

Oakwood Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112766
Local Authority	Derby
Inspection number	357182
Inspection dates	5–6 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Derek Aitken

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	339
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pam Moss
Headteacher	Nancy Elks
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Thirteen teachers were observed teaching 15 lessons. In addition, inspectors sampled six lessons taken by teaching assistants, which included focused support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Meetings were held with governors, staff and groups of pupils, and discussions were held with a few parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documents, including policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of pupils, self-evaluation records and assessment information. The inspectors analysed questionnaires from 78 parents and carers, 90 pupils and 10 staff.

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

- How good the attainment and progress is of girls in mathematics.
- The impact of programmes to support the achievement of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The extent to which pupils aware of diverse cultures.
- The impact of the school's 'learning to learn' approaches on outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

Oakwood is a larger than average, suburban school. Most pupils are of White British origin. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The school has Healthy Schools status and holds several other awards including Eco Schools Green Flag and Artsmark (Gold).

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Oakwood is a good school. Attainment in English, Mathematics and science in Year 6, while remaining average overall, have risen since it was last inspected. This continuing improvement is underpinned by good teaching, pupils' highly positive attitudes towards learning and very effective leadership and management. Pupils' overall achievement and outcomes are good and this means that Oakwood prepares pupils well for the next stages of their lives.

While academic standards are rising, some weaknesses in pupils' recording and calculation skills occasionally dent their confidence and hold back their progress when they carry out problem-solving tasks in mathematics. Pupils' handwriting has improved, but many pupils are prone to making basic spelling errors. The school's 'learning to learn' strategy is skilfully interwoven into practice in the classroom and, consequently, pupils do their best to live up to the school's motto of 'We love learning'. Pupils respond well to the challenges set by their teachers with whom they enjoy excellent relationships. While teaching is consistently good, there is sometimes too much input by teachers in the longer lessons and a consequent drop in the pace of pupils' learning. Pupils' welfare needs are met exceptionally well and, as a result, pupils have an excellent sense of security and well-being in school. While there are many strengths in pupils' moral and social development, pupils' awareness of cultural diversity is only satisfactory. The school is reorganising its academic support programmes with a view to staff intervening at an earlier stage to boost pupils' learning. It is too early to assess the impact of this change.

The capacity of the school to improve further is good. The issues identified at the last inspection have been successfully resolved. Systems are well embedded and procedures are applied very consistently. This has enabled the school to manage well the discontinuity caused by the current maternity leaves, although this has entailed some compromises to long-term strategic planning. The staff's high expectations are reflected in good teamwork and well-organised self-evaluation processes. Although the school pursues several avenues which contribute to the national and global aspects of community cohesion, these strands have not yet been drawn together into

- a focused plan.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment in mathematics and writing by:
 - improving pupils' recording and calculation skills to enable all pupils to tackle problem-solving tasks with greater confidence and accuracy

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- ensuring that the school's emergent initiatives to improve pupils' spelling are fully embedded
- Ensure that teachers always maintain a brisk pace to pupils' learning in the longer lessons
- Enhance pupils' awareness of diverse cultures by:
 - providing them with more opportunities to celebrate diversity within the local area
 - implementing a focused plan to promote the national and global aspects of community cohesion.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science when they join Year 3 has historically been below average. By Year 6 pupils' attainment is average in all subjects, but improving steadily. In 2010 the school gained its best ever results, with boys achieving particularly well at the higher level in mathematics. Pupils achieve well in reading but girls achieve slightly less well in mathematics. Although pupils enjoy complex problem-solving challenges, boys have the edge in motivation. Their greater willingness to take risks in exploring different solutions was demonstrated in a fast-moving lesson in Year 6. Sometimes, however, pupils' pursuit of solutions is impeded by basic errors in recording information and in addition and multiplication. By contrast, girls' writing is a little better than boys', because they make more productive use of opportunities to write independently. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress overall, and especially where pupils are withdrawn from the classroom for short, concentrated periods to improve their basic skills or motivation. For example, the motivation of boys in Year 5 was significantly enhanced through the opportunity to experiment with patterns while making coil clay pots.

Pupils' positive attitudes and hard-working approach are key factors in their enjoyment of learning. Their faces light up when their teachers mention the word 'challenge' and they understand fully how the behavioural choices they make will affect their learning. They conduct themselves well around school and sometimes in lessons their behaviour is impeccable. They say that they feel safe in school, because they all get on so well with each other and they have a very secure awareness of stranger danger and the potential hazards of internet use. Pupils take part keenly in a wide range of physical activities, for example, dance, after the end of the school day. They have a good knowledge of healthy lifestyles, as reflected in the school's awards and most make healthy food choices. Pupils support their local community and school well as junior wardens, school councillors, eco-troopers and as 'bosses' collecting eggs from the chicken-pen. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, but not yet outstanding as there are some gaps in their awareness of diverse cultures. Pupils' regular attendance, collaborative skills and good achievement set them up well for their future lives.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
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?

Teaching has several strengths. Most lessons proceed at a good pace, because assessment is used well to link planning closely to pupils' prior learning. This planning is adapted well to meet the needs of pupils of varying abilities. Teachers' strong expectations for pupils' progress are reflected in their precise, challenging questioning which provides ample opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning and explain their thinking. Teachers apply 'learning to learn' techniques systematically so that pupils develop academic and personal skills at a good rate. Teachers make particularly effective use of paired partner routines and lesson summaries both to direct pupils' learning and to boost their confidence. On some occasions, the teacher talks too much, particularly in the longer lessons, which slows the pace of pupils' learning. Mostly, teaching assistants are deployed well but, on occasion, they are not sufficiently involved in supporting pupils' learning during lesson starters. Teachers' oral feedback and marking point clearly to how pupils can improve their work. The school's plans to improve pupils' spelling are well judged, because not enough emphasis is placed currently on correcting simple errors.

The curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs. The 'learning to learn' strategy forges a strong sense of communal enterprise and teamwork and promotes pupils' enjoyment of school exceptionally well. Good use is made of partner schools and specialist expertise, for example, in art and music, to provide enriching experiences for pupils. Subjects are expertly linked to provide motivating and interesting activities for pupils and practical

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contexts for their learning. For example, details from Anne Frank's life are referenced to prompt emergent diary writing for pupils in Year 6. School leaders monitor and review the curriculum carefully, but a few initiatives, including plans to boost girls' achievement in mathematics, are at a relatively early stage of development.

Children are well known by the staff and they are entirely confident that they can approach an adult for help, for example, through the regularly monitored 'worry box'. The learning mentors play a significant role in supporting pupils with emotional and social problems and in developing parents' and carers' skills and confidence to help their children. Excellent transition arrangements underpin pupils' progress at all stages in their school career, as reflected, for example, in the quality of relationships amongst the new pupils in Year 3. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good overall. Leaders are still exploring how best to deploy teaching assistants in the light of recent staff changes, for example, to address the underachievement of a few pupils in mathematics. Attendance is promoted effectively and lateness monitored closely by the learning mentors to ensure the school meets its attendance targets.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers at all levels have adapted well to the challenges posed by the current discontinuity in staffing. Well-embedded systems, consistent practice and clear expectations have helped new colleagues to find their feet quickly and minimised disruption to pupils' progress. Leaders have made sensible decisions to concentrate on a reduced range of priorities, which are currently at varying stages of development. Leadership of the curriculum is very effective as subjects are monitored well, for example, through work scrutinies. Whole-school priorities are clearly identified and followed up thoroughly. Lesson observations conducted by senior leaders are detailed, but do not always focus sufficiently on the learning of different groups of pupils.

The school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination well, as reflected, for example, in the good progress of its more able pupils and pupils of minority ethnic origin. The governing body undertakes a wide range of monitoring activities to enable it to support and challenge the staff very effectively. It carries out its obligations for safeguarding well through a sub-committee solely established for this purpose. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily as the school's intentions for developing wider national and global links have yet to be fully implemented.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

Inspection questionnaires were returned on behalf of just under one quarter of the pupils registered at the school. Almost all parents and carers were complimentary about the school's work, praising in particular its happy and caring environment. Parents and carers were unanimous in the view that their children are safe at school. There was no common theme to the very few negative points made. Inspectors entirely endorse parents' and carers' very positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oakwood 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 78 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 339 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	63	27	35	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	68	24	31	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	35	45	34	44	7	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	51	30	38	6	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	42	54	29	37	4	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	50	36	46	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	45	39	50	4	5	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)	35	45	37	47	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	49	36	46	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	51	31	40	3	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	38	40	51	4	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	42	54	27	35	3	4	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	58	29	37	3	4	0	0

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.



7 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oakwood Junior School, Derby, DE24 0DD

I would like to thank you for your help when the inspection team visited your school recently. This is what we found out.

Yours is a good school. You start Year 3 with below average attainment but by the time you leave school in Year 6, attainment is average. This means that you have made good progress at Oakwood. There are many reasons why you are successful at school. You have good teachers who expect a lot of you and provide you with interesting, challenging lessons. The staff look after you really well. You have super relationships with the staff and with each other because you feel very happy and safe in school. The school leaders are always trying to find new ways to make your learning better. You do your bit too! You love challenges and make the right choices through 'learning to learn' which help you to behave well. Sometimes your behaviour is 'top-class'.

I have asked the staff to do a few things to make your learning better. The teachers

- are to give close attention to improving your calculation and recording skills to help you find the right answers when you carry out problem-solving tasks. They are also to keep a close eye on your spelling because the mistakes you sometimes make spoil your writing. They are to make sure that you keep learning at a fast pace in the longer lessons. The staff are to plan more carefully to make sure you know more about the people of different cultures around you in the United Kingdom and abroad.

You can help by keeping up your good attendance and working hard, especially in mathematics and writing.

Yours sincerely

Derek Aitken

Lead inspector

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