

The Orchard Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124964
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	293152
Inspection dates	8–9 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Ann Sydney

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Y Forbes
Headteacher	Mrs C Rusby
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2001
School address	Bridge Road East Molesey KT8 9HT
Telephone number	020 8979 2945
Fax number	020 8941 6160

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized infant school drawing most of its pupils from a number of local nursery schools. Most pupils' ability on entry is above average. Some classes are made up of mixed-age groups. The vast majority of pupils are White British with a small number of pupils at an early stage of learning English. There is a lower than average number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities but some of these have complex needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school's aims are 'to work together to develop learners who are safe and happy, healthy, considerate, confident, independent, challenged and successful'. The school succeeds admirably in this. The Orchard is an outstanding school. Standards are very high including in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Pupils love coming to school and attendance is above the national average. Behaviour is outstanding due to consistently applied behaviour strategies, high expectations and fun lessons. The school is full of happy chatter.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding and this contributes to the very high academic standards that they reach, even when teaching is good rather than outstanding. The outstanding curriculum gives a breadth of stimulating opportunities so that pupils become confident independent learners who care for each other and their environment. Children get off to a flying start because of the excellent teaching they consistently get in the Foundation stage. They make outstanding progress in language, mathematical development and physical development, but especially in how to learn. Good teaching and very good learning in Years 1 and 2 ensures that pupils make rapid progress and leave Year 2 achieving standards that are well above the national average. In one or two lessons the pace of learning is slower. For instance, when children spend too long sitting on the carpet so that they lose concentration, or the assessment at the end of the lesson is rushed.

The headteacher says 'Infants are my passion.' Through her strong leadership the staff has developed into an analytical, self-critical team that is prepared to try out new ideas. Leadership and management are good. The school has a clear direction and provides an outstanding quality of care. Assessment data is used very well to track pupils' progress, inform changes to curriculum planning and stimulate pupils' achievements. Areas of relative weakness are identified and teachers are well supported in their quest for further improvement.

The school has a good capacity to improve because of sustained high standards, its accurate identification of its strengths and weaknesses, and the fact that it has fully addressed the issues identified in the previous inspection report.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the brisk pace of learning observed in many lessons is established more consistently throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement and standards are outstanding. Pupils' standards are consistently much higher than average by the end of Year 2. They reach ambitious targets as the result of teaching that is consistently good or better. When they start in the Reception class, pupils' attainment is above average overall. Children make outstanding progress in the Reception classes. Gaps in pupils' skills are identified, for example their physical development is weaker on entry than other areas. Teachers use this information to ensure that the curriculum is modified to meet this need. Pupils continue to make very good progress in Years 1 and 2. In reading and mathematics in Year 2 many pupils are working at levels expected of pupils one year older. In

writing the difference is less, especially for boys, but standards are still significantly higher than the national average.

Through careful tracking of their progress, and extra support, the school enables pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities to progress very well. Pupils are not held back by some of them being in mixed age groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Parents emphatically describe how much their children love their school. Pupils' enthusiasm contributes to their very good attendance and the way in which they are keen to learn and volunteer answers in lessons. This plays a major part in the excellent progress that they make and the very high standards achieved. From the start of their time in the Reception Year, children quickly learn and follow orderly routines. As a result, they settle to work without fuss in all lessons. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They get on very well with each other and with the many adults in the school. Their behaviour is exemplary and pupils feel safe because they treat each other thoughtfully and with kindness. Pupils talk sensitively about those within the school and in the wider world who are 'different and special'. They are proud of their partnership with children at a school in Uganda, with whom they exchange letters and for which they have helped to raise funds. Within the school community, pupils have opportunities to take responsibility, for example as school councillors. This, and the high standards of their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, prepares them exceptionally well for the next stage of their education and future life. Pupils have a good understanding of the need for exercise and they are especially enthusiastic about PE and sports. They readily extol the virtues of a healthy diet, but that does not inhibit them from occasionally munching on bags of crisps.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils make outstanding progress because teaching is consistently good and pupils are exceptionally well motivated. Classrooms are rich learning environments, stimulating curiosity. Teaching and learning in the Reception Year is outstanding and this gives pupils an excellent foundation.

All teachers know pupils well and so plan work for them that is usually well matched to their needs and helps them build on what they have learned before. Above all lessons are fun. Information and communication technology is used well to extend pupils' horizons as well as allowing them to learn and practise computer skills. Where lessons are less effective it is where teaching assistants are too passive or pupils spend too long sitting on the carpet. Where this happens, some pupils begin to get restless, the pace of learning slows and it limits the opportunity for the teacher to match work to pupils' abilities.

Teachers question pupils very effectively to assess what they know but also to promote good language skills and reasoning. From a very early age pupils are involved in their own learning, their opinions are sought and they assess their own performance. They suggest ways to improve, or come up with research ideas. Teachers have high expectations and pupils' excellent behaviour and enthusiasm boosts their progress.

Parents feel involved in their children's learning and welcome the regular homework. As one parent said 'I have an excellent partnership with my children's teachers. They seem to like the parents as well as the children.'

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

A stimulating curriculum ensures that pupils achieve very well not merely in the '3 Rs' of reading, writing and arithmetic, but also in the school's '5 Rs' of responsibility, resilience, reflection, reasoning and resourcefulness. This focus on pupils' thinking skills helps ensure that pupils develop into confident, independent learners. It dovetails well with school leaders' decision to focus on enhancing pupils' problem-solving and investigational skills in mathematics and science. Creative links developed across the curriculum also enable pupils to make very good progress in other subjects like history and science while developing and applying their literacy and numeracy skills. Although it has a compact site and space is at a premium, the school is well resourced. The range of very well attended after-school clubs exceeds that seen in most infant schools, but this is mostly private paid-for provision.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents especially value the school's 'exceptional balance of a caring environment and high academic expectations'. Pupils are very well looked after. Those with learning difficulties benefit from individual support that helps them to make similar progress to others in the class. This tailored support is extended to other pupils, including the more able, where they are identified as at risk of not achieving their full potential. Marking and other feedback gives pupils well targeted guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.

Minor accidents and medical needs are dealt with effectively and there are robust procedures for safeguarding children and dealing with child protection issues.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Pupils say their headteacher 'takes care of the teachers and makes sure we are alright'. She has certainly succeeded in establishing a school where pupils feel secure and where staff are united in their commitment to ensure that every child becomes an enthusiastic learner who achieves as well as they can, both academically and in terms of their personal development. Leaders at all levels monitor teaching and learning, although not everyone's monitoring is as rigorous as it could be because it does not always identify clearly enough how lessons could be improved.

Even though they know this is a successful school, staff are nonetheless ambitious to see it improve further. Recent initiatives to improve the curriculum have already resulted in pupils taking a more active role in finding things out for themselves. In turn, this has boosted their confidence and personal development and contributed to pupils' outstanding achievement.

Governors are very supportive of the school. They know the school well and they ask pertinent questions that help to keep the headteacher and staff on their toes.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
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?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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?	1
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

23 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Orchard Infant School, East Molesey, KT8 9HT

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and telling us how good it is. Your parents had some lovely things to say about the teachers and the way the school is run. We agree that yours is an outstanding school with many wonderful things going on.

- Reception Year children get off to a flying start because of their outstanding teaching and learning.
- You do very well indeed in your reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- We liked the very grown-up way you work independently and co-operate with each other.
- Your teachers notice what each of you needs to learn and they plan interesting lessons so that you make outstanding progress.
- We think your headteacher leads the school very well.

The pupils we talked to couldn't think of many things they would like to change. However, we think that the school could still improve by teachers keeping you busy in your learning and not expecting you to sit for too long on the carpet!

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. Thank you again. I can understand why you are proud of your school.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Ann Sydney

Lead Inspector