

Orchard Vale Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131273
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	381325
Inspection dates	2–3 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Anne Wright

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 of pupils on the school roll	345
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Cowie
Headteacher	Jan Baker
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed seventeen lessons taught by twelve teachers and briefly visited other lessons and activities. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school documents, including those related to safeguarding, the school development plan, pupils' work, and information about pupils' progress. They also took into account the views of pupils, staff and 100 parents and carers expressed in responses to questionnaires.

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

- The impact of work being done to improve pupils' progress, in particular in English and mathematics at Key Stage 1, and in mathematics across the school.
- The effectiveness of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for the more able.
- The effectiveness of leaders at all levels and of the governing body in helping to improve the school further.

Information about the school

This is larger than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils live in the local community and are of White British heritage. There are no other groups of significant size in the school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high, as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. This is because the school has an allocated resource unit for pupils whose needs relate to speech, language and communication learning difficulties. The school provides day care for children from birth to three years of age and after-school care for its pupils through the Arts Play Club. These are run by private organisations and were not part of this inspection. The school has achieved a number of nationally recognised awards, including Healthy Schools status, the Green Flag Award for International Eco-Schools, and the International School Award. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Nursery and in the Reception class. The school converted to academy status on 1 November 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

This is a good school. As a consequence of the strong leadership and management of the headteacher, significant improvements have been made since the last inspection leading to consistently high attainment and outstanding achievement for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. These improvements have been recognised by most parents and carers who hold the school in high regard. Several commented, 'This school has strong leadership'.

At the heart of the school's work are excellent levels of care and support for every child. As a result, there is mutual respect between adults and pupils. The latter say they are extremely happy and feel very safe at Orchard Vale. They behave well and they enjoy school life. Pupils' well-being is further enhanced by the exceptional effectiveness with which they are encouraged to live healthy lifestyles, recognised in a national award. The school is particularly successful in nurturing the few pupils who have speech, language and communication learning difficulties taught in the resource unit. Pupils contribute exceptionally well to the school and wider community demonstrating their skills as responsible citizens through embracing numerous roles, such as play leaders and fund raisers. They respect one another's differences extremely well and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

Learning is good overall. Children settle quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage and make satisfactory progress, and pupils continue to do so in Key Stage 1. However, their progress accelerates rapidly and is outstanding in Key Stage 2. Consequently, their attainment in English and mathematics is significantly above average by the time they leave in Year 6. Learning is not outstanding overall because of some unevenness in progress across the school. This unevenness is the result of the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and assessment. However, the school is aware of this and has put strategies into place, in particular in Key Stage 1, to accelerate progress in English and in mathematics. These strategies, such as 'talk partners' and 'Talk for Writing', are beginning to impact positively, especially on the attainment of more-able pupils.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is as a result of focused additional support. The high-quality individual programmes of work for those with complex speech, language and communication learning difficulties taught in the resource unit similarly result in good progress.

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Teachers have strong relationships with their classes and plan interesting activities which mostly engage and motivate learners of all abilities. In a few lessons, in both English and mathematics, the match of work to pupils' abilities is not precise enough, and consequently it is too easy so that progress slows. There is variation in the quality of marking in English and in mathematics throughout the school. Where it is good, pupils are given clear, subject-specific guidance in terms of next steps for improvement.

The pursuit of excellence is evident at all levels of the school community and school leaders have high expectations of pupils. They have a clear view of where improvement is needed, based on thorough monitoring and self-evaluation. This has resulted in improvements in many aspects of the school's work since 2007, including the creation of a stimulating outdoor environment to support learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The governing body plays a key role in establishing the strategic direction of the school. Consequently, the school has good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate learning and progress so that it is consistently outstanding by making the majority of teaching outstanding through:
 - rigorously challenging all pupils to achieve as well as they can especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1.
- Improve the quality of assessment by ensuring that teachers' feedback and marking always help pupils to improve.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils enjoy their learning and this is clearly reflected in most lessons where they fully engage with their learning and remain focused on their tasks. They cooperate and collaborate effectively in pairs and groups. Pupils particularly enjoy practical learning. For example, in a mixed-age Year 3 and 4 lesson, they were able to demonstrate their knowledge of how to find areas of rectangles using multiplication, and their understanding of its connection to counting squares and arrows, through actively teaching each other. In a few lessons, however, pupils are less engaged because there is insufficient challenge.

A range of intervention programmes including reading recovery are proving effective in bringing about improvements in reading at Key Stage 1. Consequently, pupils' progress has accelerated. Similarly, a concerted drive to improve mathematics across the school through intervention programmes, such as one-to-one tuition, has accelerated pupils' progress.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. They are given good support which helps them to develop positive attitudes to learning.

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Some pupils, especially those educated in the resource unit, make excellent progress in developing the skills necessary to take full part in the life of the school.

Pupils show an exemplary understanding of the need to live a healthy lifestyle and many are keen participants in a range of sports-related activities. Pupils are clear that there is little bullying and they would readily turn to an adult if they were concerned. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the running of the school and both the Key Stage 1 and the Key Stage 2 school councils provide a very effective voice in the school. For example, as a consequence of their influence the school dinner arrangements have been completely altered. The school has been awarded the Green Flag for International Eco-Schools as a result of pupils’ ambassadorship as Eco warriors. Pupils also make an excellent contribution to the wider community through, for example, performing at local festivals and regularly participating in local events. Pupils’ good attendance, combined with their excellent basic skills, means they are very well prepared for secondary school and the world beyond.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Initiatives have been introduced to enhance key aspects of provision and to improve pupils’ achievement. Consequently, the quality of teaching is improving, and skilled teaching in the resource unit helps pupils with speech, language and communication learning difficulties to make good progress. Strengths of teaching include the effective deployment of teaching assistants to facilitate learning, good relationships with pupils and the teachers’ good subject knowledge. Enjoyment of learning is

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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enhanced by a good curriculum that is well organised and creative, and an extensive programme of visits and visitors to the school. Extra-curricular provision, such as residential trips to Paignton and Bude, provides pupils with opportunities to bring learning to life. However, it is not outstanding because the curriculum offer in a few lessons does not appropriately match the needs of all learners, especially in Key Stage 1. Teachers use a wide variety of effective strategies to assess pupils’ learning and progress. However, marking across the school in both English and mathematics is inconsistent in terms of helping pupils to understand how to improve their work.

The school’s outstanding care of its pupils is evident in its support for pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. For example, staff work in very close partnership with parents and carers, and with an extensive range of outside agencies to meet their needs. This is especially the case for pupils in the resource unit. Parents and carers value the opportunities offered to them to chat informally with each other, and with staff by visiting the ‘Coffee Corner’ located on the school site. Very thorough transition arrangements are in place to support pupils when they join or leave the school, so that they settle happily.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The successful leadership of the headteacher has resulted in a clear, shared vision for the school. This is based on high expectations and continuous improvement. Morale is high as reflected by a member of staff who said, ‘I am proud to work at Orchard Vale and feel very valued.’ The headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders, instils a sense of drive throughout the school. Challenging targets are set for pupils’ performance in national tests at the end of Year 6. The monitoring of the school’s provision is robust, and as a result, the quality of teaching is good. Leaders provide regular professional development opportunities, for example through coaching and mentoring, to allow staff to improve the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. The leadership and management of the resource unit are good because of clear planning. The school communicates well with parents and carers, and works exceptionally well in partnership with others. Consequently, pupils’ achievement and personal development are outstanding. The school is looking forward to extending its partnership links further through the additional opportunities provided as a result of its new academy status.

The governing body is effective in ensuring that the school meets its statutory duties,

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for example with regard to the safeguarding of children. Arrangements in this respect are good and are constantly updated to reflect their high priority within the school. The governing body challenges and holds the school to account well.

The school is very inclusive and promotes and tackles discrimination exceptionally well. Consequently, the school is a happy and harmonious place for pupils to learn and play together. The school promotes community cohesion well, in particular its links with other schools in other countries. These have been recognised by the achievement of the International School Award. The school is actively seeking to further develop links with other schools in the United Kingdom.

The school provides outstanding value for money because it manages resources very effectively, leading to outstanding outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The attainment of children on entry into Reception shows an improving trend over the last three years. The 2010-2011 group of children entered Reception with skills and abilities that are above those typical for children of their age overall. This is especially the case for those who attend the Nursery. However, their knowledge and understanding of letters and sounds, and calculation are below those typical for children of their age. Children settle rapidly because of the outstanding care, warm relationships and good liaison with parents and carers. Consequently, they feel safe and secure. Children show positive attitudes and behave well. Children eat healthy snacks and are aware of the importance of basic hygiene, such as washing hands. The activities that are available indoors and in the stimulating outside environment

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give them ample opportunity to show initiative and become independent learners. While some children make good progress in all areas of learning, overall progress is satisfactory. For example, the 2010-2011 group entered Year 1 with knowledge and skills that are above age-related expectations but below these in their understanding of letters and sounds, and calculation.

The school is aware that children make satisfactory progress overall in all areas of learning which lead to average outcomes. They have consequently put a range of strategies and programmes into place which have resulted in good provision. Outcomes this year, therefore, show an improving trend. Teaching, facilitated by the effective deployment of teaching assistants to support learning, is good. As a result, children are happy and they enjoy their learning. This was evident, for example, when children in Reception were observed working independently in a music lesson, playing instruments to enact different sounds, such as rain and thunder.

Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Detailed strategic plans outline a clear direction for improvement based on an accurate view of strengths and areas for development. Consequently, members of staff are working effectively as a team. They use assessment information well to inform appropriate interventions to accelerate progress across all areas of learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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

Almost one third of parents and carers completed the inspection questionnaire, showing a higher than average response. Their views were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. They particularly appreciate how much their children enjoy school and how safe they are, with one parent commenting, 'Orchard Vale is like a second home.' Another commented, 'My child is very happy at this school and is always eager to come.' A very few concerns were expressed by parents and carers relating to behaviour. Inspectors found behaviour to be good during the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Orchard Vale Community 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 100 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 345 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	67	67	31	31	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	66	66	32	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	56	56	38	38	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	51	45	45	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	71	71	27	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	59	59	38	38	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	57	57	38	38	1	1	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)	55	55	40	40	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	61	61	36	36	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	45	46	46	2	2	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	49	49	45	45	2	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	51	51	43	43	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	67	67	31	31	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:	<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"> ■ 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.



4 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Orchard Vale Community School, Barnstaple EX32 8QY

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to the inspectors when we recently visited your school, and special thanks to those of you who took the time to talk to us or tell us your views about the school through the questionnaire. We are pleased to see that almost all of you enjoy school. Your school provides you with a good education and does some things particularly well. As a result, when you leave school at the end of Year 6, your achievement is outstanding. You have lots of opportunities to participate in clubs and visits. This helps you to develop good skills in working together and appreciating others' needs. Your behaviour is good, and your headteacher and staff take excellent care of you. Consequently, you have an excellent understanding of the importance of keeping healthy and of staying safe. You make an outstanding contribution to the school and the wider community of Barnstaple.

To help the school improve further, we have asked teachers to do the following:

- Help you to improve your work by making sure that learning is always challenging enough, especially for those of you aged four to seven.
- Mark your books to show you clearly how to improve your work. You can all help by thinking carefully about how much you understand.

We wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Anne Wright
Lead inspector

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