



Offord Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110682
Local Authority CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Inspection number 288739
Inspection dates 7–8 December 2006
Reporting inspector Roger Brown

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

| | | | |
|---|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Miller Close |
| School category | Community | | Offord d'arcy |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 | | Offord d'arcy PE19 5SB |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01480 810308 |
| Number on roll (school) | 109 | Fax number | 01480 812515 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mr Charles Clay |
| | | Headteacher | Mrs Linda Corral |
| Date of previous school inspection | 25 June 2001 | | |

| | | |
|--------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Age group 4–11 | Inspection dates 7–8 December 2006 | Inspection number 288739 |
|--------------------------|--|------------------------------------|

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small village school serves the local community and the surrounding area. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The area is advantaged both socially and economically and this is reflected in the fact that no pupil is eligible for a free school meal. A few pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Attainment on entry to the school is above average. The school has achieved the Health Promoting School standard and has recently secured a renewal of the Basic Skills Quality Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with several good features. It has reached a turning point after a period of change and adjustment. Morale is high; staff share the vision of the headteacher and are keen to build on the improvements that have already been put in place. Governors are, in their own words, 'critical, but supportive' and delighted to see in their regular visits to the school, 'happy children who enjoy learning and being successful.' There are strong indications that the changes to the organisation of teaching and improvements in the curriculum have the potential to accelerate the progress that pupils make. As a result, the school shows a good capacity for further improvement.

The quality of teaching and learning has improved and is now good but the impact of teaching on achievement and standards remains satisfactory, because recent changes to teaching arrangements have not had time to take effect. There are, however, clear signs that this is beginning to happen. The school's tracking systems show that pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 is improving and, whilst standards have always been high, the school's targets are now even more demanding. Importantly, this work has highlighted a relative weakness in the quality of writing. Consequently, staff are working imaginatively in partnership with others to provide older pupils with more opportunities to write at length, in order to raise standards in all subjects.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy school and value all that it provides. They feel safe and cared for. Pupils' behaviour is good and very well managed in the classrooms. At times, pupils behaviour outside is boisterous but, as two thirds of the school are boys, it is not surprising they enjoy noisy, exciting games. The school council has an important role and is influential in improving attitudes, for example by giving certificates to those who are caring and helpful. They are particularly proud of the way that pupils are learning to negotiate with each other when disputes arise. Pupils know how their diet and the way they exercise contributes towards a healthy lifestyle. The good quality curriculum is being developed imaginatively to promote pupils' interest and enjoyment of learning. It is organised creatively to match the learning needs of all pupils, whatever their starting point. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that extend and develop pupils' interests even further.

Throughout the period of change, the headteacher has provided clear and consistent leadership. The headteacher, teachers and governors monitor quality and standards very rigorously. Consequently, the school's self-evaluation provides an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses. The great majority of parents fully support developments that have taken place. 'We are fortunate to have a school to be proud of. The whole staff work incredibly hard. My children love going to school at Offord', is typical of many parents' views. However, a small number raised concerns, which show that, despite the school's many procedures for informing parents, not all parents fully understand the school's arrangements or the regulations it must conform to. Nevertheless, because effective management and rigorous financial controls are resulting in improved teaching, high-quality resources and an excellent environment, the school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build upon the good start in Key Stage 1 by giving older pupils more opportunities to write at length throughout the curriculum so that their writing improves more rapidly in Key Stage 2.
- Improve the systems and information the school provides for parents to ensure that all parents understand the school's policies and practices.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The children's skills, knowledge and understanding at the end of their Reception year are good; most children achieve beyond the learning goals expected of this age. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, teachers' assessments show that overall standards are above those expected for their age. Indeed, the results of national assessments show that standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been consistently above average for over five years. This satisfactory pattern of progress continues into Key Stage 2 with standards in writing, mathematics and science being consistently above the average, but these standards are not yet as high as those achieved in reading, where standards are well above average. The school sets itself very challenging targets, but last year these were not quite met. This year, the targets are even more challenging, and there are good indications from the school's assessment data that pupils are on track to reach these. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as well as those with special gifts and talents make similar progress to other pupils. The school has, rightly, identified the need to raise standards in writing as the factor that will have the biggest impact in raising standards in all subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils is good. Pupils are happy, behave well in class and are enthusiastic about learning. They take full advantage of the wonderful outdoor environment in which to exercise, test their physical skills and play adventurously. At the heart of the school's work is its commitment to developing responsible citizens and giving pupils the skills they will need when they are adults. This is demonstrated when pupils negotiate sensibly with one another when they fall out, care for others who appear lonely and care for their environment. The school's very effective partnerships with other schools and organisations broaden pupils' horizons. Consequently pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They regularly show qualities such as consideration for others, co-operation and teamwork. Attendance is satisfactory. The school is thorough in recording absences, in line with local authority guidance and the law. Nevertheless, some parents still take holidays in term time, thus lowering the overall level of attendance.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The impact of teaching on pupils' learning and achievement has been satisfactory until recently. The inspection found that the quality of teaching is now good and that, consequently, the pace of pupils' learning is improving. The new arrangements have considerable promise, even though some elements cannot be implemented until the new term when a new deputy headteacher arrives. Teachers make very effective use of assessment data to plan activities that match individual learning needs. Work set by teachers is interesting and challenging for the pupils. Teaching assistants are well informed and give good support both to individuals and groups of pupils. Teachers use a good range of positive strategies to manage behaviour. As a result, pupils respond well, because they know the consequences of not reaching the standards expected.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Careful planning ensures that all statutory elements are properly covered and that the learning needs of pupils of different ages and abilities in the mixed-age classes are met. Creative approaches to planning across the curriculum, alongside strong links to local school partnerships, help to motivate and engage the pupils. Information and communication technology (ICT) is well integrated and there are further improvements in the pipeline that will strengthen the impact of ICT across all subjects. However, there are still not enough opportunities for pupils to write in the context of work in other subjects. There is good provision to ensure that pupils learn about safe and healthy lifestyles and a clear emphasis on developing the basic skills and an enjoyment of learning. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities, visits, visitors and partnership arrangements. These significantly increase pupils' interest and broaden their outlook.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils value the support they get from all the adults at the school. They say that they know whom they can turn to if there is a problem, and that there are good systems to encourage pupils to help each other. One pupil explained, 'We do care for each other here, we all know what to do, and it works.' Child protection procedures are well established and rigorously implemented. Thoughtful measures ensure that pupils are safe. There are good links both with the pre-school provision and to the high school to which most pupils transfer. Teachers make good use of the information they gain from assessments to inform the next steps in pupils' learning. The teachers make very effective use of learning criteria to guide and develop pupils' understanding. However, the process has not yet been in place for long enough to have had a significant impact on raising pupils' skills in aspects like writing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quiet, thoughtful and democratic style of the headteacher has been particularly effective at empowering all the teachers to take an effective role in the leadership of the school. Her willingness to listen and to hear all sides has been misinterpreted by a few parents as indecisiveness. This is wrong. When necessary, the headteacher, backed by the governors, has acted swiftly to ensure that the interests and needs of the pupils are paramount. During a difficult three year period for the school, the headteacher has introduced effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, there is a high quality school improvement plan. This is now being implemented but has not yet had chance to have a full impact. Nevertheless, the school has made steady progress since the last inspection. Standards have been maintained and there have been improvements in many areas. With more planned, the school is well-placed to continue to improve.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|-----------------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | |
|--|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 2 |
| 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? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 3 |

Personal development and well-being

| | |
|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| 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? | 2 |

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.

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 | 2 |
| 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 |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

8 December 2006

Dear Children,

Offord Primary School, Millers Close, Offord d'Arcy, St Neots, Cambridgeshire, PE19 5SB

Thank you for your warm welcome when I visited your school. It was a real pleasure to be with you. I enjoyed watching your classes, and I really enjoyed talking to you about your work.

What I liked most about your school was:

- the way that you all know what to do in school, and how to care for each other
- the fact that you enjoy your school, you learn well, and think learning is fun
- the work you do in school is interesting and covers so many areas
- the way your teachers are using learning objectives to guide your lessons.

I also thought that the school council is really effective and I particularly liked the thoughtful way it chooses to give out certificates to those who deserve them.

However, I would like:

- your teachers to help you to achieve even higher standards in writing by giving you more opportunities to write in all subjects
- your headteacher and governors to look carefully at the information they give your parents to make sure that everyone understands what the school is doing.

Many of your parents wrote to me to say they think that your school is effective, and I agree with them. I thoroughly enjoyed the time I spent with you in school.

Best wishes for the future.

Roger Brown Lead Inspector