

# Offord Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110682
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	337547
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 February 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Martin Beale

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	108
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Alison Lusic
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Kirsty Gray
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 December 2006
<b>School address</b>	Millers Close Offord d'Arcy Cambridgeshire
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors spent the majority of the time looking at pupils' learning. They visited eight lessons and observed five teachers, attended assemblies, and held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and the chair of governors. They scrutinised the school's work, and looked at assessment information, pupils' books, pupil records and improvement plans. The team received and analysed 26 parental questionnaires, 72 responses to the Key Stage 2 pupil survey, and 13 responses to the staff questionnaire.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the strategies used by teachers to ensure that pupils are engaged in lessons and are becoming more active learners
- how well the new creative approach to the curriculum supports the development of pupils' writing
- the impact of new leadership roles on the pupils' achievement and personal development.

## Information about the school

Most pupils are from White British backgrounds in this small school. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Their needs are mostly associated with learning difficulties related to literacy. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes with added flexibility for more-able younger pupils to work with older pupils in mathematics. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class alongside Year 1 pupils. The school has received Healthy Schools status and the Basic Skills 3 award.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

### Main findings

Offord Primary is a good school. It is improving under the thoughtful leadership of the relatively new headteacher and has developed some outstanding features. Parents greatly appreciate all that the school does for their children. As one parent accurately wrote in response to the inspection questionnaire, 'It is a very happy, caring and family learning environment for our children; they are given the chance to flourish and grow through the topic based approach'. Pupils feel part of this family and are confident that, because their needs and circumstances are so well known, the school will help them with any problems they might face.

The children enjoy Reception where they make good progress from skills broadly as expected on entry. This good progress continues across the rest of the school so that attainment is above average by the time the pupils leave Year 6. Pupils who have special educational needs also make good progress towards their specific targets. Few pupils fail to reach expected standards and a significant minority exceed this level. Attendance is high and pupils' behaviour is welcoming at all times. Their hard work and positive attitudes contribute to the great sense of purpose throughout the school. Pupils feel very safe in school and are acutely aware of how to cope with any risks they might face now and in the future. They respond enthusiastically to the school's promotion of healthy eating such as when recording in words and photographs their preparation of a healthy meal at home.

The main factors contributing to their good achievement are:

- rich and interesting daily experiences where learning is linked between subjects and imaginatively brought to life
- pupils' involvement in planning the content of each topic
- topics studied simultaneously by all pupils, which means that families with more than one child at the school can work together more closely in support of their learning
- good teaching in lessons, which are calm but exciting places in which to learn
- careful checking of every pupils' progress so that support can be carefully focused if they show signs of falling behind their targets
- sharply focused support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- staff teamwork based around renewed school aims that focus closely on the development of the pupils as learners.

Pupils benefit considerably from working together on practical activities and in pairs and groups. They greatly enjoy the topic approach and as one pupil said, 'I enjoy the topics and that the whole school works on the same topic'. Writing is improving because it is central to themed planning and so has more meaning and relevance for pupils.

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More-able pupils can learn with older classes, and are now working above the level expected for their age in mathematics. Assessment data identifies where pupils can be moved on more rapidly and older pupils investigate and solve challenging problems such as the scaled drawing work on dinosaurs. In spite of these strengths, occasionally some teaching does not always engage pupils because questioning does not consistently probe their understanding. Furthermore, marking does not always help pupils to improve and they are rarely involved in assessing their work or that of others.

The school has good capacity for further improvement, in part because everyone shares the headteacher's ambitions for pupils. New leadership roles are developing and governors make a considerable contribution to the school's future. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection in several key areas, including what has now become a very close and productive partnership with parents. Nevertheless, while everyone has a clear picture of the school's qualities on which to base planning, self-evaluation does not always use monitoring evidence and assessment data rigorously to judge the impact of any action taken by the school.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the pupils' progress and engage them further in the learning process by:
  - using more effective questioning techniques to develop pupils' thinking and reasoning skills
  - ensuring greater consistency in the guidance provided by teachers' marking
  - involving pupils in assessing their own progress and that of others in their classes.
- Sharpen school evaluation processes further by using evidence from monitoring provision and assessment data more effectively to inform future planning.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Observations of lessons show how motivated and enthusiastic pupils have become since the introduction of the new topics. Almost all work hard and persevere with activities. They are very keen to do their best and strive to meet their targets. This comes across strongly in the pride they take to present their work carefully. The pupils' excellent behaviour in lessons contributes significantly to their learning. They apply their basic skills for a broad range of purposes, using their computer skills to present their work creatively. They are able to take the initiative when working with others on a task and share responsibilities sensibly. The new topic approach is also helping them to become more independent as they plan their work and research for information on areas they are studying. They are keen to take on new challenges and engage with much interest in a wide range of activities.

Pupils show respect for others and for cultural differences. They are inquisitive and curious as shown in their recent work on Victorians. Pupils are very considerate towards each other and help any newcomers to the school to make friends and settle in quickly.

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They say they are happy in school because they trust their teachers and are confident that any concerns shared with adults will be quickly sorted out. Pupils feel they have been taught to think carefully about how to deal with risky situations. For example, older pupils are aware of the dangers when using new technology and the steps they should take to keep themselves safe. They contribute much to the life of the school and to the village, and they show great thoughtfulness when raising funds for a child in Africa. They are beginning to have a greater voice in the school including starting to make more decisions about their learning.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers are skilled at making learning interesting for pupils, who understand and accept their high expectations for work and behaviour. Teachers use resources and new technology creatively to make learning more interesting. Assessment information is used well to match methods and tasks closely to the needs of all pupils. This ensures that the more able are challenged and additional support provided where needed by a skilled team of teaching assistants. While individual targets are used to help pupils to improve

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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their work, marking does not consistently focus on the steps to be taken to meet them. The curriculum is constantly under review and used well as a vehicle to support the renewed school aims. Creative and extensive links are made between subjects from Reception upwards. Basic skills, particularly writing, are developed through all subjects and the use of computers makes a significant contribution to pupils' accelerating progress. Their experiences are enriched and extended further through visits, such as to the Natural History Museum, to support their work on 'Dinosaurs'. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is developing and is a factor in extending the more-able pupils in mathematics.

The school has a very clear understanding of the circumstances of pupils and their families. This and the improved use of assessment data is particularly valuable in enabling leaders to identify the precise difficulties faced by pupils with special educational needs and to carefully tailor programmes for withdrawal and other intervention groups. The support of external agencies is sought where needed. Induction arrangements when pupils join and arrangements when they move on to secondary school help to give a seamless transfer from one stage to the next.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher and her deputy provide very clear direction based around the new school aims, the development of which include a major contribution from parents and pupils. The leadership roles of all staff have been redefined and all are being held accountable for the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility. Improving pupils' learning is an ongoing focus but there is not always a clear picture about precisely what aspects of each teacher's skills need developing. There are limited opportunities for teachers to improve their skills by working alongside each other in class or observing the teaching of others. The governing body is well led, has a clear understanding of the school's qualities and is fully involved in planning for the school's future. It provides support and challenge for the school in equal measure.

The school has put in place secure arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of the pupils and for making sure that those working with them are properly vetted. Responsibilities are clear, so that the school provides a safe environment for all. Staff and governors take their duties to promote equal opportunities seriously, and leaders successfully ensure that discrimination of any sort is not tolerated. There is a strong

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partnership with parents, from before their children start in Reception. This means that most feel very well informed and fully involved in their children's education. The school has a clear understanding of the community and the context within which it works. It has used this to demonstrate its commitment to helping the community work together more cohesively, but the impact has not been fully evaluated.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Carefully planned induction arrangements, built on strong links with home, help children to settle quickly into the Reception class. Children are happy and secure because of the emphasis placed by all staff on their welfare and safety. By the time they leave Reception, almost all have reached the goals expected nationally and the majority have exceeded this level in all areas of their learning. Writing is the weakest aspect, but is benefitting considerably from the focus placed on it through the topics studied and activities undertaken.

The main reasons for their good progress are that:

- the children benefit from the role models not just of the Year 1 pupils in their class but from their regular contact with older pupils throughout the school
- the Reception class provides a series of carefully planned and stimulating activities for the children on a daily basis
- assessment information is used well to guide planning and check on every child's progress
- children are able to take responsibility for their learning by helping to plan the



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content of the topics they undertake

- the classroom both inside and outdoors covers all areas of learning through a judicious balance of activities led by adults and those developed by the children
- adults work well as a team focusing sharply on meeting each child's needs.

The qualities of the setting are fully understood by staff. Nevertheless, evaluation is not always sufficiently incisive for school leadership to be able to identify precisely where improvements could be made to provision so that the children could achieve even more.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Parents are very much in support of the school and have no major areas of concern. Most parents and carers report that their children enjoy school. They are pleased with the progress their children are making, the quality of teaching, the new topic approach and the way their children are helped to become safe. These are areas that are endorsed by the inspection team.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Offord Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 26 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 108 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	58	10	38	0	0	1	4
The school keeps my child safe	16	62	10	38	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	12	46	12	46	2	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	46	13	50	0	0	1	4
The teaching is good at this school	13	50	12	46	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	46	12	46	1	4	1	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	35	17	65	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	11	42	11	42	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	42	13	50	1	4	1	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	54	9	35	2	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	50	10	38	2	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	58	10	38	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	62	9	35	0	0	1	4

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



1 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Offord Primary School, Offord d'Arcy, PE19 5SB

Thank you all very much for your friendliness and help when we visited your school recently. We agree with you that Offord Primary is improving and is a good school. We were pleased to see how much you enjoy school and we agree with you that your teachers take very good care of you. You also take very good care of each other. Your attendance and behaviour are excellent and those of you who have special jobs, like members of the school council, carry out your duties responsibly.

Thank you for sharing your views with us. You are making good progress during your time in school, learning the skills you need for the future and becoming mature and responsible people. This is because you are taught well and have very interesting things to learn. You clearly enjoy the wide range of exciting activities provided for you, including the visits to places of interest such as the Natural History Museum associated with your topic on dinosaurs.

Everyone is trying hard to make the school even better. The two things we have asked the teachers and other adults to do are to:

- help you to learn better through more effective questioning and marking
- develop systems to make sure that all the new ideas they introduce really benefit your academic and personal development.

I am sure that you and your teachers will work hard to make these improvements. You can play your part in helping the school to get even better by continuing to take such great pride in your school and continuing to be so enthusiastic about learning.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale

Lead inspector

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