

Oaklands Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109809
Local Authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	377988
Inspection dates	12–13 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Stephen Lake

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John McLaren (acting chair)
Headteacher	Sue Charnley
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 March 2009
School address	Butler Road Crowthorne Berkshire RG45 6QZ
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 22 lessons or parts of lessons, observing nine teachers. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and pupils and spoke with parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at the records of school self-evaluation, the school's improvement plans and the minutes of the governing body. They also reviewed the school's assessments of pupils' attainment and progress, the records held on pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A variety of policies were scrutinised as well as reports from the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from pupils, staff and 72 parents and carers.

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

- The impact of strategies to improve attainment and progress.
- The impact upon attainment and progress of the revised systems for tracking pupil performance.
- The impact upon attainment of the support given to pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.
- The effectiveness of leadership on the school's capacity to improve.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized school serving mainly the neighbouring residential area around Crowthorne. It shares a site with its partner infant school. The very large majority of the pupils are White British, with fewer than average from other ethnic groups. Far fewer pupils than average speak English as an additional language and none is at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupils have a statement of special educational need. After-school care is available from an independent provider and is subject to a separate inspection.

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 Junior School is a good school. It has improved significantly since the last inspection because of good leadership and management and is continuing to improve quickly. Effective strategies for school improvement are well focused and enabling improvements in the quality of learning, especially for those who were high attaining at age seven. Pupils' outstanding attendance contributes much to their good progress. The interesting curriculum makes learning enjoyable and relevant for pupils. This, together with the good quality care, support and guidance that pupils receive, enables pupils to achieve well in their academic and personal skills. Pupils grow into mature and confident young people. Pupils behave well and have an outstanding understanding of how to stay safe and how to keep fit and healthy. In particular, safeguarding procedures and the links with parents and carers are outstanding.

Most pupils achieve well and, as a result, their attainment is above average overall by the end of Year 6. Almost all pupils make good progress. However, occasionally, a few pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory rather than good progress and leaders are already working to even this out.

Effective action has been taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning and the results can be seen in the improving attainment, especially in reading and mathematics. The successful strategies used here are already being adapted for use in improving writing, but attainment in writing, although improved, remains average and progress in writing continues to be an area for improvement.

The clear improvement in teaching and learning is largely due to the much-improved use of assessment information. As a result, teachers almost always plan work that challenges all pupils to do their very best. Nevertheless, occasionally some inconsistency remains and in a minority of lessons, work planned is not matched closely enough to the needs of pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and occasionally for the most able in their writing.

Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses because the self-evaluation process is good. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of overall school performance and have already recognised the need to strengthen and extend the way information on data is analysed to give a sharper picture of the performance of different groups of pupils. The driving force behind this school's success and continued improvement is the strong leadership of the headteacher,

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who ensures that all members of staff work as a collaborative team. The governing body is involved well in this process. The strengths of the previous inspection have been maintained and built upon and action is already in place to address areas for improvement noted in this report. Standards of attainment are rising faster than those nationally and the overall quality of teaching has improved effectively since the last inspection. These factors indicate a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment in writing, by September 2012, by embedding more firmly the changes made to the curriculum to stimulate writing.
- By December 2011, extend the use of the improved systems for using information on pupils' attainment and progress to plan lessons that:
 - challenge all pupils to achieve their very best, particularly more-able pupils in writing
 - include tasks more closely matched to the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- By December 2011, strengthen the systems for recording and analysing information on pupils' attainment and progress so that leaders, at all levels, understand how well different groups of pupils are doing.

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

Pupils' learning is accelerating as a result of the improved teaching and this in turn is enhancing their enjoyment of learning. Pupils join the school with attainment that is a little above average. From this starting point, they make good further progress, so that their attainment is securely above average by the end of Year 6 and for some pupils their attainment is especially high. Pupils' above average attainment and good information and communication technology (ICT) skills ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Pupils' attainment is rising year on year as a result of the effective strategies to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to make even better progress this year, especially in mathematics.

Already, greater attention is being given to providing writing experiences that really stimulate and challenge pupils, although this is not yet consistent in the school. An example of an outstanding lesson, in Year 6, was seen when pupils were very motivated when writing in a science-fiction style. Activities such as this are capturing pupils' imagination and making them want to improve their writing. In a good lesson in Year 4, pupils developed a better understanding of how to make complex sentences by using various connecting words. Pupils are learning effectively about the mechanics of writing but it is too early to see the full impact. This focus on writing is being supported by the use of a new reading scheme that includes more texts that pupils find stimulating and enjoyable.

Skilled and competent teaching assistants support pupils well and make a good

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contribution to their learning by keeping them engaged and by helping them to work independently. Many pupils, who are given additional support, come off the special needs register as their attainment and progress improve quickly. Nevertheless, a very small minority of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make quite as much progress. For example, sometimes they have to complete the same work as other pupils and some find this too hard. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because teaching is well matched to their needs.

Pupils demonstrate great maturity in the polite and courteous way they speak with visitors. They say that they feel very safe in school. They make a strong contribution to school life. Pupils are enthusiastic about taking part in physical activities. A very high percentage walk or cycle to school. Pupils keenly take part in the local carnival and have taken firm action to inform the council about the parking difficulties outside a new store near the school. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and show respect for themselves and for others.

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	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers make good use of a wide range of strategies to make learning interesting and stimulating for pupils. Teachers’ questioning often challenges pupils well and extends their learning while assessing what they already know. Teachers give good oral feedback to pupils on what they need to do to improve their work. In some books, marking does not always reinforce this by making it clear what pupils need to

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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do to improve their work. Work is usually set at the right broad level for the class; however, in writing activities, not enough attention is given to the differing abilities of pupils. The school has identified that some of its success in improving achievement in mathematics has come from teaching some of the lessons in smaller groups. Senior leaders are now looking at ways of providing some additional teaching time to enhance writing.

There are very good opportunities for sport. Those pupils identified as gifted and talented are supported well through links with other local schools and after-school clubs such as the mathematics club. Visitors and visits, including a residential trip, broaden pupils’ experiences well. Improving links between subjects are helping pupils learn effectively. The very stimulating school grounds are used well for outdoor learning. For example, a Year 3 class were engrossed when dipping the school pond to investigate the insect life. Teachers are starting to make good use of these activities and different subjects. For example, pupils have been writing manifestos for the elections to school council, but the full use of other subjects to develop writing skills is not yet completely embedded or consistent. This limits the effectiveness of what is otherwise a stimulating and well-planned curriculum.

Pastoral care is very strong. Pupils have very good opportunities to share their concerns and say that they value the support provided. The school works very closely with parents and carers to support their children’s learning, for example through parent forums. Systems for homework were recently revised after consultation with parents and carers to make homework more effective. Additional help for those pupils with additional needs is provided by a recently appointed school councillor, but it is too early to see the full impact of this yet.

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 are effective in communicating their vision for the school to all staff and governors, who share a strong ambition to improve further. All acknowledge the huge changes brought about in the last two years. The involvement of teaching assistants in school self-evaluation is particularly effective in supporting this.

Teaching and learning are monitored effectively and information gained is used well to improve classroom practice.

The school is careful to tackle any incidents of discrimination. More effective systems

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of analysing data are being introduced to strengthen the way that leaders compare the performance of different groups of pupils, although this is still an on-going element of development. Equal opportunities are satisfactory rather than good as leaders are still working to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do consistently well and that the most able pupils do as well in writing as they do in reading and mathematics.

Procedures for safeguarding, including training in child protection, are extremely rigorous. Staff and governors have a very clear understanding of what is required to keep pupils safe. They understand the importance of safe staff recruitment and take very effective steps to ensure that the school site is secure. The views of parents and carers are taken into account, for example providing a secure entrance gate to the site.

The governing body are proactive in setting a clear strategic direction for the school. They make effective use of partnerships, especially the local authority, to obtain advice and support. The school strategic plan is detailed and well targeted on the most important areas to improve pupils’ achievement. The views of staff, parents, carers and stakeholders are sought regularly and action taken on the findings where appropriate. For example, building changes in the last few years include extending the teaching space available for Years 5 and 6.

Community cohesion strategies are effective, especially at a local level. The strategies are monitored to ensure their effectiveness and links are being developed with an inner-city school to strengthen this area further.

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	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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Views of parents and carers

An average proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires about the school. In all areas a very large majority agreed with the statements. A number of parents and carers added comments to their form. Typical of the positive comments was, 'I have been very impressed with Oaklands especially over the last few years.' A very small minority of parents and carers were concerned that pupils do not make enough progress. Inspection evidence shows that the very large majority of pupils make good progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oaklands Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 72 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 244 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	58	27	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	69	20	28	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	24	33	37	51	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	39	24	33	7	10	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	40	56	25	35	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	31	43	31	43	4	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	50	30	42	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)	34	47	28	39	4	6	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	27	38	36	50	3	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	40	31	43	3	4	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	36	31	43	2	3	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	41	57	24	33	0	0	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	47	65	19	26	3	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



14 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oaklands Junior School, Crowthorne RG45 6QZ

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. Yours is a good school that is continuing to improve. Here are some of the things that we found the best.

- Almost all of you make good progress in your learning and by the time you get to Year 6 you achieve well, especially when compared with most schools.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep fit and healthy and have excellent opportunities for sport.
- The school looks after you well and helps you gain an outstanding understanding of how to stay safe.
- The teaching is good and teachers make learning mostly enjoyable and fun for you.
- You make a good contribution to the life of the school and the local community.
- The school is well run by the headteacher, staff and governors.
- Well done for attending regularly.
- The links with your parents and carers are very helpful and these help you to do well.

To help the school get even better we have made a few suggestions for improvements to help you learn better. We have asked the school to:

- help you to improve your writing so that you do as well in this as you do in reading and mathematics
- make sure that they use information on how well you are doing to plan lessons that are always just right for your needs, especially for those of you who find learning more difficult. You can help by telling your teacher how hard or easy you find your work, especially in writing
- carefully check how well different groups of you are doing.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Lake
Lead inspector

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