

# Oaklands School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	130353
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicester
<b>Inspection number</b>	360131
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Muir HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	83
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Malcolm Robbins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Eleanor Shaw
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 June 2008
<b>School address</b>	Whitehall Road Evington, Leicester LE5 6GJ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors observed 12 lessons and 12 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, the vice-chair of the Governing Body and a range of staff, including the deputy headteacher and a range of middle leaders. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school development plan, monitoring and evaluation documents. Questionnaires from 33 parents and carers were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Inspectors explored the accuracy of the school's monitoring of pupils' progress across all areas and key stages of the school.
- They considered how well the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils in all key stages so that they are ready to transfer to the next stage of their lives.
- They looked at how well the management raises and maintains expectations and aspirations across the school.
- They investigated how well the teaching meets the needs of all pupils taking into account the changes in the cohort and their special educational needs and/or disabilities.

## Information about the school

Oaklands is a school which has undergone significant changes to its cohort in recent years. Traditionally, many pupils in the school have had moderate learning difficulties, but the primary needs are changing with many pupils now having a range of complex needs, particularly related to autistic spectrum disorder and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Over half of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school uses a range of methods including English, symbolic communication systems, British Sign Language (BSL) and other sign language systems to develop pupils' communication skills.

The school has secured many awards for its work, including: Active Mark; Arts Mark Gold; the Inclusion Quality Mark; Investors in People; the International School Award and National Healthy Schools status.

**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

Oaklands School is good school with a strong ethos built around placing pupils at the centre of its work. The recent and ongoing changes to the special educational needs and/or disabilities of the pupils in the school have meant that leaders have had to adopt new strategies to ensure that these changing needs are met. The high levels of commitment and professionalism of all staff teams have enabled the school to successfully adopt these new teaching and communication methods so that they contribute well to improving outcomes for all pupils. Most aspects of pupils' personal outcomes are good. The school recognises that its profile in the local community is underdeveloped as are the benefits received from its established links with local organisations. Parents and carers overwhelmingly value the work of the school with Ofsted questionnaire returns showing unanimous agreement that their children enjoy school. This is an impressive outcome, as many pupils had unsettled experiences of education prior to joining the school. Pupils' enjoyment of school was also reflected in the good behaviour seen throughout the inspection.

The large majority of teaching seen during the inspection was good, with some being satisfactory. This, alongside the good curriculum, supports the good learning and progress taking place across the school. In lessons, work is adapted through the careful modification of resources, tasks, expected learning outcomes and the exemplary support provided by all staff in the class. Outstanding care, guidance and support are strengths of the school. There is a particular focus on supporting parents and carers and providing outstanding information, advice and guidance. This helps pupils and the families to manage transition into, and out of, the school and on to the next stages of pupils' lives.

Leaders and managers monitor the performance of the school well and are developing systems further so that they continue to meet the changing needs of the pupils. The information which is collated is used to plan improvements in the quality of the provision. Currently, more work is being undertaken to collect and analyse data around the progress pupils make, especially with regard to the changing profile of needs. The school uses published schemes, teacher assessment and comparative data to make judgments about their progress. These show that there is no difference in the progress made by any groups of pupils based on their special educational needs and/or disabilities or ethnicity. Pupils' views are taken seriously, through the annual review process and other systems. The headteacher is supported by a skilled and dynamic senior leadership team which provides drive, passion and a common vision, all of which permeate the school.

The work of the governing body is satisfactory. Although it plays its part in devising, monitoring and evaluating the school development plan, members are not well known in the school, which demonstrates that their first-hand knowledge of the school is not as complete as it could be. This was also reflected in staff questionnaires where a significant

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minority disagreed that 'governors do an effective job'. All aspects of safeguarding are excellent, with some examples of exemplary practice. Community cohesion is satisfactory as the school does not yet measure the impact of this area of its work on the school and wider community.

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a good education and ensures that children receive a positive start to their school lives. The accurate knowledge that leaders have, together with improvements in several areas since the previous inspection, demonstrate that the school has good capacity to make sustained improvement.

## **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that the systems for monitoring and tracking progress are effective and comprehensive by monitoring all cohorts and groups of pupils over time to identify trends or patterns in progress with regard to their changing needs.
- Promote more effective community cohesion by measuring the impact of the school's work in this area on the community served by the school.
- Develop the work of the governing body so that it is better able to evaluate the performance of the school by more effective implementation of current systems so that all areas of the school's work are monitored at first hand by a named governor or committee of the governing body.

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

**2**

Due to their special educational needs and/or disabilities, the attainment of the large majority of pupils on entry to the school is low. As a result of the changing needs of pupils over time, the school works hard to ensure that all pupils are able to make good progress during their time in the school. The school is currently amending its systems for monitoring pupils' progress so that it is measured relative to pupils' needs and their starting points. All individuals and groups of pupils make good progress in their lessons, and this was verified by the lessons seen during the inspection. The teaching seen, and the school's data, support the judgement that pupils make good progress. There is no difference in the progress made by different groups of pupils.

Behaviour seen during the inspection was good and this is supported by the school's data. Many pupils enter the school with unsatisfactory behaviour due to their special educational needs and their negative experiences of prior education and behaviour management. The improvement which pupils make in their behaviour is the result of consistent work by staff and demonstrates impressive improvements for many pupils in managing their own behaviours. The school is also clear that behaviour by pupils with different needs require different approaches and appropriate strategies are implemented accordingly. Pupils' work in the school and the wider community is satisfactory. Although there are links with various groups such as the Rotary Club and the local allotment association, these are not well developed or widespread enough to provide pupils with rich experiences in the local or wider communities. The development of pupils' social and interaction skills, literacy and numeracy, alongside well-planned learning about the world of work and jobs, mean that they develop workplace skills well. Pupils also develop a strong sense of right and wrong and are given ample opportunities to develop an awareness of themselves, their peers and other people. The school works actively to raise awareness of other countries, cultures

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and backgrounds to a high level, particularly through aspects of the international primary curriculum. Pupils develop an awareness of their relationships with their peers, which significantly enhances their personal development. Attendance is satisfactory and improving, and the school is working with parents and carers to ensure that this improvement continues.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

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

\* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

## How effective is the provision?

The large majority of teaching seen during the inspection was good, with none being less than satisfactory. This agrees with the school's own monitoring. Joint observations of lessons during the inspection confirmed that leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. Teachers ensure that work links well with prior learning, based on their knowledge of pupils' levels and abilities, and a variety of well-matched activities ensure that pupils make good progress. The best teaching showed an acute awareness of the abilities of all pupils, with work adapted to an individual level, so that they had opportunities to work on their own or in groups and were well challenged. Regular references by staff to pupils' learning targets also helped to promote higher expectations. Where teaching is not as effective, links are not clear between tasks and the learning which is expected to take place in the lesson. Teaching assistants know their pupils well

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and are able to provide effective support as a result. Links between pupils' learning plans and learning objectives in lessons are reflected well in tasks set during lessons. In addition to managing pupils with challenging behaviour, the developing knowledge which staff have of the needs of young people with autism increasingly contribute to the overall good and improving outcomes.

In all key stages, the curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. It is closely monitored to ensure that it is meeting the changing needs in the school. It is well thought out with topics being adapted so that they meet the needs of all pupils. This was clearly seen in the ongoing review of the curriculum in personal, social and health education to allow a wide range of activities and learning opportunities to be planned over a two-year rolling programme. There is also a good range of enrichment days to support learning. Extra-curricular activities are mainly delivered through lunchtime clubs, although the school organises an annual 'sleepover' during which pupils stay at school for two nights and participate in an array of activities. Care, guidance and support are outstanding overall as they promote pupils' good personal development, alongside several significant features which are outstanding. Excellent use is made of multi-agency support, including strong partnerships with support services. Support and advice provided for families is very strong and is greatly appreciated by parents and carers. Transition arrangements when pupils enter the school, and leave it, are outstanding and are individually tailored to meet the specific needs of each pupil. This allows pupils and their parents and carers to receive maximum support at this time of uncertainty so that the move in to the school or on to the next place of education causes as little disruption as possible.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Most aspects of leadership and management are good. However, safeguarding is outstanding due to the thoroughness and innovations in this area. For example, the range of policies supports safeguarding to a very detailed level and is provided to all staff on colour-coded memory sticks to audit who needs further training. The well-used tannoy system ensures that pupils can be closely monitored around the school and the school has excellent relationships with social services in the local authorities with which it works. The headteacher, with very effective support from the senior leadership team, provides a clear vision and model for high expectations throughout the school. This is keenly followed by staff who understand their roles in developing and maintaining high expectations in all areas of the school's work, especially in the light of the ever-changing needs of the pupils. Everyone is clear that the ethos of the school demands that pupils should be placed at the centre of its work and this is followed through to a good level. Leaders have identified the

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school's strengths and further areas for development well and all staff are given the opportunity to contribute to the school development plan and its self-evaluation. The performance of all aspects of the school's work is monitored well and leaders are revising systems to ensure that its systems are continually updated to ensure they are fit for purpose. The systems for tracking pupils' progress are good, and leaders are working to ensure that they keep pace with the changing needs in the school. The information collected is used well to develop targets to promote further progress.

Despite the school's strenuous efforts to involve parents and carers in their child's education, it has encountered some difficulties in engaging them all. The school is continuing to look for different ways to enhance communication with parents and carers. Nevertheless, the overwhelmingly positive response of those who completed the inspection questionnaire shows that they profoundly value the work of the school in delivering good quality education and care for their children. The work of the governing body is satisfactory as it provides appropriate support and challenge to the work of the school. However, visits to the school to evaluate its work at first hand are not well established, although there have been some recent developments in this area. The school's work on community cohesion is satisfactory, as it has a good knowledge of its context although it is not yet assessing the impact of this work on the school and the wider community. The school's work in promoting equality of opportunities and tackling discrimination is good.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

The good quality of the provision, reflected in the good teaching, alongside an effective curriculum, meets the needs of all children well. Care is excellent, and results in good progress being made. Planning and assessment are of a good quality and meet the needs



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of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Several schemes are used to ensure that all aspects of learning and development are extremely well monitored. The curriculum is good and is matched to the individual needs of the children very effectively in the six areas for learning.

The school works very hard to engage parents and carers and supports them in managing their children's needs at home, providing much needed continuity for the children. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed and the lead teacher and other staff have a good understanding of children of this age who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Partnerships with other professionals are well planned, contributing very well to the quality of the provision and the outcomes for the children.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Over one third of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and these were overwhelmingly positive in all areas. The responses and many positive comments reflected the inspectors' judgements in most areas. A comment from a parent about their child's education was: 'Child has not been to school for over 2 ½ yrs. Then the parents got him into this school and now he attends everyday'. The findings of the inspection support the positive views of parents and carers.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oaklands 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 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 84 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	53	15	47	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	67	10	30	0	0	1	3
My school informs me about my child's progress	17	52	14	42	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	45	17	52	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	58	14	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	63	11	34	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	55	14	42	0	0	1	3
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)	16	48	14	42	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	52	14	42	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	39	19	58	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	47	14	44	1	3	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	18	55	14	42	0	0	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	50	15	47	0	0	1	3

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



18 March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Oaklands School, Leicester, LE5 6GJ**

On behalf of the inspectors who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you very much for making our visit very interesting and enjoyable.

We found that you go to a good school. The headteacher, leadership team and staff all work very hard to make your time in school successful. Your personal development is a strength of the school, in particular the way your behaviour improves during your time in the school. You also make good progress in the work that you do in lessons. The care, guidance and support which you receive are outstanding. You have good attitudes to learning and you should all be proud of the contribution you make to the school.

I have asked the school to improve three areas so it can be better than it is now:

- to make sure that the adults monitor and track your progress carefully, so that leaders always know how well you are doing in your learning
- to promote more effective community cohesion by measuring how well the school's work in this area is helping the local community
- to make sure that the members of the governing body visit the school more often so that they can see for themselves how well the school is doing.

You can all help with this, by telling the teachers what you like best about school and what makes you even more interested in learning than you are already.

Yours sincerely

David Muir

Her Majesty's Inspector

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