

Oulton CofE (C) First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124276
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380848
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julian Sokoloff
Headteacher	Jeanette Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2006
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Age group	3–9
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons or part lessons, taught by four different teachers. The inspection team examined the school's policies, assessment information, pupils' work, teachers' plans and school improvement planning. They held discussions with the headteacher, the staff, members of the governing body, parents and carers and pupils. The inspectors analysed 72 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, also 30 from pupils and 11 from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How good is the provision for mathematics and how well are pupils performing in this subject?
- How well are teachers matching tasks to different abilities and ages so that pupils can learn as well as they can?
- What are the school's ambitions and improvement priorities under the new leadership?

Information about the school

This is a much-smaller-than-average primary school. The school is popular and oversubscribed. Almost all of the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also below average. The headteacher was appointed in September 2011.

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

Oulton CofE First is a good school which has maintained the good provision and outcomes for pupils identified in the previous inspection report. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching and a well planned curriculum. Good quality provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that children start well and make good progress. This continues in Key Stages 1 and 2 and attainment by the end of Year 4 is above expectations. The school has taken effective steps to raise attainment in mathematics and bring it in line with that of reading and writing.

Teachers establish positive relationships with their pupils and manage them well. Their explanations, instructions and demonstrations successfully promote learning. Questioning is used effectively to check pupils' understanding of new work. Occasionally learning slows, with overlong introductions when pupils are eager to move on to the main tasks. Most pupils make good gains in their learning but tasks are not always sharply matched to the needs of the most-able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Opportunities are sometimes missed to develop pupils' advanced skills of problem solving and independent study.

Care, guidance and support make a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils feel extremely safe because of the good attention given to safeguarding and the very good care provided by staff. Pupils really enjoy school and show positive attitudes to learning. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils adopt a healthy lifestyle by choosing healthy food and participating in regular exercise. They make valuable contributions to the school and to the wider community. Attendance levels are above average and pupils are well prepared for the future.

The new headteacher brings good experience and enthusiasm to the school. She has already gained an astute overview of the school's performance and there are well thought-out plans for further improvements. The monitoring of teaching is effective but opportunities for teachers to visit other schools and observe outstanding practice are lacking. A productive partnership has been established with parents and carers, who are very pleased with the care and education provided for their children. Through systematic self-evaluation, the school knows its strengths and takes effective steps to bring about improvements. The raising of attainment in mathematics and the developments to the Early Years Foundation Stage provision demonstrate the school's good capacity for further improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching and learning by providing opportunities for teachers to observe outstanding practice in other settings and ensuring that in all lessons:
 - learning proceeds at a brisk pace
 - tasks are very closely matched to pupils' needs.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to develop problem solving and independent study skills.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are broadly at the levels expected for their age. They make good progress across all the areas of learning. Throughout the school, pupils show enthusiasm for learning and enjoy the wide range of activities provided. Most pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 make good progress. Occasionally, the more-able are not sufficiently extended in lessons. Also, tasks are sometimes too difficult for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, although overall these pupils make good progress. By the end of Year 4, as shown by assessments, the lessons seen and pupils' work, pupils' attainment is above that expected in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils are confident and articulate speakers with a wide vocabulary. They respond enthusiastically to teachers' questions and are keen to demonstrate their knowledge and express their ideas. Speaking and listening skills are therefore very well developed by the end of Year 4. Pupils enjoy the range of books available and make good progress in reading. They write for a range of purposes and in different styles. For example, after being inspired by a well selected film clip of '101 Dalmatians' and the teacher's successful demonstrations, pupils in Years 3 and 4 used powerful adjectives and imaginative similes in writing character descriptions of Cruella De Vil. Handwriting was fluent, joined and neatly presented. Punctuation and spelling were mainly accurate.

In mathematics, pupils in Year 1 made good progress in recognising two-dimensional shapes and describing their properties. Pupils identified different 'shapes all around us' from a range of colourful photographs. Pupils enjoyed the practical tasks which were well matched to their different needs.

Pupils make good progress in their spiritual, moral and social development. They demonstrate positive personal qualities such as cooperation, kindness, respect and responsibility. In assemblies, they celebrate fellow pupils' achievements and reflect on the importance of offering encouragement and support to others. Though satisfactory, their knowledge and understanding of different cultures and faiths is not

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as strong as other areas of their personal development. Pupils feel extremely well cared for at school and know that there are always trusted adults they can turn to for help if needed. As pupils told an inspector, 'Staff always help us'. Pupils make good contributions to the school and to the wider community. Those on the school council represent their fellow pupils well. 'Eco warriors' promote the importance of recycling materials and saving energy. Pupils raise funds for a range of appeals and charities to help those who are less fortunate than themselves. With good personal skills and above expected attainment in literacy and numeracy, pupils are well prepared for their next school and future life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching promotes good learning and positive personal outcomes for pupils. Teachers share the purpose of the lesson with pupils so they know what they are expected to learn. Explanations and visual aids are used effectively to illustrate key learning points. There are good examples of drama being used to develop pupils' speaking skills and generate ideas for writing. Assessment is usually used well to plan teaching and the next steps of pupils' learning. Pupils are challenged and their interest is sustained when tasks are well matched to their abilities and needs. These features were present in most lessons but not in all. The marking of pupils' work is helpful and constructive.

The curriculum promotes good academic progress for pupils and makes a good contribution to their personal development. A range of strategies have been

¹ 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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effectively implemented to improve mathematics and the school continues to explore ways to improve boys' writing. The promotion of independent study, problem solving and research skills is less well developed. Health education and the range of physical activities provided contribute well to pupils' healthy lifestyles. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the wide range of clubs, including football, gymnastics and wildlife. Visits and visitors further enhance the curriculum and pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support underpin the school's positive ethos. Pupils, parents and carers appreciate the well organised, safe and secure environment provided. A parent commented, 'The school provides a nurturing environment'. Relationships between adults and pupils are very positive. Several parents and carers commented on the approachability and the helpfulness of the staff. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are usually provided with the good support they need. In partnership with other agencies, the school is effective in supporting pupils and their families who require additional help. There are effective procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and staff have successfully created a positive school atmosphere for pupils to learn and develop. The new headteacher has quickly identified the school's strengths and has a clear vision to further develop the curriculum and extend the partnership with the local and wider community. The staff and governors fully support this direction. In a school of this size, key and subject responsibilities are distributed among a few staff. Some staff have too many subject areas to lead and the headteacher, with the staff, intends to review and restructure responsibilities. Effective leadership and management have given rise to improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage and to pupils' attainment in mathematics. Through effective monitoring, the headteacher has recognised the strengths in teaching and has identified where it might be further improved.

Members of the governing body show a clear understanding of the school's strengths and improvement priorities. They are supportive and provide constructive challenge so as to hold the school to account. Safeguarding is given good attention and there are effective policies and procedures protect and safeguard pupils. The monitoring and evaluation of these procedures are rigorous and thorough. All staff are well trained in the area of safeguarding. Safe practices for pupils are promoted through

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the school's curriculum and teaching.

Pupils have full access to the range of good quality provision, resulting in good progress in their learning. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and discrimination is very effectively tackled. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily. Partnerships with the parents and carers, the church and the local community are positive. The headteacher has well thought-out plans to further extend pupils' understanding of the diversity of cultures and faiths within the United Kingdom and in the wider world.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account:	
The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership, planning and local authority support has brought about good improvements to this area since the previous inspection. Children settle quickly because of good induction arrangements and the strong relationships between adults and children. Good care, guidance and welfare mean that children feel safe, secure and grow in confidence.

Children thoroughly enjoy the indoor and outdoor activities provided. They are well taught and make good gains in their learning. Assessment information is used well to plan teaching and learning. There is an effective balance of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children. Children have good opportunities to explore, be creative and work independently.

Children make good progress in speaking and listening because these skills are effectively promoted through most activities. Children enjoy the range of books available and thoroughly enjoy the stories read to them. For example, children

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listened attentively as the teacher read the 'Little Red Hen' with animation and expression. They participated well in discussion and the use of puppet characters from the story promoted further enjoyment and learning. The children had good opportunities to make and bake bread like the hen. Others, with help from adults, used reclaimed materials to construct a model hen; they made good progress in cutting and joining materials. Opportunities for children to acquire and practise mark making and early writing skills are satisfactory but could be extended. The spacious and well-resourced outdoor areas successfully encourage children to be active and purposeful learners. Children enjoy riding the wide range of vehicles with increasing coordination and control. Some of the learning resources are old and well used but there are plans to replace these.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

The inspection team received a much higher than usual response to the parent and carers questionnaire. All the parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are very happy with their children's experience at the school. They are particularly pleased with the safety in the school, the sense of enjoyment, teaching, preparation for the future and the leadership. The inspection findings support these positive views. The results of this survey indicate that parents and carers' concerns are very few. A very small minority do not feel that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. During the inspection, pupils' behaviour was consistently good and there are effective procedures to deal with any inappropriate behaviour that might occur. The new headteacher and staff are keen to further extend the good partnership with parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oulton CofE (C) First 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 72 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 95 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	74	18	25	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	60	83	12	17	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	36	50	32	44	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	49	30	42	2	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	46	64	23	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	51	32	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	63	24	33	0	0	2	3
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)	48	67	18	25	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	53	28	39	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	56	18	25	4	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	51	28	39	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	44	61	25	35	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	76	17	24	0	0	0	0

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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:	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. <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



26 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oulton CofE (C) First School, Stone, ST15 8UH

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school, giving us your views and showing us your work. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit. This is a good school.

These are the main strengths.

- You thoroughly enjoy school and your attendance is above average.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start.
- You are making good progress because of the good teaching you receive.
- You enjoy a good range of learning activities including clubs, visits and visitors.
- Behaviour in the school is good and you get on well with each other.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and fit.
- You feel extremely safe at school because teachers and other adults take good care of you and provide outstanding guidance and support.
- You make valuable contributions to school life and to the wider community.
- The school is well led and managed.

We have given your school a few points for improvement.

- We have asked teachers to ensure that full use is made of every minute in all lessons so that you learn as much as you can. We have also asked them to ensure that tasks are always very well matched to your needs so that work is not too easy or too hard.
- We would like you to have more opportunities to apply your skills to solve problems and to learn independently.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts
Lead Inspector

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