

Oaklands Infant School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	109865
Local authority	Wokingham Borough Council
Inspection number	377999
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2012
Lead inspector	Edward Wheatley

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carolyn Elliot
Headteacher	Julie Sheppard
Date of previous school inspection	12 June 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Edward Wheatley

Additional inspector

Kate Robertson

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed six teachers and 14 lessons or parts of lessons; six other lessons were visited briefly. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body, parents and carers, and pupils. Inspectors carried out joint observations of lessons with the headteacher. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at achievement information, development planning and self-evaluation records. They took into account 87 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

Information about the school

Oaklands Infants is a smaller than average-sized school. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage and a very small number are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The proportion of pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs is low. The school meets the current floor standard, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- This is a good school. Pupils achieve well, and their progress is improving. Teaching is good and meets the learning needs of pupils well. Pupils’ behaviour is good. The school provides good care for its pupils and ensures that they are safe. Leadership and management are effective and prioritise raising attainment. The school is not outstanding because pupils make good rather than outstanding progress. This is because occasionally teaching does not challenge pupils enough, and marking in mathematics is not always detailed enough. Occasionally, pupils’ spelling and punctuation are inaccurate.
- Children’s progress in Reception exceeds expectations and, by Year 2, attainment is above average and often high. Pupils read and write well by the end of Year 2 and have good mathematical skills. Their progress is good.
- Teaching is usually good. Lessons are interesting and work is mostly challenging and fast paced. Questioning is good and pupils are encouraged to work independently and in small groups. Marking is good in English, but in mathematics there is not the same high quality of information about how well pupils are making progress, what they need to do to improve their work and what their targets are.
- Pupils behave well, even when they find the work a little easy. Unacceptable behaviour is very rare, bullying even rarer and pupils say that both are dealt with extremely well. Pupils feel safe, and procedures ensure they are safe at all times.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school’s strengths and weaknesses. They take rapid action to deal with weaknesses in all aspects of the school’s work. Leaders manage teachers’ performance well. They set targets closely linked to the school’s improvement priorities and provide a wide range of professional development to support established and new staff well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the progress of pupils still further through making sure all teaching reflects the best seen by:
 - ensuring work is always matched to pupils’ learning needs

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- giving the same high-quality information in mathematics as in English to pupils on how well they are attaining, what they can do to improve their work, and what their targets are
- improving the accuracy of pupils' spelling and punctuation.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Since the school was last inspected, differences in attainment between reading and writing have been eliminated and attainment is rising. Currently, attainment is above average, there is little difference between boys and girls, and many pupils reach high levels of attainment. Pupils' attainment in reading is above average by the end of Key Stage 1. They use phonetic strategies well when they meet unfamiliar words. Pupils say they enjoy reading and that the phonic methods they use relating to the sounds letters make help them with their reading and writing. Their attainment in writing is above average. They write well and use a wide vocabulary to express their ideas and understanding. Inaccurate punctuation and spelling sometimes spoil the quality of what they write, but they are improving and most work is well presented and clearly legible. Pupils' mathematical skills are above average. They have above-average mental calculation skills, and have good basic numeracy skills which they apply well to mathematical problems.

Pupils of all abilities make good progress from their starting points. They enjoy working and are pleased when they do well, particularly if they have produced good work by themselves. For example, in a literacy lesson about note-taking, pupils of all abilities selected the books they needed to extract the information they wanted about their chosen aspect of 'weather'. They worked together well in small groups. They discussed which books they needed, collaborated with other groups about which books they used, challenged each other about what the most important facts were and then agreed what they should write. The quality of work they produced was good, all pupils achieved well and they were pleased with the notes they produced. The small number of pupils at the early stages of learning English make good progress. Working with other pupils helps them acquire English language skills quickly and this means they make good progress in other subjects. The small number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are fully involved in all learning activities and make good progress. Past small gaps in progress by different groups of pupils have reduced.

In the Reception classes, learning is good and children work and play together extremely well. They are pleased to talk about what they do. They have a wide vocabulary that is enriched by the wide range of activities they do. For example, a group of children engaged in a building activity used the words 'trowel', 'bricks', 'cement', and 'measure' accurately.

Parents and carers are pleased with how well their children learn, and inspection

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findings endorse their views. A very small number feel that their children do not learn well enough. In the course of their observations, inspectors found that the great majority of pupils learned well and, occasionally a few pupils, briefly, learned slowly.

Quality of teaching

Most parents and carers feel that their children are taught well, although a very small number feel that their children's learning needs are not fully met. Inspectors found that occasionally this is true, but that teaching is usually good and, while there is a small amount of satisfactory teaching, it is improving. However, occasionally work is not quite as challenging as it should be and pupils' progress briefly slows down. Most lessons are well planned and pupils enjoy the wide range of activities provided. Usually, work is well matched to pupils' learning needs and there is a good focus on making sure all pupils learn well together. Questioning is particularly good and engages all pupils in answering and discussing what they know so that their understanding improves. For example, in a good numeracy lesson, the teacher questioned pupils about their answers to a mental calculation exercise. The questions were tailored to individual pupils' abilities and effectively helped them to explain how they had worked out particular tasks and, where necessary, to correct the approaches they used. Learning was good for all pupils and all were helped to develop confidence and self-esteem in their ability to carry out calculations. Relationships are excellent. Teachers organise group activities so that pupils have opportunities to work and play with others of similar and different abilities, and pupils from different backgrounds. The range of activities the school provides in the planned curriculum, for example Chinese art and writing, studying the weather, and seeing animals close-up, contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well by being incorporated into all subjects.

In the Reception classes, teaching is good and encourages children to make independent choices about the activities they do. Activities are well organised with clear learning intentions that children are well aware of. For example, after a whole school talk and demonstration about show-jumping, a child said, 'I am supposed to be drawing a horse and then writing about it.'

Teachers' marking is generally good, and especially so in English. It gives pupils a good idea of how well they are attaining, how to improve their work and what their learning targets are. However, it is not so consistently informative in mathematics, and questioning of pupils shows that they are more vague about how well they are achieving in mathematics than they are in English. Nevertheless, when they are given guidance on how to improve their work, they follow it.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils enjoy coming to school and learning. They behave well almost all of the time. A very small number of parents and carers feel that occasionally pupils disrupt the learning of others, but that the school deals with it well. A very small number also

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commented that there was occasional physical bullying. Pupils said that this was true on rare occasions but that they were not worried about it because teachers or other adults always sorted it out quickly. They had not experienced other forms of bullying and the school's records confirm there is little bullying of any kind, and that any incidents are efficiently resolved. The school has good procedures to resolve occasional disagreements between pupils, often involving pupils resolving them between themselves, which they feel usually works well. They are also confident that when necessary they can go to any member of staff for help.

Pupils feel safe. Parents and carers feel that the school keeps their children safe, and inspection evidence confirms that this is the case. The school provides very good care for its pupils and has good procedures to care for and support those pupils and their families whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Pupils' attendance is above average and the school has good procedures to encourage attendance and reduce absence.

Leadership and management

Parents and carers feel that the school is well led and managed, and inspection evidence supports this view. The headteacher provides clear direction for improvement. Other leaders and staff have an accurate view of the priorities for development. For example, the school has accurately identified spelling and punctuation as areas for improvement, together with the need to improve satisfactory teaching. It is taking steps to ensure improvement takes place. Teaching is monitored rigorously, and improvement is supported with school-based and external professional development that is well planned. As a result, attainment is rising, and spelling and punctuation are improving. The governing body works closely with the school, asks pertinent questions about year-to-year performance of pupils and works hard to ensure it has the expertise to help and challenge the school when appropriate. It has improved outdoor provision and opportunities for independent learning activities in Reception, issues at the last inspection. The school has good strategies, through its personal, social and health education programme and the excellent relationships between staff, pupils and families, to deal with all forms of discrimination successfully. It promotes equality of opportunity well and successfully integrates those pupils arriving at the school with little or no English language so that they rapidly settle down and start to learn. Given the improvements in spelling and punctuation, and in teaching, the school is demonstrating a strong capacity to improve.

Parents and carers are very supportive. One wrote, 'My children have thoroughly enjoyed their time at Oaklands – exciting lessons, dedicated teachers and happy children...thank you.' The great majority appreciate how the school helps them with their children's learning and the high quality of communication with homes. The school has rigorous procedures to ensure safeguarding requirements are met, and pupils have a very good understanding of what they should do if they see something they are not sure about. The curriculum is wide and well matched to pupils' needs. It provides many opportunities for enrichment. For example, the visit of a professional

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show-jumper and horse, musical activities, and environmental trips contribute to children's learning. These and opportunities to speak, sing and present their individual work in assemblies contribute significantly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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.



12 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oaklands Infant School, Crowthorne, RG45 6QZ

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly when we inspected your school and sharing your views with us. We agree with you, and we think that your school is good. You make good progress, and this is improving.

The following things are particular strengths of your school:

- Teaching is good. You enjoy learning and there are many visitors, trips and activities that make learning fun and interesting.
- The staff and governing body know what they need to do to make sure the school improves further, and are working hard to make that happen.
- You behave well. You know how to stay safe and you say that if bullying happened it would be sorted out quickly.
- Your attendance is above average.
- The school takes very good care of you.

In order for your school to continue to improve, we have asked your teachers to make sure that:

- work is always difficult enough for you
- marking of your work in mathematics tells you how well you are doing, how to do better and what your targets are, just as it does in English
- you spell accurately and punctuate your writing correctly.

All of you can help by making sure you always spell accurately, trying to punctuate your writing properly, and telling teachers if you find work too easy.

Yours sincerely

Edward Wheatley
Lead inspector

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