	27 November 2006
Reporting inspector	Graham Lee

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Holt
Headteacher	Mrs Elaine Rosenthal (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2000
School address	Chase Side Southgate London N14 5HD
Telephone number	020 8886 7108
Fax number	020 8886 0258

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a much larger than average primary school which serves a mixed, but relatively advantaged area. About a quarter pupils are of Greek Cypriot origin and another quarter have White British heritage. The remainder are from a diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Most pupils speak English as an additional language, but few are at the early stages of learning English. Following the retirement of the former headteacher in the summer of 2006, the school is currently being led by an acting headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Parents and pupils are right to be proud of Osidge because it is a good school with a number of outstanding features. It has developed a strong sense of community over the years and the care and guidance of pupils and their families are outstanding. As a result, the school enjoys the overwhelming support of parents. One, speaking for many said, 'Osidge has provided both my children with the best possible start in life'. Pupils' personal development, including the social, moral, spiritual and cultural aspects, is outstanding. They feel very safe and enjoy everything that the school has to offer. They have extremely positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is excellent. Consequently, pupils achieve well irrespective of their background or ability.

The school has been through an uncertain period in which governors were unable to appoint a new headteacher. In the interim, the acting headteacher is leading the school extremely successfully. She has built on the school's existing strengths, and established the support and commitment of a very strong staff team who work extremely well together. She has drawn very effectively on the expertise of the newly expanded senior management team and knowledgeable and committed governing body. The school has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses through rigorous self assessment. Where underachievement is identified effective measures are put in place to bring about improvement. All issues from the last inspection have been fully addressed and the school is well placed to improve still further.

Throughout the school, pupils achieve well because of good teaching and learning. From average starting points pupils make good progress and by the time they leave reach standards that are significantly above average. Some pupils, particularly boys, do not do as well in writing as they do in reading, because in the past they have not been highly motivated to write. The school has adopted a range of successful strategies to address this issue and this has resulted in better progress although standards in writing remain well below those in reading. Pupils' very good work ethic and good basic skills prepare them well for secondary school and the world beyond.

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is rich and stimulating and ensures that children make a good start to school life. Elsewhere, the curriculum is good and provides pupils with a wide range of enrichment activities which develop their skills and interests and increases their enjoyment. Music is a particular strength and many pupils learn to play musical instruments and perform to a high standard in the school orchestra and choir. The wide range of sporting activities contributes to pupils' excellent awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The high priority the school gives to its families is illustrated by its provision of a breakfast club, private nursery and after school care. The school is committed to including all pupils in all its activities. For example it provides very well for pupils with learning difficulties and is widely recognised for its very good work with pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. The school works in close partnership with a range of agencies to support children's needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, particularly for boys.
- Secure the leadership of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. When they arrive children's skills and understanding are broadly average although often lower in communication and literacy. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage in all areas of learning. In the infants, pupils continue to make good progress, consolidating their language skills and developing good learning habits. By the age of seven standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress accelerates in the juniors and by time they leave, pupils reach standards that are significantly above average in science, mathematics and English. Throughout the school, pupils, particularly boys, do not do as well in writing as they do in reading. Most develop the technical skills of writing effectively but are not always as successful in using this to develop sustained writing. In recognition of this the school has revised its approach to the teaching of writing and this is resulting in better progress. Pupils with learning difficulties, including a number with autistic spectrum disorder, are very well supported and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding because of the excellent care and guidance they receive. Pupils are extremely friendly and polite. Their enjoyment is evident in the enthusiastic way in which they talk about the many things they like about school and in their good attendance. In lessons, they are very attentive, apply themselves diligently, and develop very positive attitudes to learning. They understand the importance of learning. One pupil commented 'Teachers are friendly but not too friendly so we are all expected to learn'. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community and willingly take on responsibilities. They feel that their views are listened to, for instance, the hard play area has recently been extended at their request. Pupils are also involved in the local and world wide communities. They helped to raise significant sums of money to rebuild a school in Bolivia for example. Pupils' excellent awareness of healthy lifestyles is illustrated by their healthy food choices at lunchtime as well as their enthusiastic participation in physical activities. Pupils feel extremely safe and secure and trust the adults to look after them. They are also confident that adults will help them to resolve any difficulties that arise.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

'Teachers make lessons interesting through the use of games and things like that', enthused one pupil. The interesting content of lessons was demonstrated well in lessons throughout the school. In Reception, teachers planned a range of exciting activities to develop children's skills and understanding in all areas of their learning. As a result, children were fully engaged and developed high levels of independence. In Year 6, pupils were learning about the features of journalistic writing and producing their own 'newspaper' articles. Pupils were fully engaged and all were motivated to write including the small group of boys in the lower ability set. This reflects the school's revised strategies for teaching writing although it is not yet fully evident in the motivation and standards achieved by all pupils. Pupils achieve well because teachers have high expectations and plan effectively to meet the needs of all learners. They enjoy a

good partnership with highly skilled teaching assistants who make a significant contribution to the quality of education, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A real strength of the curriculum is the outstanding range of enrichment activities. As well as the extensive sporting and musical activities pupils have the opportunity to take part in clubs as diverse as yoga, computing and cookery amongst others. Visits and visitors are a regular feature of the curriculum and several parents comment warmly on the many residential visits which are an important feature of school life, and which enhance their children's personal development. The school has addressed a number of curriculum issues from the last inspection. Information and communications technology (ICT), for example, is now used effectively to support pupils learning in many subjects. The curriculum is planned effectively to develop pupils' basic skills, and those who are underachieving are given good support to help them to catch up. The school has recognised that pupils do not do as well in writing as they do in reading and has changed its curriculum to make it more relevant to these pupils, particularly boys. The curriculum places an important and successful emphasis on pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding. Parents agree and unanimously feel that their children are well cared for. One commented, 'What makes Osidge such a special place is not just the excellent academic standards. More important is the welcoming, safe and nurturing learning environment'. Support for vulnerable pupils is of high quality and draws effectively on excellent links with a range of outside agencies. Parents appreciate how the special needs 'drop in' sessions 'help everyone feel part of the family'. Pupils thrive in this supportive environment and their personal development is outstanding. The school uses a range of performance data to follow pupils' progress, to identify those in need of additional support and to set targets for improvement. Pupils are clear that their targets help them to improve. Consequently they achieve well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and ensure that pupils achieve well. The acting headteacher has made a significant impact in a short time and her leadership was commended by many parents and staff. She has a clear vision for the further development of the school which is shared by staff and governors. The expanded senior management team welcome their involvement in the strategic leadership of the school and have an increasing role in raising achievement. Systems for monitoring the impact of the school's work are becoming more rigorous and subjects leaders are energetic in their roles and are helping to improve teaching and learning in their subjects. Through its monitoring and self evaluation the school has a clear picture of what needs to be improved. For example, its top priority for the current year is the raising of standards in writing and it has put in place a range of strategies which are beginning to have an effect. The tracking of pupils' progress is also being used more effectively to identify underachievement and to set targets for improvement. Governors offer a good balance of

support and challenge to school leaders and are acutely aware of the importance of the appointment of a permanent headteacher to the school's future development.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

You may remember that I visited your school earlier in the week. I am writing to thank you for being so friendly and welcoming. I really enjoyed my day at Osidge and talking to so many of you. I thought you would like to know what I found out.

First of all you and your parents are right to be proud of your school because it is a good school which is outstanding in some of the things it does. Everybody at the school looks after you extremely well and makes sure that you feel safe and secure and stay healthy. I was really impressed with your excellent behaviour and how enthusiastic you were in lessons. Well done! You are very lucky to have such a lot of extra things to do which you really seem to enjoy. Even though I only heard the orchestra in passing I was very pleased to see so many children playing instruments.

You do really well at school because the teaching is good. You told me that you really like your teachers and that they make lessons fun. By the time you go on to secondary school you are very well prepared thanks to the staff at Osidge. Those of you who find things a little bit more difficult are given lots of extra help. Some of you do not do as well in writing as you do in reading. I have asked the school to help you to improve this and they are already trying new ideas which are beginning to work. You can all help by trying hard with your writing.

At the moment the school is being extremely well led by your acting headteacher, with a lot of help from all the staff. Together they are working very hard to make things even better for you. The governors know that they need to find the right person to lead the school in the future and I wish them and all of you every success.

Yours sincerely

Graham Lee

Lead inspector