

Oaklands Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118437
Local Authority	Medway
Inspection number	358348
Inspection dates	9–10 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Eileen Chadwick

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dorothea Georgeson
Headteacher	Les French
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Thirteen lessons were visited and nine teachers were observed. Inspectors also held meetings with pupils, staff with key responsibilities, representatives of the governing body and a local authority officer. In addition to observing the school's work and evaluating documentation such as policies, the school improvement plan, pupils' work and records of their learning and progress, inspectors examined 59 completed questionnaires from parents and carers, 99 from pupils and eight from members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- How consistently well pupils develop their key literacy and numeracy skills from Year 3 to Year 6.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6, including that of the current Year 6.
- How well teaching and the curriculum consistently meet the learning needs of different groups of pupils in English and mathematics.
- The effectiveness of systems for managing the school now that it has grown in size and has also become federated with the infant school.
- How effectively leaders at all levels evaluate the quality of the school's work and use the information for future improvements.

Information about the school

This is an average size junior school which serves the local community and its surrounding area. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or learning disabilities is well above average although the proportion with a statement of special education needs is average. These pupils mainly have emotional and behavioural, speech, language and/or literacy and numeracy learning difficulties.

Two years ago, the school became federated with Oaklands Infant School, which is on the same site. The two schools share a headteacher and governing body. ♦♦ Additionally, due to the recent closure of a nearby primary school, the school has expanded and the proportion of pupils entering the school other than at the normal point of entry has recently been well above average. ♦ Half of the class teachers are new to the school since this September. The school is preparing to fully amalgamate with the infant school in 2012.

♦ The infant school was separately inspected at the same time as this inspection. The children's centre on site is managed by the school and was not inspected at this time. The school runs a daily breakfast club and holds Activemark and a Healthy Schools award

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Pupils benefit from an attractive and well-organised learning environment where they are well cared for and kept very safe. These aspects, together with interesting learning opportunities that are relevant to their daily lives, lead to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils demonstrate good behaviour, they enjoy school and show a strong awareness of how to lead healthy lifestyles. Pupils contribute well to the community in which the school plays an important part. Given the good levels of personal and social development, pupils' average basic skills in the current Year 6 and the development of teamwork and decision making, pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the future.

The reorganisation of the roles of senior leaders and the recently strengthened systems for checking how well pupils are doing, are enabling senior leaders to take a rigorous look at pupils' achievement. This information shows that pupils enter the school at much lower than the average level of attainment. From this starting point, senior leaders have accurately judged that, while pupils' progress is satisfactory, more needs to be done to raise pupils' attainment. This is because pupils' attainment has fluctuated over the past few years and overall it has been low.

There is convincing evidence that teaching, learning and progress are now satisfactory and improving securely and quickly; this is why pupils' overall achievement is judged to be satisfactory. Pupils' attainment in writing has improved in recent years as a result of a drive to improve teaching in this area. Leaders and teachers are correctly working to lift the proportions reaching average and better levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. There is also a focus on helping to ensure that individual pupils' attainment is more even between subjects. Early evidence of pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 indicates a better picture with an increasing proportion working towards, or beyond, the expected National Curriculum levels. In writing, pupils write fluently for a range of purposes. Work has begun on improving spelling and punctuation but there is more to do on this.

While there is good teaching in every year group, this is not consistent enough in the school as a whole and overall teaching and learning are satisfactory. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress have been overhauled and are now satisfactory. However, at a class level, variation in the quality of assessments hampers pupils from making the best possible progress. There is unevenness in pupils' progress in some classes for those who find learning more difficult and for more-capable pupils. Leaders know that there is a need to ensure that Year 3 literacy tasks build well on pupils' prior literacy attainment in Year 2, especially by ensuring better direct teaching of reading skills.

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Leaders have overhauled many systems and procedures to ensure that the school runs smoothly in keeping with its increased size and federation with the infants. ♦ ♦ Everyone shares the same ambitions and the school has made sound progress in addressing the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. School leaders and governors show clear recognition of where action is needed and, as a result, provision and outcomes for pupils are improving quickly. This reflects the accuracy of leaders' self-evaluation and helpful development planning to support improvement. However, although the development plan is a helpful tool, it does not contain precise enough information about the monitoring of lessons and year group target setting. Taking all of these features into account, the school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics by:
 - ? increasing the proportion of pupils reaching average and higher levels and ensuring individual pupils' attainment is even
 - ? increasing the direct teaching of literacy skills for lower attaining pupils and ensuring tasks build on pupils' literacy skills on entry to Year 3
 - ? improving pupils' spelling and punctuation skills.
- Increasing the consistency of good teaching and learning by:
 - ? developing teachers' skills in assessing pupils' learning and progress so they can plan activities consistently well for all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Ensure all those with leadership responsibilities focus rigorously on improving the academic outcomes for pupils by:
 - ? rigorously monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and the progress of pupils from different ability groups
 - ? ensuring the school improvement plan shows clear monitoring and evaluation criteria, including attainment targets for different years.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Lesson observations, together with evaluations of pupils' progress data and their work, showed that pupils' learning and achievement are satisfactory. In particular, pupils make accelerated progress in Year 5. Pupils develop a will to succeed because of the excellent relationships between staff and pupils. They feel secure and safe. Pupils develop into enthusiastic learners who enjoy interesting and practical activities that underpin more abstract learning. For example, in a good mathematics lesson in Year 5, pupils learned to measure mass accurately as they worked together to estimate and weigh everyday objects using grams and kilograms. The careful build up of pupils' knowledge, skills and mathematical vocabulary helps them to do more complex mathematical problem solving.

Observations showed that lower attaining pupils, including those with special education needs and/or disabilities, achieve satisfactorily. Those who are withdrawn for focused support often make good progress. However, the support for these pupils is not as

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consistently well organised in class lessons, as the level of the work is not always accurately matched to their needs.

Pupils are polite, trust adults and keep themselves neat and tidy, wearing their school uniform with pride. Their attendance is now average and has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities whether as a member of the school council, as play leaders or as school ambassadors. ♦ Along with demonstrating their responsibility within school, of special note is pupils' respect for other cultures, religions and lifestyles.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Classrooms are calm and rich with imaginative activities and displays which capture pupils' interest. Teachers are skilled at making learning interesting and pupils understand and respond well to their high expectations for behaviour. Excellent relationships with pupils help to create a supportive climate for learning. Pupils know what is expected of them because objectives are clearly shared at the beginning of lessons. Interactive whiteboard activities and practical resources are used well to make lessons interesting. Teachers use a good range of approaches to help pupils to understand what they are learning about. For example, there is a good balance of listening and watching as well as learning through practical investigations. In Year 6, the direct teaching of key skills and questioning

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techniques subsequently enabled pupils to make good progress in researching information from newspaper reports.

The curriculum enables pupils to use and apply their key skills to different subjects, for example, as seen in The Medway Olympics project. This work encouraged strong links between sport and mathematics and was used well as a springboard for writing. Strong liaison with the secondary school broadens pupils' experiences. Curriculum continuity across the infant and junior schools is at an early stage of development. Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

Pupils are well looked after. Good induction arrangements help to ease the transition to secondary school. Parents are very pleased with how later arrivals to the school have settled due to good induction and support procedures. Adults provide strong support for pupils' social and emotional development, including for vulnerable pupils and those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. As a result, incidents of poor behaviour are rare. The breakfast club provides a caring start to the school day. ♦

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher communicates his vision clearly and also provides strong pastoral leadership. Teachers new to the school are settling in well because of the good support they receive. Senior leaders have been successful in promoting good working relationships among the staff in the two federated schools. Together with governors, they are very keenly working to bring about improvements in pupils' achievements. They are fully focused on improving teaching, learning and assessment. Although monitoring of learning and progress is satisfactory, leaders are not looking precisely enough at the learning and progress of pupils of different abilities. The senior team has been restructured and leadership responsibilities are being more evenly shared. The two assistant headteachers work effectively to ensure that the school is managed well when the headteacher is working in the infant school. Due to staff changes, some middle leaders are still developing their roles.

The governing body is well led by a recently appointed chair. As a result of the federation, reorganising and additional training are currently a focus to enable them to challenge the school in matters of attainment and progress. Good safeguarding arrangements are in place and the school is diligent about child protection. School leaders ensure that staff receive effective guidance to enable them to identify issues that would raise concerns about pupils' well-being. The school is active and effective in tackling discrimination and

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promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. Community cohesion is satisfactory and the school actively promotes cohesion in its own community. It has evaluated that further work is needed to reach out beyond this and is in the process of appropriately extending its global provision. ♦

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

Just under a third of all parents returned questionnaires, which is a broadly average response. A large majority are pleased with their children's experiences at the school. They feel this is a happy school where their children are kept safe and enjoy school. Parents are often delighted with procedures for enabling later entrants to settle and with how well they settle. A few are concerned that pupils do not always behave as well as they should. Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments. They find that pupils behave well in lessons and in the playground although are occasionally a little noisy when moving around corridors in the school. The school acknowledges a few older boys did not behave as well as they should towards the end of the last academic year and these pupils have now left the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oaklands Junior 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 59 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 211 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	53	24	41	2	3	2	3
The school keeps my child safe	32	54	25	42	2	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	27	46	29	49	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	47	28	47	3	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	42	29	49	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	42	28	47	4	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	41	32	54	2	3	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)	24	41	31	53	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	41	30	51	1	2	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	39	25	42	8	14	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	37	30	51	4	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	28	47	25	42	3	5	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	32	54	23	39	2	3	1	2

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



11 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oakland Junior School, Walderslade, ME5 0QS

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking with you and your teachers. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school.

The school provides you with a satisfactory education and here are some of the good things about your school.

- You enjoy school and help to make it a special place because you are polite and helpful and get on well with each other.
- Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good.
- You understand how important it is to keep fit and healthy and know you should not eat too many cakes and sweets.
- You have many good opportunities for sport and joining clubs.
- Senior staff, teachers and governors are working hard to make your school better and think carefully about what is best for you.

This is what we are asking your school to do to improve.

- Make sure more of you reach the level of attainment that is expected of you and more of you reach higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. ♦
- Help you to improve your spelling and punctuation.
- Make all lessons as good as the best ones so that the work is just at the right level and never too hard or too easy for you in English and mathematics.
- Make sure all school leaders check how well you are doing and contribute to making the school better.

We hope you will continue to enjoy school. You can help by working hard in all you do and working hard to improve your spelling and punctuation. ♦♦♦

Yours sincerely

Eileen Chadwick Lead inspector

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