

St Oswald's CofE Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112796
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325688
Inspection date	18 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Alison Cogher

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	109
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Leon Ball
Headteacher	Mrs Becky Wood
Date of previous school inspection	19 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Mayfield Road Ashbourne Derbyshire DE6 1AS
Telephone number	01335 342660
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following:

- the impact of the school's work to raise the standard of boys' writing and the problem solving skills of all pupils
- the impact of leadership and management in bringing about whole school improvement
- the impact of school procedures in securing good pupil attendance
- the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision.

Evidence was gathered by observing lessons, scrutinising documents and pupils' work, and from discussions with staff and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not evaluated in detail but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and very few are learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities including those with an identified specific need is above average. The school provides Early Years Foundation Stage provision in a Reception class. Children typically start school with levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that are just below those expected for their age, particularly in the areas of personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy.

The school has achieved a number of awards in recognition of its work. These include the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Healthy School status, Activemark and Silver Anti-Bullying Awards.

The St Oswald's Ladybirds Playgroup operates on the school site and before and after school care is available at the Mulberry Bush Nursery close by. These providers are privately managed and are subject to separate inspections.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has a number of outstanding features. Parental support for the school is overwhelmingly positive. Comments such as 'I couldn't wish for a better school for my child' were typical of those received that expressed pleasure and appreciation for the good quality of education their children receive.

A key feature of the school is how much pupils enjoy being there. This is because staff work hard to make the school a happy place to be where pupils are given a very wide range of opportunities for learning and fun. The school's warm, friendly and vibrant environment ensures pupils feel very safe and secure. Their outstanding personal development reflects their intense enjoyment of school. Pupils' overall attendance is good. Pupils are polite, helpful and enthusiastic, and behave exceptionally well in and around the school. Their very thorough understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle is reflected in the energetic way they take part in activities such as 'Shake and Wake' held at the start of the school day. Their ability to work cooperatively contributes to good development of skills that prepare them well for the next stage of their education and future lives. Pupils show a good awareness of the needs of others through their charitable activities and the contact they have with groups from their own community.

Pupils' enthusiasm for school contributes significantly to their good achievement. In 2008 standards in Year 2 were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. These results were lower than in previous years but the school has identified and tackled the reasons for this. School based assessment information and pupils' work seen in lessons in all year groups, shows pupils' progress is accelerating and standards are beginning to rise. Pupils are achieving well with an above average proportion reaching above expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls of similar ability. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with an identified specific need achieve as well as other pupils because of the effective support they receive. Similarly, pupils learning to speak English as an additional language receive effective support and achieve well.

Teaching of the excellent curriculum is good. Links between subjects are effective and close attention is paid to the development of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. An increase in the variety of learning opportunities effectively supports the raising of standards. For example, the use of drama activities is helping pupils to improve their writing. Improved assessment of pupils' work has enabled teachers to plan activities that match pupils' needs with increasing accuracy. Teachers have good subject knowledge and manage pupils well. They ensure pupils are clear about what they will be learning in lessons and are helping them to develop the skills to assess their work for themselves. While this approach is in the early stages of implementation it is evident that pupils value being able to check their own work to see how well they are doing. Typically, lessons are lively and planned to capture and maintain pupils' interest. However, at times the focus on supporting pupils' learning of basic skills is so structured that opportunities for pupils to think for themselves are restricted. Pupils enthusiastically rise to the learning challenges and the targets they are set. This is particularly evident in the afternoon sessions where creativity within the curriculum is promoted most strongly and pupils' own suggestions are included in the planning of lessons. The use of practical and investigative approaches to learning in these sessions captures pupils' imagination and challenges them to develop their own ideas. Pupils are encouraged to pursue

their own lines of enquiry and to present their findings in ways that they choose for themselves. For example, a group of pupils made a short film to present their findings when learning about 'cold places'. The school recognises that extending this approach to teaching and learning to lessons throughout the day is the next step to support the raising of standards. Teachers and teaching assistants provide well targeted, sensitive support for individuals and groups of pupils so all can participate fully in lessons and make the same good progress.

The curriculum provides an excellent range of learning opportunities that meet pupils' needs very well. Pupils' contribution to the planning of the topics they study results in an enthusiasm for learning as they pursue subjects that are of interest to them. Pupils' value being able to contribute to their learning in this way and also to other aspects of the school's work through the school council. The use of an extensive range of visits, visitors and after school activities serve to enrich pupils' learning very effectively. Excellent use is made of good quality resources and the locality to extend pupils' learning. Community cohesion is promoted particularly well at a school and local level. Plans to extend pupils appreciation and understanding of the diversity of British society and international communities are underway.

This is a very caring school. Its excellence in this respect is evident in the very effective systems for ensuring that statutory safeguarding requirements are met. The respect and trust evident between all members of the school community support excellent relationships. Pupils are confident that adults listen to them and will support and help them whenever they need it. Pupils learning to speak English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or identified specific needs are catered for very well. The school's partnership with parents is very strong and much appreciated by them. Excellent pastoral care and support underpins pupils' outstanding personal development. The academic support and guidance they receive is also excellent. Pupils' work is marked very carefully, discussions are held with them and targets are set to show them what they need to do to improve. Teachers regularly assess pupils' work to track their progress and to identify areas where pupils may need additional support or challenge.

The headteacher and senior staff have succeeded in establishing a clear educational focus for improvement. A strong team approach where all staff and governors work together has enabled a number of significant improvements to be made since the last inspection. These include the close monitoring of teaching and improved systems for assessing pupils' standards and progress. Although some of this work is at the early stages of implementation, it is impacting well on the overall quality of teaching and pupils' learning. This demonstrates the school's good capacity for further improvement. Governor involvement in the work of the school is good. Working closely with the headteacher and other staff they know the school well and are able to hold it to account. School self-evaluation is accurate and when an area is identified for improvement it is tackled effectively. Staff willingness to work together and learn from each other is a key feature of the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels in the school. Excellent links with partner organisations, schools, and outside agencies contribute significantly to the many strengths evident in the quality of education provided by the school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures children make a good start to their education. Excellent relationships with parents and pre-school providers ensure children settle quickly and happily at school. They are keen to come to school and enjoy working and playing together. Effective teaching ensures that children make good progress and achieve

well so that most are working within the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1. The varied range of activities provided match children's interests and abilities well so they engage in them with enthusiasm. Children behave extremely well and relationships within the class are very warm, constructive and supportive. Children are polite, able to share and take turns and concentrate for an extended period of time without adult intervention. Children's development in all areas of learning is regularly measured and this information is used well to guide the planning of future activities. Both the indoor and outdoor spaces are used imaginatively to motivate children to explore their world using all their senses and the wide range of resources made available to them. As a result children's individual needs are met and their enthusiasm for learning is sustained. Adults ensure children are exceptionally well cared for. Teaching assistants work closely with children and offer particularly effective support for those experiencing difficulties. Occasionally, adults provide too much direction and this inhibits the opportunities children have to use their imagination. However, by involving themselves in children's play adults encourage them to make choices, share their ideas and to gain independence in all that they do.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the effective teaching strategies evident in afternoon sessions to all lessons to raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Continue to implement ways to help pupils to assess their own work to improve their personal, independent learning skills.

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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	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	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 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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

19 March 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of St Oswald's CofE Infant School, Ashbourne, DE6 1 AS

Thank you very much for helping us with the inspection of your school. We really enjoyed watching and talking to you in your lessons, and at playtime and lunchtime. We were very impressed with your excellent behaviour and the way you look after each other and work hard in lessons. You told us lots of things that you like about your school and how much you enjoy being there. We were very pleased to hear this. You think your school is good and we agree with you. Here are some of the best things about your school.

- You make a good start to your education in the Reception class.
- You understand how to stay healthy and safe and you are helping the adults to make school an even better place to be.
- You get very involved in your school and local community.
- The adults in school take very good care of you and make sure that you are safe and get help when you need it so you can do your best in lessons.
- The teachers work hard to plan interesting things for you to do in your lessons.
- Adults listen to you so that things you want to do are included in lessons and they talk to you about how you can improve your work.
- You are making better progress in your work than you used to.
- The headteacher of your school is a good leader and all the adults including the governors are working well together to improve it.

Even in a good school like yours, there are things that could be even better. We have asked your school to do two things.

- To make sure your lessons in the morning allow you to learn in the ways that you enjoy most in your afternoon lessons so you get even better at reading, writing and mathematics.
- To show you how to check your own work so that you can help yourselves with your learning.

We hope that you will keep on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make St Oswald's an even better school.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cogher

Lead inspector