

Red Oaks Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131377
Local Authority	Swindon
Inspection number	315795
Inspection dates	27–28 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Clifton

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	447
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adam O'Brien
Headteacher	Terri Menham
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Redhouse Way North Swindon Learning Campus Swindon SN25 2AN
Telephone number	01793 707570
Fax number	01793 707575

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. Most pupils come from the local area. The school opened in September 2006 and since then has experienced very rapid growth. Most pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The majority of these have numeracy and literacy difficulties. The school has two special provisions, one for hearing impaired pupils who attend from across the borough and one for learning difficulties and disabilities. The school has been successful in gaining many awards including the Healthy Schools Award, Basic Skills Award, ECO Award Silver, International Schools Award (Intermediate Level), Investors in People and Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Red Oaks Primary is a good school. It is improving rapidly because of the inspirational leadership of the headteacher; many areas of the school's work are outstanding. One parent commented, 'What a great place. I almost wish I was six again!' This view was echoed by many others, who described the school as 'brilliant' or 'wonderful'. Another parent commented, 'There are so many opportunities for the children to get involved in the running of the school – their ideas and suggestions are positively received', reflecting the pupils' excellent involvement in their community. Pupils have a very good understanding about keeping themselves safe. They have exceptionally positive attitudes and their behaviour is excellent.

Standards are above average and achievement is good. Nearly all pupils enjoy school greatly and take a great deal of interest in their work because of consistently good teaching and a highly innovative curriculum which stimulates their imagination and captures their interest. Good provision in the Nursery and Reception classes ensures that children settle very quickly and make good progress. Improvement is driven strongly by leaders and there is a detailed plan in place for improvement which is built on rigorous monitoring and accurate self-evaluation, which identifies writing and calculation as areas for improvement. Teachers create a positive and friendly atmosphere for learning in all classes. There are many good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills such as through drama and discussion, especially to support writing. The use of targets in lessons ensures that the pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve. Consequently, recent work to improve provision in writing and mathematics is showing some remarkable results. Many pupils are now making good and sometimes outstanding progress. However, leaders recognise that there is still more to be done to drive up standards in these areas. The progress of all pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is monitored frequently and with rigour so that the few pupils who may not be doing well enough are quickly given extra support. Marking in books is consistently good and leaders have rightly identified that more time needs to be built into lessons to enable pupils to respond to comments made.

The pupils have an exceptionally strong grasp of their rights and responsibilities and an outstandingly clear voice such as through the school website where they have their own improvement plan. They say the 'green traffic lights tell us when things have been done.' Large numbers of pupils join in with the extensive range of extra-curricular activities. The school is a very healthy community. Pupils say they eat lots of fruit at break times and really like sport. A member of the school's Eco Action Group also commented that 'we recycle anything we can get our hands on'. They are well prepared for the future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children are given a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. They come to school with skills that are generally in line with expectations for their age, however their skills in communication, language and literacy are slightly below expectations. They make good progress in all areas of learning because of good teaching and very interesting activities which focus on developing skills and building children's self-confidence. The children greatly enjoy their time in school and play and work well together. They are highly motivated by the Forest School initiative, which is part of the good use made of outdoor provision and the environment to enrich learning. Parents feel they are kept well informed of their children's progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more time for pupils to respond to feedback given by teachers through marking and discussion.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children achieve well in the Nursery and Reception years making good gains in learning and in their social development. By the time they enter Year 1, most attain the expected level for their age, with a significant number exceeding this. Since the school opened, there has only been one year of results from national tests. In 2007, Year 2 pupils reached average standards. The Year 6 pupils reached above average standards in English, mathematics and science. The current picture in Year 2 is improved, with pupils well on track to reach above average standards. In Year 6 current standards are broadly similar to those in 2007 with standards in mathematics slightly better than those in English. However, pupils are now making accelerated progress especially in writing and mathematics. Pupils who find learning difficult and those with disabilities make outstanding progress because of the high quality of guidance and support provided.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children settle well in the Nursery and Reception classes and are confident and keen to share their experiences. By the time they start in Year 1, they work and play well together. Pupils' outstanding behaviour and very positive attitudes make a considerable contribution to their learning. Their spiritual and moral development is outstanding because of the plentiful opportunities for them to reflect on their own and other people's lives through the school's coverage of global issues. They attend well and arrive punctually in school often with a smile, looking forward to the day's activities. Pupils have an excellent say in how the school can be improved and enjoy having their say through the 'helping hands' who represent pupils' views or writing out their thoughts for the week to share with the class. At break times, the pupils are very active, keeping fit by letting off steam in the playground. They enjoy each other's company when playing together and there is a wide range of equipment provided to enhance their experience. Pupils understand why they should eat healthily and many pupils bring in fruit. The pupils talk enthusiastically about sporting opportunities available and turn up regularly in large numbers.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good because lessons are carefully planned to meet the needs of pupils. Pupils learn well because of the clarity with which teachers explain ideas and the wide range of activities used to stimulate their interest and understanding. Teachers are enthusiastic and their encouragement helps the pupils gain in confidence and enjoy their lessons. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning, skilfully supporting those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and at an early stage of acquisition of English. The teaching of writing and mathematics has improved following a whole-school focus and pupils consistently make good progress in lessons. Teachers give pupils plenty of opportunities to

use information and communication technology, so that they develop good computer skills. On a few occasions, the pace of learning dips between different activities, and not enough time is left at the end of lessons to consolidate and extend learning. Pupils have clear targets for improvement which are reinforced in lessons. Leaders have rightly identified that more time needs to be set aside for pupils to reflect on what they can do to improve, following marking or assessment of their own work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum offers a rich learning experience for pupils with a very good balance between the development of basic skills and creative subjects. It is highly innovative and regularly reviewed. Pupils have their say about how it could be developed through their school improvement plan which is posted on the school website. Recent changes to the curriculum to improve reading, writing and calculation have all been highly successful and are improving pupils' progress. Pupils' enjoyment is greatly enhanced by an excellent range of trips and visits. Regular themes such as being healthy, recycling, cultural diversity and 'fair trade' ensure that it reflects a changing world and covers global issues. The success of much of this can be seen in the high quality artwork and displays across the school. In the Foundation Stage, the curriculum meets the needs of children well, and this is reflected in the good progress they make. There is a good balance of child initiated and adult led activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides a very safe learning environment and has robust procedures that meet statutory safeguarding requirements. The school has excellent links with external agencies and other local schools to support the learning and behavioural needs of the pupils, including those with disabilities through the use of both speech and sign language. Learners at risk of underachieving are identified early by a very effective screening process and join established focus groups in order to work on key skills, which often enable pupils to catch up with their peers and re-join the mainstream class. Children settle quickly in the Foundation Stage because of the effective induction programme. Pupils have well-written targets for literacy and numeracy. They know these well and use them frequently to check on their own progress. The standard of marking is consistently good throughout the school and there is some outstanding practice such as in literacy in Years 1 and 2. This is one of the reasons for the accelerated progress now being made by pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

As the school has rapidly grown in size, the headteacher and the senior leadership team have ensured that there remains a relentless focus on the pursuit of progress and improving standards. Well-established curriculum teams effectively work together to establish new initiatives and to monitor the work of the school. Self-evaluation is both accurate and thorough and involves all staff and pupils. All leaders are involved in developing areas of innovation. Teaching staff are set and meet very challenging targets which reflect leaders' high expectations. Inclusion at the school is exemplary with very close links to local schools providing opportunities to cater for the needs of vulnerable learners. This is resulting in excellent outcomes for pupils with

learning difficulties and/or disabilities. New initiatives are now making a substantial difference to progress made by pupils in the school. Therefore, the school is now providing excellent value for money and is exceptionally well placed to get even better. The governors are highly perceptive. They have a very clear grasp of the strengths and areas for development and often challenge to seek improvements in practice.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	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?	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?	1
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

31 March 2008

Dear Pupils Inspection of Red Oaks Primary School, Swindon, SN25 2AN

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and were very impressed with your friendliness and confidence. The valuable information you gave us was a great help. We think your school gives you a good education and has some excellent features such as the care, guidance and support you receive and the curriculum offered. Teaching is good and you are making good progress. Leadership of your school is outstanding.

What we most liked about your school

- Your headteacher is inspiring you and the teachers to improve.
- You enjoy school greatly, have very positive attitudes to learning and your behaviour is outstanding.
- You settle quickly in Reception.
- There are excellent opportunities for you to say what you think about school and help to make it better.
- There are very strong links with your parents or carers.
- The school ensures you are very safe and secure.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and make sure you have many interesting activities to help you to learn.
- You have well-written and up-to-date targets to ensure that you understand what you need to do to get better.

We have asked your headteacher and others to do these things

- Provide you with more time to respond to marking.

With your hard work and help, we think that your school will continue to improve.

Yours faithfully

Peter Clifton Lead inspector