

# The Oaks Community Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118483
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	358359
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 June 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Derek Watts

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>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	335
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Margaret Cooper
<b>Headteacher</b>	Heather Futter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 June 2008
<b>School address</b>	Gore Court Road Sittingbourne ME10 1GL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01795423619
<b>Fax number</b>	01795470577
<b>Email address</b>	admin@oaks.kent.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed seventeen lessons or part lessons taught by ten different teachers. The inspection team examined the school's policies, assessment information, pupils' work, teachers' plans and school improvement planning. They held discussions with the headteacher, staff, members of the governing body and pupils. The inspectors analysed 88 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and others by staff.

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

- The quality of outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The effectiveness of the action taken to raise pupils' achievement in mathematics.
- How well the most able pupils are challenged and extended in lessons.
- The effectiveness of the specially resourced provision and how well the pupils with speech and language needs progress.

## Information about the school

This is a larger than average sized infant school. The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with speech and language needs which is shared with the junior school on the same site. This is known as the speech and language unit. The unit is jointly managed by the two schools and currently has fourteen infant pupils aged between four and seven years. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.

The school holds Healthy School status, Eco-Schools Green Flag and the Primary Geography Quality Mark Silver award.

**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

The Oaks Community Infant is a good school. There are some outstanding elements to the school's work. The headteacher and staff have maintained and built upon the strengths identified in the previous inspection. The very positive school ethos, good care, guidance and support and the high-quality relationships between staff and pupils lead to outstanding pupil behaviour. Pupils feel extremely safe because of the good emphasis given to safeguarding. They make extremely good contributions to the school and the wider community. Pupils show a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They thoroughly enjoy school and attendance levels are above average.

The specialist provision in the unit for pupils with additional speech and language needs is outstanding. The provision has a very positive impact on pupils' learning and especially on their personal development and self-esteem.

Across the school, pupils achieve well because of good teaching, an interesting curriculum and their extremely positive attitudes to learning. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in most areas of learning. They make outstanding progress in their personal and social development. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and attainment is above average overall by the end of Year 2. However, there is variation in performance between subject areas. Writing is a real strength and attainment is consistently high. Pupils' writing is accurate, detailed and imaginative in English lessons and across the curriculum. Reading is above average, but attainment in mathematics is closer to average. The school is taking positive steps to improve pupils' performance in mathematics, but there are not enough opportunities for investigative and problem-solving in mathematics lessons. In science, opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to plan their own investigations and decide how best to organise and record their findings.

Teachers establish high-quality relationships with pupils. Classrooms are attractive and stimulating. Teachers' explanations, instructions and questioning promote learning well. The teaching of writing is very effective. In mathematics, tasks are not always sufficiently challenging for the most able because assessment information is not always used well enough in planning learning. Furthermore, pupils' individual learning targets for mathematics are not always specific enough to guide the next steps of their learning. The curriculum includes interesting topics and is enriched with a wide range of additional activities. Art is a clear strength with high-quality pupil work displayed around the school.

The headteacher provides good leadership and educational direction. She is well supported by other key leaders. Some leaders are new to their posts and are developing in their role. The school engages positively with parents and carers, who are very pleased with the care and education provided for their children. There are also strong partnerships with other agencies to promote pupils' learning and development. Through effective self-evaluation, the school knows its strengths and takes positive action to bring about

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improvements. Since the last inspection, the school's outstanding elements have been maintained and there have been good improvements to Early Years Foundation Stage provision. The school demonstrates good capacity for sustained improvement.

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

- Accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics and raise attainment to at least above average by the end of Year 2 by:
  - extending opportunities for investigative and problem-solving activities in mathematics lessons
  - using assessment information effectively to ensure that tasks are sufficiently challenging for the more able
  - sharpening pupils' individual learning targets so pupils know precisely what they need to do to improve.
- In science, provide more opportunities for pupils to plan their own investigations and decide how to organise and present their findings.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge, understanding and skills broadly as expected for their age. Children are now entering Year 1 with above average attainment because of recent improvements to provision.

Across the school, pupils show considerable enthusiasm for learning and enjoy the wide range of activities provided. They told the inspectors, 'We have lots of fun in lessons.' 'Writing is rewarding,' and, 'We love art.' Most pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those with speech and language needs and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. However, there are occasions in lessons, particularly in mathematics, when the most able are not sufficiently extended. School assessments, pupils' work and the lessons seen indicate that attainment by the end of Year 2 is high in writing, above average in reading and broadly average in mathematics.

Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening. They respond well to teachers' questions and have good opportunities to share their knowledge and express their views. A well-structured approach to the teaching of reading and the wide range of attractive books available lead to good progress in reading. Pupils remarked, 'We enjoy the books in the library.' The school has been particularly successful in developing pupils' writing skills. Pupils write for a range of purposes and in different styles. Extended pieces are often interesting and imaginative. Spelling and punctuation are mostly accurate. Handwriting by Year 2 is consistently legible, fluent and joined. Pupils apply their writing skills well in different areas. For example, Year 2 pupils wrote clear weather reports for the United Kingdom after carefully interpreting weather data from a map and charts. They wrote clear factual reports comparing homes and schools in Sittingbourne and in Uganda. In mathematics, pupils' progress is satisfactory. There are insufficient opportunities for work which fully challenges the pupils and enables them to use and apply their numeracy skills to solve a range of problems.

Pupils' work in art and design is of a high quality. In Year 1, pupils used information and communication technology (ICT) very well to design and create colourful butterflies. In

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Year 2, pupils used ICT imaginatively to create intricate and colourful spiders' webs. Year 2 pupils also produced impressive observational drawings of fruit and vegetables. Watercolours, pastels and fine black pen were used to great effect.

Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in their consideration and support for others. Pupils demonstrate qualities such as cooperation, kindness, respect and responsibility very well. In assemblies, they reflected on supporting those needing additional help with communication and how we can all play our part in conserving important resources. Pupils feel well cared for at school and told the inspectors, 'Lots of adults look after us.' Pupils participate well in a range of physical activities and most choose healthy foods. They make extremely good contributions to the school and to the wider community. The eco team looks after the school environment and promotes the importance of recycling and saving energy. Those on the school council represent their fellow pupils well. Pupils raise funds for a wide range of different appeals and charities to help those who are less fortunate than themselves. Pupils are well prepared for their next school and for the future because they make good progress in acquiring and applying literacy skills. They make sound progress in numeracy. Their personal and team skills are very well developed.

*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>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</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>1</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>	2
<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

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## How effective is the provision?

Teachers create attractive and stimulating classrooms which include pupils' good-quality work on display. Teachers establish very positive relationships with pupils and manage them well. Lessons have a clear purpose and pupils know what they are expected to learn. Questioning is used effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and to check their understanding. Effective modelling and demonstrations by teachers promote pupils' writing skills well. In some mathematics and science lessons, there is an over reliance on worksheets. These are not always sufficiently demanding, especially for the more able, and can restrict opportunities for pupils to plan and organise their own work. Assessment information is not always used effectively to match tasks to pupils' needs in mathematics. Teaching assistants are well deployed and make good contributions to pupils' learning, particularly for those who need additional help with language.

The curriculum contributes very well to pupils' personal development and promotes good academic progress, particularly in reading and writing. School leaders are aware of the need to increase investigative approaches in mathematics and science. Themed events such as 'book week', 'poetry week', 'bug week' and 'zoo lab' provide interesting and memorable learning experiences for all pupils. Health education and the wide range of physical activities provided contribute well to pupils' good understanding of healthy lifestyles. Art and design activities are very well incorporated into major topics. Popular clubs include basketball, eco team, football, gymnastics and gardening. Visitors and visits further enhance the curriculum and pupils' learning. Good use is made of the school's gardens, woodlands and outdoor facilities to promote learning and enjoyment.

Good care, guidance and support underpin the school's extremely positive ethos. Pupils, parents and carers appreciate the well-organised, safe and secure environment provided. They commented, 'Our children feel safe and supported,' and, 'We are extremely happy with the school environment.' Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with the support they need, although targets in their individual plans are not always sharp enough. Pupils in the specially resourced provision are extremely well provided for. One very happy parent wrote, 'I cannot praise the language unit enough for its excellent provision.' In partnership with other agencies, the school is successful in supporting pupils and their families who require additional help. The effective monitoring and promotion of attendance has led to above average attendance over the past two years.

*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>2</b>

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## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and staff have successfully created a very positive school atmosphere for pupils to learn and develop. Senior leaders and staff are focused on providing good-quality provision and promoting positive outcomes for pupils. The leadership and management of key areas such as the Early Years Foundation Stage, English and the specially resourced provision are effective. All leaders and managers are appropriately involved in monitoring performance and improving their areas of responsibility. There are clear plans and a determination to raise pupils' achievement in mathematics. The monitoring and development of teaching and learning have contributed to the consistency in practice.

Members of the governing body show a clear understanding of the school's strengths and improvement priorities. They are supportive and recently have been more challenging and questioning about the school's performance in order to hold it to account. Safeguarding is given good emphasis. There are effective policies and procedures to protect and safeguard pupils. The monitoring and evaluation of these procedures are thorough. All staff are well trained in the area of safeguarding. Safe practices for pupils are successfully promoted through the school's teaching and the curriculum.

All groups of pupils have full access to the good range of activities provided. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and discrimination is very effectively tackled. Community cohesion is promoted well. Partnerships with parents, carers and the local community are good. The curriculum effectively promotes pupils' understanding of life in different countries. A positive partnership has been forged with a primary school in Uganda. There are further plans to increase pupils' understanding of the diversity within the United Kingdom.

*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>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>



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## Early Years Foundation Stage

Effective leadership and planning are promoting good provision in this setting. There are some outstanding elements. Children settle quickly because of good induction arrangements and the close partnerships with parents and carers. Children make exceptionally good progress in their personal, social and emotional development because of the strong relationships and the very good attention to care, guidance and welfare. Children feel safe, secure and generally confident.

Children thoroughly enjoy the activities provided. These are effectively planned around exciting themes such as 'Toy Story 3', 'mini beasts', and, 'how things work'. Children make good gains in their learning because of the good teaching. Assessment information is used well to plan teaching and learning. Good records of children's progress and learning experiences are provided. There is an effective balance of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children. Children have good opportunities to explore and work independently. Just occasionally, tasks do not sufficiently challenge the most able.

Adults promote children's speaking and listening skills well through most activities. Children enjoy books. There are good opportunities for children to acquire and apply writing skills. For example, children in Reception wrote letters to the giant in 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. They use ICT well to support their learning. Since the last inspection, there have been considerable improvements to outdoor learning. The spacious and very well resourced outdoor areas successfully encourage children to be active and purposeful learners. In the woodland area, Nursery children were fascinated by the ants, beetles and woodlice they found. They observed the creatures carefully and named them using charts. They showed care and respect for the creatures.

*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

All of the parents and carers who returned the questionnaires are happy overall with their children's experience at the school. They are particularly pleased with their children's sense of enjoyment, safety in the school, the quality of teaching, the meeting of children's particular needs and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. These very positive views reflect the findings of the inspection. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about how well the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. The school strives to meet the needs of parents and carers and to take account of their suggestions and concerns. However, the school is not complacent and senior leaders are keen to take steps to further improve this area.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Oaks Community Infant 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 88 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 335 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	71	81	17	19	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	70	80	18	20	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	45	51	41	47	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	57	35	40	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	62	70	24	27	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	53	60	31	35	1	1	3	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	59	67	28	32	1	1	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)	49	56	35	40	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	63	31	35	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	47	44	50	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	49	37	42	6	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	51	58	34	39	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	65	74	23	26	0	0	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	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](http://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"> <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.**



29 June 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of The Oaks Community Infant School, Sittingbourne ME10 1GL**

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school, giving us your views and showing us your work. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit. The Oaks Community Infant is a good school with some outstanding aspects. These are the main strengths.

- You thoroughly enjoy school and your attendance is good.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception get off to a good start.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making good progress because of the good teaching.
- An interesting and wide range of learning activities is provided including clubs, visits and visitors.
- The speech and language unit is extremely successful in helping those with special learning needs.
- You get on extremely well with each other and your behaviour is outstanding.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and fit.
- You feel very safe at school because teachers and other adults take good care of you and provide a safe learning environment.
- You make exceptionally good contributions to school life and to the wider community.
- The headteacher leads the school well and she receives good support from other key leaders.

We have given your school a few points for improvement.

We have asked teachers to increase the number of problem-solving activities in mathematics lessons and to ensure that all tasks are challenging in mathematics, especially for those who find learning easy. Sharper learning targets would also help to guide the next steps of your learning.

In science, we have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities to plan your own investigations and to decide how to record and present your findings.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard, particularly in mathematics. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts

Lead inspector

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