

Oak Hill First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132820
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	360444
Inspection dates	21–22 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Jo Curd

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	463
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Ray
Headteacher	Lynn Kelly
Date of previous school inspection	20 December 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Twenty-six lessons were visited and sixteen teachers were seen; discussions were held with parents, groups of pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at lesson monitoring, pupils' work, local authority reports, policies and procedures relating to safeguarding and 68 questionnaires from parents and carers, 12 from staff and 100 from pupils in Key Stage 2.

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

- The extent to which boys' relatively high and girls' relatively low attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2010 can be explained by the school's efforts to modify the curriculum to meet the generalised interests and learning styles of many boys.
- Whether all the positive things reported in the school's self-evaluation about aspects such as their engagement with parents and carers and the curriculum justify their judgements of these as satisfactory or whether some aspects are more effective than this.
- How well leaders and managers are raising the quality of teaching given that they judge this to still be satisfactory.

Information about the school

This school is larger than most of its type. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage others are from a wide range of minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils who speak languages other than English as a first language, predominantly Urdu, Malayalam and Polish, is lower than most other schools. Although the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is slightly lower than in most other schools the proportion of pupils with statements of educational need is in line with the national average. Most of these needs are linked with moderate learning difficulties or speech, language and communication. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly higher than the national average. The school has received several accreditations including Healthy Schools status and Artsmark Gold. The school runs a breakfast club and offers after-school and holiday care through an independent organisation. The school's assistant headteacher took up her post in September 2009. The headteacher and deputy headteacher joined the school and started their posts in September 2010.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This school is satisfactory and rapidly improving. Nearly all pupils behave well in and out of lessons and enjoy the school's calm, happy ethos. Relationships are good and pupils feel safe because they know that staff are there to help them. Progress and the quality of teaching vary between classes and are satisfactory overall. Most of the parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are pleased with their child's experience of the school, as one said, 'Overall I am happy with the school. I am proud that my child attends Oak Hill First School'.

There have been several significant changes in the school since the last inspection including new leaders, managers, teaching and non-teaching staff. The new headteacher and deputy headteacher quickly and astutely identified fundamental strengths and weaknesses. Recognising that some of these, such as teaching, were slowing the progress of some pupils they acted rapidly to improve the situation. They built on, and extended, good partnerships with others, such as other schools, nurseries and the local authority to verify their monitoring and support developments. They have successfully used their thorough and accurate self-evaluation to improve many aspects such as teaching and the curriculum. In January the local authority confirmed the school's view that a proportion of teaching was inadequate. Frequent monitoring, accurate evaluation and strong support of teachers have led to rapid improvements. The quality of nearly half the lessons observed during the inspection was good and none was inadequate. The quality still varies, however. Teachers do not always use assessments effectively to plan and present suitably challenging activities and aims for pupils' differing needs. In such lessons pupils do not always know the purpose of activities or how they can improve their learning. The curriculum, which engages boys and girls, is improving and contributes to the satisfactory progress of all groups. Relatively high attainment by boys and relatively low attainment by girls at the end of Year 2 in 2010 was due to individual starting points and represents sound achievement for each group.

Attainment at the end of Year 4 in remains in line with expectations. Leaders are well aware that attainment is generally lower and progress slower in writing, and have introduced several new strategies to address this. Whilst these are proving successful, particularly in Year 4, they have not been fully implemented in all classes are not yet embedded throughout the school. Some pupils do not achieve as well as they could because staff do not always implement interventions as quickly as they could if the progress of some pupils occasionally slows.

The involvement of parents and carers in events such as fund-raising Tea Days and Nursery 'toddle waddle' are proving very popular. There are fewer effective opportunities for parents and carers to engage directly in pupils' progress and learning. Several parents and carers feel that they are not sufficiently informed about changes in the school, what

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pupils need for particular lessons, what their children are learning and how well they're progressing. Whilst informative newsletters are sent out each fortnight the speed and quality of information given between this varies and occasionally important messages are missed.

Given the speed and effectiveness of developments over the last year and the accuracy of self-evaluation and aspirations of all stakeholders the school's capacity to sustain improvements is good.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in reading, mathematics and especially writing by:
 - ensuring that effective interventions are quickly put in place for any pupils whose progress is slowing at any time.
 - embedding a range of effective strategies to raise standards in writing across the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that within the next year most teaching is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - teachers use assessments effectively to provide suitably challenging work for all pupils
 - all pupils understand the purpose of tasks and how to achieve them
 - all pupils know how to improve their work and what they need to do to progress.
- Improve the effectiveness of engagement with parents and carers by
 - providing more opportunities for parents and carers to engage in their children's learning
 - improving communication to ensure that pupils are fully prepared for school, especially particular requirements of lessons and that all parents and carers are aware of what pupils are learning and how well they are progressing.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils generally enter Year 1 and leave Year 4 with attainment in line with the national average. This represents satisfactory achievement by all groups. There are no significant differences over time between any groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are generally supported well by teaching assistants but work is not always sufficiently well matched and is occasionally too difficult for some. Progress varies between classes and subjects. Despite some very effective new initiatives progress in writing is generally slower than in reading. During the inspection, progress in a literacy lesson in Year 2 showed some positive fruits of this. Pupils were motivated because their writing was well rooted in previous learning about a familiar story. They all knew the lesson objectives and the different aims which were carefully matched to the needs of different groups and their targets for future learning. Pupils knew how to achieve these through making effective preparatory notes and seeing the teacher produce helpful

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examples. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also made good progress because they were supported well through the effective deployment of the teaching assistant. Other pupils made slower progress in a design and technology lesson because they all had to write the same lesson objective and draw the same pulley mechanism, were not sure exactly what they had to do or why they were doing it and did not know how to extend their work or how it improved their learning.

Although a few pupils have behavioural difficulties the majority behave well in and out of lessons. Pupils enjoy school. Attendance is in line with the national average. The school achieved Healthy School status three years ago. This has not been a priority for development since. Pupils have adequate understanding of healthy lifestyles but do not always choose to follow this. Several eat biscuits and crisps at break times and are not always encouraged by positive role models from staff. Pupils contribute to the school through doing various jobs and serving on the school council. Opportunities for them to contribute to the wider community are relatively limited. Pupils are adequately prepared for later life and learning. They are well behaved, confident and have positive attitudes even though progress is satisfactory and attainment remains in line with the national average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

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How effective is the provision?

Pupils are generally cared for and supported well. The school's new behaviour policy, rewards and sanctions recognise the behaviour and attitudes of all pupils. The school's firm action along with the very positive attitudes and actions of most pupils are resulting in good behaviour and a happy school. Pupils feel safe because they know staff are there to help even though some staff are slightly more responsive in this than others. Case studies show that vulnerable pupils and families are supported well, for example in improving the behaviour of one particularly troubled pupil. Transition arrangements are good with increased visits to the middle school for more vulnerable pupils. Strong partnerships contribute well to care. For example, taking the advice of staff from a special school in developing facilities for pupils with mobility difficulties.

The quality of teaching varies considerably. Strengths include relationships, behaviour, interesting activities and the deployment of teaching assistants. These are not evident in all classes, however, and weaker teaching in some classes slows the progress of some. The quality of marking and use of targets to show pupils how to improve are developing. They vary between classes and are not always clear to all pupils.

The curriculum is developing. Relatively new features such as creative themes and role-play opportunities in the 'practical areas' outside all classrooms contribute well to the enjoyment and motivation of pupils. Effective enrichment through visits, visitors, clubs and residential trips also contribute well to this. Good partnerships are further extending opportunities for pupils. For example the involvement of students from Birmingham University in a topic on Vikings used their knowledge of history to bring the topic of Vikings to life. A strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy is gradually raising achievement across the school. Many of these developments are new and are not embedded in all classes or having sufficient impact to raise achievement to good.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Effective leadership and management underpin all the recent improvements in the school. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, external partners and, increasingly, other leaders and managers are successfully using their accurate evaluation of the school to raise ambition and drive improvements. Developments are evident even though some, such as the curriculum, are at relatively early stages, not fully embedded and not showing their full impact on achievement. Improvements in the quality of teaching are evident in monitoring records and reports even though it remains inconsistent and is not consistently good. The

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governing body carries out its statutory duties adequately. Although governors are increasingly aware of the school's effectiveness and its role in school development, their capacity to question and hold the school to account is at a relatively early stage. Policies and procedures to safeguard pupils' health and safety are sound and securely in place, even though some details are not always as clear or explicit as they could be. There are no significant differences in the achievement of any group over time. All pupils are all valued and the school is largely harmonious. Pupils do not always achieve as well as they could and progress varies between classes. The school's promotion of equal opportunities and effectiveness in tackling discrimination are satisfactory. Community cohesion is satisfactory but at a relatively early stage of development. Pupils take part in some local events and raise money for charity locally, nationally and internationally.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They start Nursery with knowledge skills and understanding lower than expected for this age and leave the Reception classes broadly in line with the national average. These positive gains are largely attributable to the broad range of activities in the Nursery and Reception classes and engaging opportunities inside and out. One parent or carer described these classes as, 'a happy environment with very good facilities'. During the inspection children in one Reception class made good progress in their creative skills and knowledge and understanding of the world as they used their own initiatives to make pirate hats and swords from paper, card, adhesive tape and a stapler. Children in Nursery developed their creative and language skills, and knowledge and understanding of the world as they enthusiastically painted trees with water in the forest area on school grounds. The quality of teaching varies and some opportunities for adults to extend children's learning are missed. For example, adults missed opportunities to encourage children to use different

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materials when building houses outside. The Nursery coordinator, along with other leaders and managers in the school, are making good use of partnerships with other nurseries and the local authority to improve the Early Years Foundation Stage further. Developments are rapid and staff are currently highly motivated and excited about changes to maximise the initiatives and capabilities of children.

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

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire was much lower than that in most other schools. The large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire or who met directly with inspectors were positive about all aspects investigated. Most parents and carers who responded were happy with their child's overall experience of the school. The most positive response was about safety. Inspectors found relationships, care and support to be good. In contrast the least positive response was on behaviour. Comments expressed concern about some poor behaviour and the possibility that pupils with challenging behaviour received more attention than pupils who behaved well. Inspectors found that, although a very few pupils have behaviour difficulties, most behave well in and out of lessons and that behaviour overall is good. They also found that new systems of rewards and sanctions recognise the behaviour and attitudes of all. Several parents and carers expressed concerns about communication. Leaders acknowledge that despite a fortnightly newsletter the effectiveness of communication varies considerably across the school. Inspectors have asked the school to improve this.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oak Hill First 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 68 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 463 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	44	35	51	3	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	44	36	53	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	25	37	32	47	10	15	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	34	35	51	8	12	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	28	41	35	51	4	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	41	33	49	6	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	26	40	59	7	10	1	1
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)	20	29	39	57	5	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	34	37	54	3	4	3	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	34	26	38	14	21	4	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	26	35	51	11	16	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	17	25	34	51	9	13	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	39	35	52	3	4	2	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	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.



23 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oak Hill First School, Redditch, B98 7JU

Thank you so much for being so friendly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our time with you. All the things you told us helped us with our work. Most of you are very positive about your school and nearly all of those who answered the inspection questionnaire, said they enjoyed being there. Most felt that school leaders do a good job, that adults help explain your work, and that you learn a lot in lessons. Some of you do not feel that behaviour is always good.

We think your school is satisfactory. Children make a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes, but progress in other years varies. We think that most of you could do better, particularly if teaching continues to improve across the school. We found your behaviour generally good. Whilst we know that a few pupils have difficulties with this, most of you behave well in and out of lessons. You say you feel safe because staff are there to help you. We know that many of your parents and carers love coming in to Tea Days and special events such as assemblies and the recent 'toddle waddle' in Nursery. They do not always have enough opportunities to be involved in your learning or feel that they are told enough about changes in the school, what you are learning or how well you are doing.

We agree that school leaders are doing a good job. We have asked them to help you all to do better by; helping those of you who are not doing as well as you could, particularly with writing, so that you all reach higher levels in learning, improving teaching by making sure activities are suitable for you all, making sure you all know what to do and how to do it and making sure that you know how you can improve your learning. We have also asked them to provide more opportunities for your parents and carers to be involved in your learning and to improve communication with them.

You can all help in this by continuing to work as hard as you can, telling your teachers what really helps you with your learning and by passing messages and letters to your parents and carers when they come from school.

Yours sincerely

Jo Curd

Lead inspector

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