

13th September 2007

Dear Parents and Carers

Results from the Recent Ofsted Inspection

As you are no doubt aware, unless you are new to the school this term, the school had its long awaited Ofsted inspection in the last week of the school year. The school received less than a week's notice that the inspection was going to take place and being right at the end of term meant that it was very hard for all the staff to keep the momentum going, not allowing things to wind down too much. However, it did mean that the staff could have a restful summer knowing that the inspection had taken place and not having it hanging over them in September; the last inspection was in September 2002 and the period between inspections would not have exceeded five years. The final version of the report was received at school on Monday this week and it is being sent to all parents and carers in its entirety for detailed reading.

The purpose of an inspection is to inspect and regulate in order to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It is not just about being critical but is also a way of making suggestions in order to help a school improve further. Ofsted use a system of grading where grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 is good, grade 3 is satisfactory and grade 4 inadequate. Satisfactory maybe only sounds mediocre, but in reality it means that things are OK and that there is nothing wrong with the standards reached. Gradings are given covering various different areas and for Caldecott School most of these have been classed as satisfactory whereas personal development and well-being have been classed as good. Education is not just about academic achievements it is also to do with developing the whole person and this is something that we are particularly good at and proud of at Caldecott School.

I would like to take this opportunity to draw to your attention a number of points that have come out of the report.

- The standards at the end of year 2 improved considerably this year
- The standards at the end of year 6 have improved over the last 3 years and are improving further
- The school celebrates achievement and this in turn help the children have a positive attitude to school
- The school has good capacity to improve further
- Pupils with communication and language difficulties do well as a result of their very focused teaching
- The school has a warm and caring atmosphere
- Behaviour is good and attendance is above average
- Pupils have adopted safe and healthy lifestyles and have positive views on healthy eating

- Individual targets for pupils are being used well to help the children progress
- The English curriculum has been revised recently in order to assist children develop their writing skills
- The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are monitored closely
- The headteacher and deputy are working closely and successfully
- The school has detailed plans and a clear strategy to raise standards further
- The governors provide the school with appropriate support and challenge.

In order to help Caldecott School improve further, the Ofsted inspectors have suggested four areas where the school could improve:

- There is a great range of abilities within each class so the teachers need to ensure that the tasks set are precisely matched to the needs of all groups of pupils
- Improve writing skills by writing in a range of subjects
- Improve investigative skills in science
- Enhance the role of all co-ordinators to broaden the drive for improvement.

These four areas will be looked at in turn over the weeks and months ahead and ways will be sought to incorporate them into school life.

The range and diversity of the pupils at Caldecott School make it a challenging place to work. Margaret Wolf always tries to accommodate children who want to attend the school if she believes it is in the child's best interests, whereas some schools would be reluctant to accept more challenging children. Inclusion is a very important feature of the school but in return this does impact on the school's overall results. Inspectors were clear that all pupils were making sound progress in relation to their starting points academically – this includes gifted and talented and more able. Every Child Matters is an approach to the well-being of children aged 0 to 19 which is made up of five different elements – be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being. It is obvious at Caldecott School that every single child really does matter and that all these five strands are being brought into each and every school day.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff for their continued dedication and commitment in helping all our children reach their full potential. If you have any questions about the report please do not hesitate to ask Margaret Wolf, Katy Walsh or myself and we will do our best to answer them.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Jeanette Thomas
Chair of Governors

Caldecott Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123087
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	292577
Inspection dates	18 - 19 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Mr Christopher Parker

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

Type of School	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	345
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jeanette Thomas
Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Wolf
Date of previous school inspection	30 September 2002
School address	Caldecott Road Abingdon OX14 5HB
Telephone number	01235 523132
Fax number	01235 530950

Age group	3-11
Inspection Date(s)	18 - 19 July 2007
Inspection Number	292577

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is much larger than average. It serves a mixed area with pockets of significant disadvantage. More pupils than usual take free school meals. The school has a communication and language resource base for up to 24 pupils. Currently there are 18 pupils with speech, language and communication needs. In the school as a whole, the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is high. In total 22 pupils have statements of special educational need. Pupils are predominantly of White British heritage. More pupils join and leave the school than usual.

The school provides additional day care for up to 16 children in the nursery and out of school care for a similar number of pupils from the ages of 3 to 11. Holiday care is also provided.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for the pupils. The headteacher and her deputy have given the school a new direction and generated a momentum for improvement. A downward trend in results has been halted, standards have risen and pupils are now making satisfactory progress.

Two years ago, the school joined the intensifying support programme (ISP). As a result, the headteacher and her staff examined the school's provision and effectiveness. They introduced frequent and robust checks on the school's performance and precise plans to bring about improvement.

The tracking of each pupil's progress is comprehensive. It confirms that most pupils are making at least satisfactory progress. This also is borne out in lessons. Children in the Foundation Stage make a secure start to school life but few reach the goals set for the end of the Reception Year reflecting the low attainment on entry. In the recent national tests at the end of Year 2, although still below average, standards improved considerably. The recovery in results at the end of Year 6 began last year and this year have improved further in English. However, writing remains much weaker than reading. Pupils with learning difficulties also make satisfactory progress. Those who attend the communication and language resource base make good progress.

The teaching is satisfactory. There are some strong features to the teaching but inconsistencies reduce its impact. The pupils benefit from having their work marked in a way that helps them to improve. However, in some lessons tasks do not match the pupils' needs precisely enough to move them quickly to the next stage in their learning.

The school has an ethos which promotes and celebrates achievement. As a result most pupils have positive attitudes to school, enjoy lessons and behave well. The pupils' personal development and well-being are good because they are guided and supported well. Care is good, including both daycare in the nursery and out of school provision.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is enhanced by theme weeks and productive links with schools in other countries. Recent changes are strengthening approaches to writing. A higher profile for investigative skills in science is evident in the pupils' work but this improvement is not sufficiently systematic to raise standards further.

The headteacher and her deputy, with the support of governors, are leading efforts to bring about improvements with increasing success. They have yet to harness the commitment of all coordinators to bring further improvements in all aspects of the school's work. Nevertheless, they have reversed the decline in the school's performance, have an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and now have a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the rate of pupils' progress by making sure that the tasks teachers set are precisely matched to needs of all groups of pupils.
- Raise standards in writing by extending the opportunities that pupils have to use their writing skills in a range of subjects.
- Ensure pupils develop a comprehensive range of investigative skills in science as they move through the school.

- Enhance the role of all coordinators to broaden the drive for improvement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Attainment on entry is well below average. The children make satisfactory progress but fewer than usual reach the goals set for the end of the Reception. Standards remain low in communication, language and literacy, particularly for boys. The pupils achieve satisfactorily from Year 1 to Year 6. Standards fell sharply at the end of Year 2 between 2002 and 2006. Although standards remain below average the proportion reaching the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics has doubled in this year's tests. More pupils have also reached the higher level. The recovery in standards at the end of Year 6 has been consolidated this year. A further improvement in English results has moved the proportion reaching the expected level to just below the national average, although performance in writing remains weak. Improvements in science have been maintained but the pupils' work covers a limited range of investigative skills.

Pupils with communication and language difficulties do well as a result of the very focused teaching and support they receive. The school has done much to engage boys in learning but their performance remains weaker than that of girls, particularly in writing. Achievement is satisfactory overall, and makes a sound contribution to the pupils' future economic well-being.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils and their parents say they enjoy school and benefit from the 'warm and caring atmosphere' which a number of parents commented on. Those attending out-of-school care enjoy the range of activities provided for them. Positive relationships throughout the school promote good attitudes to work. As a result pupils listen carefully to their teachers and concentrate on their work. Behaviour is good and, as a result of the school's encouraging and strong stance, attendance is now above average.

Pupils have adopted safe and healthy lifestyles and have positive views on healthy eating. 'Wakeup, shake up' gets the school day off to a lively start. The pupils also gain positive approaches to environmental issues and classes compete for the recycling trophy. Good links with schools in other parts of the world give the pupils a broad cultural understanding. The school and class councils make a good contribution to the school community. The inclusion of pupils from the communication and language resource base in activities such as residential trips contributes well to their social development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The teaching is satisfactory. Relationships are good and behaviour is generally well managed. Teachers set out clearly what the class is expected to learn in each lesson. Most lessons are well planned but there are instances where not enough consideration is given to the needs of different groups. In some lessons there is an over reliance on deploying teaching assistants to support groups of pupils rather than tailoring tasks to their needs. In English lessons teachers are using targets well and making increasingly good use of speaking and listening to help the pupils prepare for writing. In some lessons questioning is skilful and used well to modify tasks for groups of pupils but this is not consistently the case. Marking is good and helps the pupils to improve their work.

In the Foundation Stage children have an appropriate balance of teacher led activities and opportunities to make their own choices. Occasionally, the children are passive for too long and the opportunity for them to become engaged in the lesson is missed.

The teaching of pupils with communication and language difficulties is good. Work is matched well to the next steps in pupils' learning, practical resources are used imaginatively and teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the good progress of this group of pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage teacher-initiated activities, including role play, promote children's language development. A phonics programme is helping the younger pupils to make better progress in spelling and writing. In Years 1 to 6, units of work in English have been revised to develop systematically the skills that pupils require to improve their writing. The pupils have opportunities to write in other subjects, but they are not extensive or consistent. In science, pupils have some opportunities to use investigative skills but these are not yet developed systematically. Pupils enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities including sport, the arts and a residential visit for the older pupils.

The curriculum for pupils with communication and language difficulties is matched well to their needs. Flexible arrangements enable pupils from the base to learn in other classes in some subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good and the school enjoys warm relationships with parents. There are effective and thorough procedures for keeping pupils safe. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are monitored

closely. Pupils with communication and language difficulties receive a good level of support. Parents are very appreciative of the support these pupils receive. Midday supervisors have not been trained in supporting the social development of pupils from the communication and language resource base and, as a result, time spent playing at lunchtime does not contribute to pupils' personal and social development as much as it should.

Children in day care are seamlessly integrated into the nursery. Care for the children is good and extends to the out of school care which also provides good support for those attending.

Academic guidance is good. Target setting in English and mathematics helps pupils to know what they need to do to improve and helps them to develop responsibility for their own learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy are working closely and successfully. They have placed higher expectations on the teaching staff. The quality of teaching is rigorously monitored and steps have been taken to tackle weaknesses. Although this has resulted in increased consistency in the quality of teaching and the satisfactory progress that pupils make, some variation remains. Provision for pupils with communication and language difficulties, and the day- and out-of-school care are well led by the headteacher, and reflect her very strong commitment to inclusion.

Detailed plans for improvement set out a clear strategy to raise standards further. Self-evaluation is accurate. The analysis and use of performance data to set both individual and group targets are good. These targets are realistic and are being used effectively to bring improvements in standards and raise the achievement of pupils who previously underachieved.

Coordinators play a positive and supporting role but not all are sufficiently involved in driving improvement in all aspects of the school's work. The appointment of a new coordinator for Years 3 to 6, from the beginning of next term, is designed to extend the leadership team and provide an opportunity to devolve more responsibility for bringing further improvement.

The governors provide the school with appropriate support and challenge. The chair and headteacher meet frequently. Governors visit the school to find out for themselves how well it is performing.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

10 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Caldecott Primary School, Abingdon, OX14 5HB

This letter is to tell you about the recent inspection and to thank those of you who gave up your time to talk inspectors. The end of term is a busy time and it was good to see your enthusiasm for sports day and hear about preparations for the final assembly.

You enjoy lessons and find them interesting. Some of you said that lessons are fun! At the moment the school is providing a satisfactory education for you but the headteacher has got good plans to make it even better.

Over the last year or two, the headteacher and teachers have made many changes to give you the opportunities to do well in lessons. They have been successful and you are now making the progress you should in English, mathematics and science. We have asked the teachers to do all they can to help you to get better and better at writing and using your investigative skills in science. The teachers give you lots of help, set you targets and mark all your work so that you know what you need to do to improve. We have asked them to set you tasks in all lessons that are just right for you, to help you to make consistently good progress.

The headteacher and her deputy are working together to make more and more improvements. We have asked them to get all the teachers who have responsibilities more involved in making improvements in all aspects of the school's work.

I enjoyed visiting your school and hope that it continues to improve and helps you to do as well as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely,

Christopher Parker

Lead Inspector

