

Oakmeadow Church of England Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135787
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	360752
Inspection dates	9–10 May 2011
Reporting inspector	David Shears

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	343
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Terry Seston
Headteacher	Huw Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons taught by 12 different teachers, and held meetings with representative members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at policies, planning documentation, assessment data and pupils' work. They analysed the questionnaires returned by 164 parents and carers, 24 members of staff and 170 pupils.

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

- How consistently do teaching and learning help all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and more able pupils, to make good progress, particularly in writing?
- How effective is the curriculum in supporting the development of core skills, including information and communication technology (ICT)?
- How effectively do leaders and managers identify, monitor and evaluate specific areas of development to ensure better progress?

Information about the school

Oakmeadow is a larger-than-average sized primary school. The overwhelming majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average; their needs are mainly moderate learning difficulties or those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average and the proportion of those known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has a breakfast club for pupils at the school, which is run by the governing body. Pre-school provision operates on the junior site, although this is externally managed and is, therefore, subject to separate inspection. The school has achieved the gold award for Healthy Schools status and the Food for Life award. The school is the result of an amalgamation of two former primary schools in September 2009, this being the first inspection of the new school. A major building programme is underway to house the school on one site.

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

Oakmeadow Primary is a good school. It has been through a difficult period in the last two years with significant change, involving the amalgamation of two schools and the current building works. Nevertheless, the headteacher, supported well by the senior leaders and governing body, has successfully brought two communities together to form one school which, although still physically separated on two sites, is working together for the good of all pupils. The dedication and commitment of all staff to continue developing the school are strong, resulting in a sense of unity. Pupils are making good progress, following a renewed focus on teaching and learning this year. The school has rightly emphasised the development of writing. A number of initiatives have been introduced to give pupils more opportunities to write, having a good impact on the progress pupils have made.

The unity of the school has resulted in pupils who feel safe and secure on both sites. They have an excellent understanding of what constitutes an unsafe situation and are well aware of how to keep safe, from crossing the road to surfing the internet. They know that staff care well for them and respond positively, displaying good behaviour both in lessons and on the playground, and having positive attitudes towards their work. They enjoy lessons because the curriculum is thoughtfully enriched with many activities and visits to inspire learning. While the majority of the curriculum contributes well to pupils' learning, the quality of their learning in ICT is satisfactory because there are not enough opportunities for them to develop these skills across the curriculum. The school has recently been able to invest in more hardware to support the development of ICT, but it is too soon to see the impact of this.

Teaching and learning are particularly good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 2 where basic literacy and numeracy skills are effectively taught and then practised in other subjects. However, in Years 3 to 6 there is some variability. While there are focused teaching groups, based on ability, not all are consistently giving enough attention to ongoing assessments to ensure that the activities given to pupils closely match their abilities.

While the quality of marking is generally good, it is not fully consistent and pupils do not always have the opportunity to respond to it. All teachers ensure that it is completed and are successful in giving encouraging remarks, but there are not always enough comments to help pupils know what they need to do to improve. A new system for tracking the progress of pupils has been introduced, giving useful information about how individuals are performing, although staff are still developing its potential, for example in tracking progress over time and analysing the progress of particular groups of pupils. Monitoring is regular and gives the school a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for development. Occasionally, school leaders do not give sufficient priority to evaluating the effectiveness of key areas for improvement. Through the pupils' good progress, and its

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success in managing the complex amalgamation, the school demonstrates a good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of good teaching and learning, particularly in Years 3 to 6, by ensuring that:
 - ongoing assessment is used more rigorously to closely match work to the pupils' abilities
 - marking tells pupils the next steps in their learning and gives them opportunities to respond
 - ICT is used more effectively as a learning tool across the curriculum.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by ensuring that:
 - the new system for recording and analysing the progress of pupils enables all staff to use the information more effectively to track pupils over time and analyse groups.
 - monitoring activities are focused securely on the school's identified areas for development.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children start school with skills and experiences that are generally lower than expected nationally. They make good progress through the school, leaving with attainment that is above average, particularly in reading and mathematics. Attainment in writing is lower, being average in some year groups, although progress in writing has markedly increased during this academic year, due to effective teaching. For example, in one lesson pupils were actively engaged in identifying spelling rules, with the teacher extending their learning through probing and challenging questions. The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. For example, in one lesson, these pupils were successfully building on their understanding of the sounds of words by sorting cards. The progress of all groups of pupils is similar so that overall pupils make good progress, enabling them to gain the skills and knowledge needed in their future lives.

Pupils say that they enjoy school and that they like their teachers, one commenting that they 'help you with work and if you are upset'. As a result, attendance is above the national average. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, knowing that eating healthily is an important part. As a result the school has been awarded the 'Food for Life' award as well as the gold award for Healthy Schools status. Pupils make a good contribution to the school by taking on different responsibilities such as assembly monitors, librarians, prefects and being members of the school council. They also make a positive contribution to the local community such as visiting the local elderly and those in sheltered housing to entertain residents and give harvest gifts. Pupils also make a positive contribution to communities further away such as raising money for Children in Need and Comic Relief. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good overall. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and their social skills are developing well. However, pupils' understanding and experience of different cultures is more limited.

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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	2
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?

The effective teaching is characterised by good relationships that exist in all classes. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan interesting and engaging activities to stimulate pupils. Effective use is made of interactive whiteboards to enhance the quality of teaching. There is a good focus on enabling pupils to work independently, giving them opportunities to discover learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils both in terms of behaviour and work. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils with special educational needs and/or learning difficulties. In particular, those with behavioural, emotional and social needs are helped to manage their behaviour, enabling them to make progress in lessons. Although there are times when learning slows because pupils' work is not consistently matched to their abilities, there are others where teaching and learning are both outstanding. At these times lessons move at a brisk pace and skills from the wider curriculum are used well to achieve the lesson objective. Assessments by teachers are accurate and targets set for pupils are appropriately challenging. The majority of pupils are now on track to reach these targets.

Planning for the curriculum ensures that it is broad and balanced. There are good cross-curricular links that are well-established in Years 1 and 2 and are developing well in Years 3 to 6 in most areas, although less so in ICT. There are good opportunities to practise the basic skills of writing and numeracy. Pupils have good opportunities for visits that relate to

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their topic, such as experiencing a recreated Victorian village as part of a history topic about the Victorians. There are many activities that enrich the curriculum and provide active learning for pupils, such as an African art day, a drumming day, and the visit of a Roman soldier! Pupils in Years 5 and 6 also have the opportunity to engage in a residential visit. There is a wide range of extra-curricular clubs for pupils to enjoy, including scrabble through to French and from art to orchestra. Pupils enjoy these activities and many attend.

The pastoral care of pupils for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, especially for those with complex needs, is excellent. Links with the local pupil referral unit are strong. The arrangements for pupils to transfer from Year 6 to Year 7 are well planned and information is shared appropriately to ensure that the receiving staff have a good knowledge of the pupils. The school is highly committed to working in partnership with a range of agencies, such as the educational psychologist, to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the support they need, resulting in these pupils making good progress. The breakfast club is well organised and with a variety of food and a number of activities for pupils to enjoy. Good attention is paid to the safety of pupils, including the transporting of Key Stage 2 pupils to the other site, ready for the beginning of the school day.

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?

School leaders and managers have made good progress in establishing a new school within a short period of time. They have brought staff and pupils together, sharing a clear vision for an effective school. Subject leaders are enthusiastic and keen to promote their areas and there is evidence of clear developments through the curriculum. The good governing body has also had to undergo much change and it, too, has worked together in order to support the school through this difficult period. Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and can identify the main areas for improvement. They visit the school and know what it is doing to make improvements, such as in writing. Partnerships with parents and carers are good because the school has ensured that they have been well informed of what is happening in school, and their views are taken into account when making decisions. There are good links with other agencies to further the school's work such as with neighbouring schools and the local church.

The school tackles discrimination well and works hard to promote equality of opportunity. Where any disparity is found the school works hard to address it and makes rapid progress, for example in improving English this year. The school's good attention to

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safeguarding ensures that pupils are kept safe. Clear policies are maintained and the training for child protection is of good quality. In particular, the attention given to health and safety by staff and governors is of high quality, clearly demonstrated in the procedures put in place during the building works.

The school has completed an audit for community cohesion and a development plan is in place. Community cohesion is taught in a cross-curricular way so that pupils learn about different faiths and cultures in a number of subject areas. The effectiveness of community cohesion within the school is very strong, and there are international links with schools in other countries such as The Czech Republic and France. However, opportunities for pupils to meet and engage with others of different cultures and faiths are more limited.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start in the Nursery because children and their parents and carers are well prepared through home visits. Good relationships are built so that children settle quickly into school routines. The Early Years Foundation Stage environment is of high quality where displays reflect the children's work, including examples of good writing. Planning is good because it is built on a clear understanding of the children's interests. Consequently, children enjoy their work and have good attitudes towards their learning. The assessment of children is developing well, although this is not always used effectively enough to make the next steps in learning clear. Even so, children make good progress in most areas. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early and appropriate support is given. Good use is made of partnerships with outside agencies to support the work in school. However, there are not always enough opportunities to ensure that more able children are challenged sufficiently.

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Children feel very safe in school because they know that teachers care for them and look after them well. They are learning how to be healthy and basic skills of reading, writing and number are being taught well. Good use is made of both the indoor and outdoor environments to enhance learning in all areas. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities to ensure both good learning and the opportunity for children to develop their independence. Staff are very committed to the development and care of pupils, resulting in children who behave well and enjoy school.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

An above average proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The very large majority of parents and carers were positive in their views about the school. A few parents and carers felt that the school did not take account of their concerns. Inspectors found a number of instances where the school had responded to parental concerns such as providing transport and staggering the end of the school day so that parents could collect their children from one site, running an evening to discuss how parents and carers could help their child to read and providing evening performances of concerts for parents and carers. Although a few parents and carers were concerned about the management of unacceptable behaviour, inspectors found that any rare instances of misbehaviour were managed well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oakmeadow CE Primary and Nursery 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 164 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 343 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	92	56	63	38	5	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	90	55	68	41	4	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	71	43	85	52	6	4	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	77	47	72	44	10	6	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	85	52	72	44	4	2	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	72	44	76	46	12	7	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	73	45	85	52	5	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)	60	37	90	55	4	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	69	42	85	52	6	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	56	34	83	51	14	9	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	55	34	86	52	14	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	86	52	65	40	5	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	93	57	61	37	6	4	1	1

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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"> ■ 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 May 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Oakmeadow Church of England Primary and Nursery School,
Shrewsbury SY3 0NU**

Thank you for the welcome that we received when we visited your school recently. It was lovely to meet you all and find out about your good school. The leaders of your school have worked very hard to bring everyone together as a new school and we can see that this has been successful. You told us that your school was a friendly place where everyone gets on well together. We also found out that you enjoy coming to school. You told us that your teachers look after you well, which helps you to feel safe. We were particularly pleased with your good behaviour and how well you work together in lessons.

Your teachers plan interesting activities for you so that you enjoy your learning, including having trips out and special visitors to the school. You have a wide range of clubs to choose from and we know that many of you enjoy attending them.

Although you make good progress overall, we have asked your teachers to make sure that this happens all of the time, particularly for the older pupils. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that the work you are given is just right for you. You could all help by telling your teachers if you are finding the work too hard or too easy. In addition we are asking your teachers to tell you how to improve your work and to give you the opportunity to respond to their comments. You could really help by responding thoughtfully. We would like you to have more opportunities to develop your ICT skills in different subjects.

Your headteacher and other teachers have been putting in some new ideas to help you with your work and we have asked that they check these carefully to make sure that they are working well.

Thank you again for a lovely two days. We wish you all the very best in your future lives.

Yours sincerely

David Shears

Lead inspector

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