

Oakthorpe Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	119945
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	379915
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2012
Lead inspector	Richard Marsden

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	94
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Niki Whitehouse
Headteacher	Donna Moulds
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2008
School address	School Street Oakthorpe DE12 7RE
Telephone number	01530 270383
Fax number	01530 274925
Email address	office@oakthorpe.leics.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Richard Marsden

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed eight lessons taught by five teachers. He spoke with parents and carers, and held meetings with pupils, staff and representatives of the governing body. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and examined: safeguarding documentation, attendance records, information on pupils' attainment and progress, the curriculum, the school's self-evaluation and planning, as well as responses to questionnaires from 55 parents and carers, nine staff and 85 pupils.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are White British with very few from other heritage and very few who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have disabilities and those with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average.

The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. It holds several awards, among them: Healthy Schools, International Schools and Activemark.

Children in the Reception Year have their own class. Other pupils are taught in three mixed-age and mixed-ability classes. A breakfast club operates each morning before the start of school.

A private pre-school provision operates on the school site. This is not managed by the governing body and is inspected separately.

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. It is rapidly improving and pupils achieve well. It is held in high regard by parents and carers for the high standards of care and the well-rounded education it provides. The school is not outstanding because planning is not ambitious enough in ensuring all pupils who can, reach the higher National Curriculum Level 5 in English and mathematics by Year 6. Although pupils develop independence in their learning, some are over-reliant on the drive and determination of teachers to motivate and engage them. The school does not fully engage every parent and carer in their children’s learning.
- From starting points which are below expectations for their age, particularly in literacy skills, where they are well below, pupils make good progress in all years. By the end of Year 6, their attainment in English and mathematics is in line with the national average (Level 4).
- Strong, energetic teaching in all classes ensures that pupils engage enthusiastically, concentrate hard and make good progress. In mixed-age and mixed-ability classes, teachers meet the needs of individual pupils well.
- Pupils show respect and courtesy to each other and adults. They are esteemed as individuals, and the promotion of respect for themselves and other people is strong. Attendance has improved although the school has not yet convinced all parents and carers of the value of regular attendance and good punctuality.
- The headteacher and staff have been highly effective in bringing about improvements since the previous inspection. School self-evaluation is accurate and performance is well managed so that achievement has improved. Teaching is well led, and has improved. Leaders and staff share a common vision in their quest for excellence. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Adjust planning so that, from autumn 2012, it accurately identifies and makes

provision for every individual pupil who has the potential to do so to reach the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

- Strengthen teaching so that more pupils take a lead in their own learning, developing drive and self-motivation and becoming less dependent on teachers to inspire and engage them.
- Create opportunities to involve more parents and carers in the life of the school, enabling them to engage more fully in their children's learning, and assisting the very few families whose children do not attend regularly to understand the value of the educational opportunities available.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers believe that their children are making good progress, and inspection evidence supports this view. The small numbers in year groups make accurate evaluation of trends in achievement unreliable. However, evidence shows securely that individual pupils, whatever their starting points, make good, and in some cases outstanding, progress from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards. A strong emphasis on teaching basic skills in the Reception Year means that, although their starting points are below expectations for their age when they join, children make good progress in readiness to move into Year 1. Pupils generally attain average standards in English and mathematics by Year 6. The numbers reaching the higher Level 5 in these subjects are increasing, but a few individuals are not directed closely enough to aim for the higher level.

There is no significant variation in the achievement of boys and girls. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points. Their progress is meticulously tracked and they are supported well in lessons and in small-group or one-to-one activities nearby. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals achieve in line with others. The very few who speak English as an additional language also achieve well and are fluent users of the language.

In lessons observed, pupils responded well to opportunities to work in small groups or pairs and to do 'hands-on' tasks rather than having to sit and listen to the teacher for too long. They concentrated well on their work and enjoyed the challenges they were given. Reading standards in Years 2 and 6 are average. The most-able pupils read fluently and with good expression, showing skills above those expected for their age. They talk enthusiastically about what they enjoy reading and why. Lower-attaining pupils in these years also show a sound grasp of the principles of reading. They were able to show the inspector how they tackle unfamiliar words using 'blending' techniques.

Quality of teaching

Almost all parents and carers, and pupils themselves, say that the quality of teaching

is good. In the lessons observed during the inspection, most teaching was good, and some was outstanding. Teachers use what they know about pupils' prior attainment to plan well to make sure that tasks are well matched to pupils' needs and enable them to make good progress. Teachers energetically question pupils to check understanding, and they reshape tasks and explanations to make sure that no one is left behind. Topics are chosen carefully to engage both boys and girls. In an English class, for example, pupils studied publicity material from animal and children's charities and became fired with enthusiasm to create a 'persuasive text' of their own. In the Reception Year, *Jack and the Beanstalk* provided a context for practising counting and measuring as well as literacy-based activities. Models and costumes created great excitement for these children.

Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they have high expectations of what pupils should achieve. Pupils use technical terms such as 'rhetorical question' and 'split digraph' with confidence. Teaching in the Reception Year includes a balance of teacher-led tasks and those chosen by the children themselves, the latter helping to develop confidence and independence.

Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and provide high quality feedback, showing pupils clearly how well they are doing against their personal targets and how to improve. Pupils say they find these comments very helpful in promoting their progress. Homework is used well by most pupils to promote learning. Pupils are encouraged to develop independence in their learning, although some remain over-dependent on the input of their teachers to motivate and inspire them.

The curriculum promotes the teaching of literacy and numeracy across all subjects, not just in English and mathematics. Pupils also develop their computer skills in a wide range of contexts. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted in lessons as well as at times such as assembly. When they are given opportunities to reflect, pupils make thoughtful and sensitive responses. They listen with interest and respect to the views of others. The school draws on links with schools in other parts of the United Kingdom, France and Africa to ensure that pupils interact with their counterparts from different communities. This exposes them very effectively to the diversity of the world beyond their immediate community. They are well aware of the diversity of modern society, and are well prepared to take their place in it.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

'My child is happy at school and is proud to be part of this community. His confidence and pride in himself have grown and he is taught not only respect for his peers but respect for himself.' This comment was typical of many which were written on the parental questionnaires. Parents and carers and pupils themselves testify that behaviour is consistently good and that pupils feel safe. Inspection findings fully endorse these views. Pupils show a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including on the internet. They understand different types of bullying and they, as well as their parents and carers, are confident that teachers take swift and appropriate action whenever necessary. Pupils listen very well to adults and to each other. Good behaviour in lessons enables teachers to teach creatively and pupils to learn effectively. Pupils listen well to adults and to each

other.

Routines and expectations are made clear from the outset. Children in the Reception Year respond well to the warmth and encouragement shown by adults. They are introduced to the school's high expectations of conduct and clear routines. They develop social skills well, leaving their parents and carers confidently, taking turns and helping with jobs such as tidying up. Older pupils are proud to take on jobs and responsibilities they have. Play coaches, for example, support younger pupils at lunch and playtimes, and pupils serve as librarians or receptionists. Pupils say their views are listened to, not only formally through the learning council, but also informally. Relationships show high levels of mutual respect.

The school gives good support to pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable. The inspector found telling evidence of ways in which such support has enabled these pupils to conform to the expected standards of attendance, behaviour and work, and to make progress in their learning so that their achievement is in line with that of other pupils.

Leadership and management

The school is well led overall, and some aspects are outstanding. The headteacher has led the sustained drive to raise attainment, and it has risen sharply. Together with the deputy headteacher and other staff, she has a clear focus on further improvement. The quality of teaching is closely monitored and has improved. Staff are highly supportive of one another and eagerly embrace opportunities to develop their expertise for the benefit of the pupils. A carefully planned programme of staff training focuses sharply on improving teaching and learning, and is rigorously evaluated to ensure that it does so. This strong track record of improvement indicates that the school is very well placed to improve further.

The governing body is well informed and well organised. Its members are closely involved in the life of the school, making regular visits, both formal and informal. They hold the school to account for its performance and are not afraid to ask searching questions and challenge the headteacher, in order to secure the best for pupils.

The school has the support of most parents and carers and engages them well in its work. However, it has not yet convinced all of the value of their child's regular attendance and punctuality, nor of the benefits of becoming involved as partners in their children's education.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which meets the needs of all groups of pupils well and promotes their progress. It promotes their spiritual, moral and social development well. A wide range of extra-curricular activities has something for all – such as cookery, gardening, sport and music. Visits out of school and visitors, such as the author who inspired both boys and girls to work hard at their writing, and the artist who helped pupils develop the 'underground house', bring learning to life. Regular themed weeks such as Enterprise Week and Superhero Week, also add excitement and vibrancy. An annual residential visit provides opportunities for team- and confidence-building activities in an adventurous

environment. The breakfast club provides a purposeful start to the day for the small number of pupils who use it.

Leaders take care to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities. No pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those known to be eligible for free school meals, are excluded from any activity. Leaders are diligent in discharging their duties regarding child protection and the safeguarding of children. They keep these aspects under regular and rigorous review to ensure that statutory requirements are met and that good practice prevails.

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.



23 March 2012

Dear Pupils/Students

Inspection of Oakthorpe Primary School, Oakthorpe, DE12 7RE

Thank you for the welcome you gave me when I visited your school. It was a great pleasure to meet you. I came to find out what your school does well and how it might be improved. I listened to your views as well as those of the adults, and a special thank you to those who completed questionnaires. Your school is good, and your parents and carers are right to be pleased with it. These are the things that particularly impressed me.

- Teachers look after you well and keep you safe.
- You make good progress and by the end of Year 6, the standard of your work in English and mathematics is in line with the standard in most other schools.
- Your behaviour is good. You are very thoughtful, polite and helpful.
- You enjoy your lessons and you concentrate really hard in class.
- Your teachers mark your work regularly and show you clearly the steps you need to take to improve it.
- You enjoy lots of out-of-school activities, themed weeks and visitors.
- You learn lots about the lives of people in places beyond your local area.

To make your school even better I have asked your teachers to help you to make even better progress in English and mathematics, so that more of you reach above-average standards by the end of Key Stage 2. I have also asked them to give you more opportunities to develop independence in the way you work, and to involve more of your parents and carers in what goes on in school.

It was a great pleasure to visit your school. You can all help to make it even better by continuing to behave so well and trying your hardest. The few of you who do not attend regularly enough should try to come to school every day, unless you are unwell.

Yours sincerely

Richard Marsden
Lead inspector

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