

Oakfield Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	135179
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	381827
Inspection dates	29 February–1 March 2012
Lead inspector	Margaret Coussins

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	471
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julia Bellamy
Headteacher	Garry Ratcliffe
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 July 2009
School address	Oakfield Lane Dartford Kent DA1 2SW
Telephone number	01322 220831
Fax number	01322 279800
Email address	office@oakfield.kent.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	29 February–1 March 2012
Inspection number	381827



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012



Introduction

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins

Additional inspector

Alastair McMeckan

Additional inspector

Richard White

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 25 lessons involving 17 teachers, as well as spending shorter sessions in classes, hearing children read and looking at their work. Meetings were held with the headteacher, other staff with leadership responsibilities, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, pupils' progress records and the safeguarding procedures. Questionnaires from 185 parents and carers were received and analysed along with those from staff and pupils.

Information about the school

Oakfield is larger than the average-sized primary school. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average. Their needs relate mainly to speech, language and communication difficulties. Provision is made for the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Nursery where children can attend for a morning or afternoon session and three Reception classes. The school meets the government's current floor standard. The school has gained several awards, including Healthy School Status and Safe Schools accreditation. Daily breakfast and after-school clubs are provided and managed by the school. The school shares its site with a separately managed children's centre, which was not included in this inspection.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Oakfield is a good school where pupils achieve well and leave the school as well rounded individuals. There have been many improvements in the outcomes for pupils since the last inspection. It is not outstanding because pupils' achievement in writing is not high enough and there are shortcomings in some aspects of leadership and management.
- Achievement has been improving year on year since the previous inspection. Pupils' progress, including that for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, has accelerated and it is now good. Pupils' good progress is not fully reflected in their attainment by the end of Year 6, which nevertheless has improved considerably over the last three years and is broadly average. Pupils' current work and the school's progress data show that they are on track to continue this upward trend in 2012.
- Lessons are mostly well planned to meet the needs of different abilities effectively. However, on a few occasions, planning for writing does not give pupils the opportunity to make the progress of which they are capable. Teaching generally inspires and motivates pupils who, in turn, develop good independent learning skills.
- The school provides a safe, secure environment for learning, and pupils' attitudes to learning are increasingly positive and reflected in improved attendance rates. Pupils are polite, friendly and considerate. Good behaviour makes a positive contribution to their learning and a well-ordered, happy school community.
- Leaders, including the governing body, share high aspirations and ambition for the school's future. Performance management is given a high priority but is not fully effective, although targets for teachers' performance management are well linked to school priorities. The monitoring of teaching is clearly focused on learning and, where weaknesses are identified, effective support is given to

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

teachers. The school has correctly identified the need to monitor the school's performance more effectively and has just restructured the leadership team and delegated more responsibility in order to achieve this.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in writing and accelerate the pace of pupils' progress more rapidly by:
 - clarifying the expected teaching and learning approaches in more detail to ensure consistency throughout the school and ensure that tasks enable pupils to learn at a good pace
 - continuing to develop pupils' skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling whilst maintaining pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment of writing.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - clearly defining the roles and accountability of the leadership team to ensure that there is consistent and robust monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and the school's performance
 - using the information gained from this monitoring to establish clear improvement targets.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils make good progress and achieve well from their starting points. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported in their learning, including, where appropriate, through good links with external agencies, enabling them to learn alongside their peers and through additional support where necessary. This ensures that they also make good progress and achieve well. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average. It is stronger in mathematics than in English, because, as the school has correctly identified, achievement in writing has held them back. Almost all parents and carers feel that their children make good progress and inspection evidence confirms this view.

Children generally start in the Nursery or Reception classes with skills below the expected level for their ages. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and reach the expected goals for learning by the time they move into Year 1. A strong focus on developing children's communication, language and literacy skills and their personal, social and emotional development permeates all activities in the Nursery and Reception classes so that children gain independence and are confident to express themselves, with an increasing vocabulary. In the Reception Year, they can write simple sentences with full stops and capital letters and are given good opportunities to apply their early skills, such as writing letters to the newly hatched chicks. Their knowledge of phonics (linking sounds and letters) is

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

good. Children can add and subtract, and record number problems such as '6-6+10' showing a good understanding of the concept of 10 by gathering together 10 paper cups without having to count them individually.

Attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is average. By Year 2, competent, fluent readers are clearly reading to make sense as well as using phonic knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words. Some readers need to be reminded that they do not need to sound out a word if they already know it. Less fluent readers show good knowledge of the sounds in words but have more difficulty in reading for meaning. By the end of Year 6, pupils read with confidence and enjoyment and develop comprehension skills through well-planned guided reading lessons.

Learning is purposeful; pupils are enthusiastic, have good attitudes, enjoy collaborative investigative activities and work well together. This was demonstrated in a mathematics lesson, where pupils were exploring properties of three-dimensional shapes such as vertices, edges and bases and investigating nets. The pace of learning was good and, at the end of the lesson, pupils said that they 'could look at a net and visualise it to guess what three-dimensional shape it will make'. Pupils apply their skills well and use a range of methods for recording their work, illustrated in Year 5 where pupils recorded various ways to find 50% of 350.

Pupils enjoy writing for a wide range of purposes and audiences in different genres. The impact on the quality of writing is becoming evident in pupils' current work. Descriptive writing makes good use of metaphor and simile. For example, 'The trees are as tall as skyscrapers towering over me'. On occasion, some pupils are not given opportunities to work at their own pace in writing lessons and this can slow the progress they make. Reading, writing and mathematical skills are used well across the curriculum.

Quality of teaching

Almost all parents and carers feel that their children are taught well and this is confirmed by inspection findings. Pupils are very positive about teaching and feel they are supported to do as well as they can so they work hard and want to do their best. They describe their lessons as fun and interesting and some older pupils commented that they are learning well because, 'things are more relaxed than in the old school, teaching is better and we trust our teachers'. Teaching assistants provide good support for the groups and individuals they work with so they are fully included in all lessons. A notable feature of teaching seen across the school is the opportunity pupils have to develop their speaking and listening skills through sharing their ideas and thoughts with 'talk partners' and adults. A group of boys in a writing lesson agreed that this helped them to, 'have loads of ideas about what to write'. In a mathematics lesson, a pupil explained that she had one way of working out a sum but after she had talked with her partner she had two ways. On occasions, in writing lessons, tasks are too limiting to enable pupils to learn at a faster pace. In addition, the school has identified the need to continue the current focus on improving pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling to further increase writing standards. There are

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

some good examples of marking and feedback that give pupils clear pointers on how to improve their work but just occasionally pupils are not always sure about how they are doing to achieve them. Teaching and the well-planned curriculum motivate pupils effectively and promote a good work ethic, independent learning skills and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching ensures there is a good balance of activities that are directed by adults and those where children can make their own choices. The classrooms and outdoor areas provide stimulating learning environments to promote progress in all areas of learning. Teachers and other adults have a good understanding of how children learn best and provide quality resources, interesting activities and lots of speaking and listening opportunities.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Almost all parents and carers agree that the school keeps children safe and that behaviour is good. These views agree with inspection findings. Most pupils, in their questionnaire, also said they feel safe in school and that behaviour is generally good. A small minority felt that behaviour was good only sometimes, but discussions with several groups of pupils revealed that they were referring to the small number of pupils who have specific behavioural needs and they were much more positive about the behaviour of most pupils who, they said, behave well because, 'the teachers expect it'. They also confirmed that teachers never let any inappropriate behaviour stop them learning. Behaviour around the school and in lessons was good, with pupils showing care, respect and kindness towards each other and adults. School records show that this is typical of behaviour over time. Behaviour policies and systems are understood by all and are consistently well implemented.

Good relationships and the atmosphere and ethos of the school make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Discussions with pupils indicate that they understand what constitutes bullying in all its forms, including cyber bullying and prejudice-based bullying. They are confident that there is none in the school and equally confident that teachers would deal with any incidents should they occur. One disabled pupil commented, 'I used to have the mickey taken out of me, but it just doesn't happen anymore and I feel so much happier'. Parents and carers, and pupils comment that they appreciate the before- and after-school provision and school records show that they have helped to improve attendance, which is average, and punctuality.

Leadership and management

The highly effective leadership of the headteacher motivates and galvanises the enthusiasm of staff, pupils, parents and carers. Equality of opportunity is promoted well by school leaders, staff and governors and the school ensures that pupils learn in a safe, secure and supportive environment without fear of discrimination. This is reflected in the recent Safe School accreditation. Leaders ensure that arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements. Parents and carers rightly feel that

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

the school takes good care of their children.

The headteacher and the governing body are relentless in their drive to further improve outcomes for pupils. To achieve this, a revised leadership team was established recently with the aim of increasing effectiveness and capacity by gaining a better and more timely understanding of actions needed to further improve the provision. The school has rightly identified the necessity to ensure that all members have clearly defined responsibilities and play an influential role in monitoring teaching and driving forward school improvement. There is a strong focus on the professional development of all staff. Teaching and learning, achievement and attendance have all improved since the last inspection. The improved outcomes for pupils have moved the overall effectiveness of the school from satisfactory to good, demonstrating a good capacity for further improvement.

The curriculum is effective because there is a strong focus on the development of literacy and numeracy as well as the good promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. An excellent range of extra activities, including trips and visitors to school, enriches pupils' learning, broadens their experiences and raises their aspirations.

Parents and carers are extremely positive about all aspects of the school's work. One parent summed up the views of many with the comment: 'The communication between home and school is wonderfully open and clear. The children are extremely happy and thrive socially and educationally. I feel the staff are exceptionally supportive and nurturing and have a deep understanding of each child's individual needs.'

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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 March 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Oakfield Community Primary School, Dartford, DA1 2SW

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We really enjoyed visiting your lessons, talking to you and your teachers and looking at the work you have been doing. You are very polite, friendly and interesting to talk to and we appreciated the way you helped us find out about your school. You are right to enjoy coming to Oakfield because we agree with you that it is a good school.

These are the things your school does particularly well.

- You are making better progress to catch up with gaps in your learning.
- Your attendance has improved; well done for this.
- The positive attitude you have to learning is one of the main reasons why you are doing well, including those of you who find learning harder than others.
- Although in your questionnaires some of you were not sure about this, your behaviour is good. You learn together well.
- You think teaching is good in your school and we agree. Teachers plan interesting lessons to help you learn well and motivate you and give you work that is just right for each one of you.
- Your headteacher does a very good job and has made sure that the school has improved.

Although the school is doing well there are still things it can improve. I have asked your school to help you be at least as good writers as you are readers by:

- making sure all teachers are clear about how the school expects you to learn about how to write
- continuing to develop your skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling but making sure that you carry on enjoying writing for lots of different reasons.

I have also asked your headteacher and the governors to improve how the teachers who have special responsibilities help you. They need to check on how well you are doing so that they can all help you do even better as quickly as possible. You can help by always doing your very best.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins
Lead inspector

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. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**