

# Oxhey Wood Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117170
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379364
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 October 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Selwyn Ward

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	318
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	James Brown
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rita Jackson (Acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 November 2008
<b>School address</b>	Oxhey Drive South Oxhey Watford WD19 7SL
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who visited 24 lessons taught by 16 teachers. Inspectors spoke with staff, parents and carers, members of the governing body, local authority advisers and groups of pupils. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work, the analysis of the tracking of pupils' progress, attendance records, school policies and procedures, school leaders' monitoring records, school planning and risk assessments. They also analysed the questionnaires received from 99 pupils, 34 staff, and 103 parents and carers.

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

- What is the reason for variation in the progress of girls and boys across the school?
- How effectively is work in English and mathematics matched to girls and boys with different learning needs?
- What impact have leaders and the governing body had in raising attainment and driving school improvement?

## Information about the school

This school is larger than average. Numbers have increased each year since the last inspection. The large majority of pupils are White British, with around a quarter coming from a cosmopolitan mix of minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language has been rising and is now average. An above average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, mostly for speech, language and communication. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The deputy headteacher has been acting headteacher since September 2011 and a consultant headteacher has joined the school part-time to support the leadership team. Oxhey Wood has an Activemark award and Healthy Schools status. The school shares the site with a separately managed pre-school and a children's centre. These did not form part of this 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?**

**4**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the quality of teaching and to pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. From a generally below-average starting point, they make good progress so that they join Year 1 with skills and capabilities that are broadly in line with those expected for their ages. Progress has mostly been satisfactory in Key Stage 1, with pupils reaching average levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. In 2011, attainment was above average. It is in Key Stage 2 where progress has traditionally slowed. Attainment has been low in two of the past three years and it remains low in the current Year 6, especially in mathematics. Progress is uneven because of variation in the quality of teaching. Although it is only a minority of lessons, there are still some where pupils make inadequate progress. More often than not, this is because teachers set pupils work that is not appropriately challenging. In the large majority of other lessons, where teaching is satisfactory, pupils are not pushed to make sufficient progress to narrow the attainment gap caused by past underachievement.

Nonetheless, this is a school that can point to much success. As one parent wrote, expressing the views of many: 'The school is friendly, approachable and deals with any concerns quickly and thoroughly.' The good arrangements for pupils' care and welfare are much appreciated by parents and carers. They result in pupils who feel happy and secure in school, enabling those with additional learning needs to make better progress than their peers. The good welfare arrangements also contribute to the good personal development of all pupils. There is very little misconduct, but inspectors judge behaviour as only satisfactory because pupils are not always attentive enough in lessons. Where teachers take answers only from those who volunteer, they do not challenge the few who are quietly inattentive and whose learning therefore slows. This can often be girls, and it is girls that, as a group, have done least well in Key Stage 2.

Teaching through topics has made the curriculum interesting for the pupils, and all benefit from the school's impressive musical tradition, so that every child learns an instrument and many are involved in the choir, which continues to be a key

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community link following the school and local community's shared feature roles in *The Choir* BBC television series. The curriculum is satisfactory rather than good because too few cross-curricular opportunities are found for pupils to develop and apply their numeracy skills.

Even though school leadership is currently in a state of transition, with senior staff in temporary positions and other key staff also new to their roles, the leadership and management team has proved effective in identifying and beginning to tackle shortcomings. Leaders acknowledge that their monitoring of lessons has sometimes focused on the features of teaching and not always sharply enough on the progress pupils make. Nevertheless, there is evidence of improvements in teaching and learning during the course of this term as a result of the detailed feedback given to teachers following leaders' lesson observations. Leaders have worked in close partnership with the local authority to build and strengthen their capacity, drawing, for example, on specialist mathematics support to develop the new team leading this key subject. There have been measurable improvements in other important aspects of the school, including attendance which is now average and rising, when previously it was low. These successes, coupled with the school's realistic self-evaluation, show Oxhey Wood's satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

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

- Raise attainment, particularly in mathematics, so that most pupils reach nationally expected levels by the end of Year 6, by:
  - always giving pupils work that is matched to their different capabilities and which challenges and extends them
  - checking on the progress each pupil is making twice-termly rather than through termly progress meetings
  - providing pupils in all classes with clear guidance through marking that shows them the next steps they need to take to improve their work
  - devising more opportunities for pupils to give practical application to their numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in lessons so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - directing questions at girls and boys who are slower to volunteer rather than always taking answers from those who put their hands up
  - making more effective use of 'talk partners' to engage pupils and develop their speaking and listening skills
  - routinely expecting pupils to check and evaluate their own and each other's work, including their spellings, punctuation and grammar
  - recording pupils' feedback responses in lessons so that there is always follow up when a pupil indicates they are unsure about their learning
  - ensuring that leaders' monitoring of lessons is focused on pupils' learning and rates of progress.

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

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Despite pupils’ average attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the Year 2 assessments, attainment is low at the end of Year 6 because pupils have made inadequate progress through Key Stage 2. The school’s progress tracking data show the current Year 6 pupils made faster progress over the past year, but, despite this, only 60% are currently working at age-related expectations in mathematics. It is, particularly, mathematics where boys and, more often, girls have underachieved and where attainment has been low. In this subject, there remain too many lessons where pupils make insufficient progress or where progress, though satisfactory, is not fast enough for pupils to catch up on previously lost ground. Although teachers mostly set different tasks for pupils of different abilities, these are often too similar and so offer insufficient challenge. In a lesson on ‘counting on’, for example, able pupils were simply asked to start counting on in twos from a higher number than was assigned to the least-able. Although the tasks were ostensibly ‘different’, they were not sufficiently matched to pupils’ widely different capabilities. As a result, the pupils themselves described the activity as ‘easy’ and several consequently continued with it at a leisurely pace. Pupils learning English as an additional language include several who join the school partway through their primary education. They are helped to quickly settle and they make rapid progress in their language acquisition and other skills. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from carefully tailored support, with learning targets that are closely matched to their needs and which they, and their parents and carers, share and so work hard to achieve. The attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is in line with that of pupils in similar circumstances nationally.

Pupils readily explain the importance of a healthy diet and regular exercise, and the large majority practise what they preach. They feel safe at school and have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to take on responsibilities, including as play leaders, and they take an interest in the wider community through active fundraising for those ‘less well off than us’ in the Third World, and through their involvement in local activities, including the choir. Although pupils get on well together, develop good teamworking skills and have satisfactory attendance, their weak basic skills, particularly in numeracy, mean they are not sufficiently prepared for the next stage of their education.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</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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<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</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>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers set out learning objectives at the start of lessons, usually with clear success criteria, so pupils know what they should be learning. At the end of a lesson, teachers usually ask pupils to indicate if they feel they have achieved the learning objective. However, this is often signalled with a cursory 'thumbs up' or 'thumbs down', with neither teacher nor a teaching assistant taking a note of which pupils remain unsure about their learning. This limits the opportunity for subsequent follow-up. There have been initiatives aimed at increasing pupils' engagement but these are not always used to best effect. Although teachers regularly ask pupils to discuss ideas with their 'talk partner', they mostly then ask pupils to report back what they told their partner not what their partner told them. This does little to promote or develop pupils' listening skills. There are examples of good marking that shows pupils how to improve their work, and pupils' books show that this is becoming more prevalent. Often, teachers pose questions to pupils who then enter into a dialogue that encourages them to reflect on their work. This is not uniform practice across the school, however. Sometimes praise is too effusive. There is not a routine expectation in every class that pupils check their own or a partner's work, and so pupils continue to make careless errors that could otherwise be avoided. Spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors are not always picked up.

Pupils enjoy the way teachers bring subjects together to add relevance to what they are learning. Many opportunities are found for pupils to use their literacy skills to apply in other subjects what they learn in English. There are fewer similar opportunities to reinforce numeracy. Music continues to be a strength, with pupils also enjoying the range of sports on offer, including some taught by specialist coaches. The impact of the school's good welfare arrangements is evident in the pupils' good personal development and in the better progress made by the pupils who receive extra help with their learning. Year 4 pupils with special educational needs made particularly good progress in a small nurture group, where short well-planned activities kept them on their toes. The same pupils seen the next day in their class had clearly taken on board what they had learnt and were applying it in their classwork. Working in partnership with families, including through regular activities run through the children's centre, helps to smooth children's induction to school life.

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*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Even though school leaders are mainly new to their roles, they have a clear picture of where improvements are needed and they have already begun the process of securing these, drawing well on the support of the local authority. Monitoring of teaching and learning is now more rigorous, with teachers benefiting from detailed feedback that is already driving up improvement in teaching and learning. There is regular tracking of each pupil's progress, although termly meetings have not been frequent enough to ensure that individual underachievement is quickly spotted. Equal opportunities are promoted satisfactorily. The school has had success in raising attainment and rates of progress for pupils in circumstances that make them vulnerable, for pupils with speech and language delay and for the growing number who join the school at an early stage of learning English. However, there is still a gender gap, with more girls than boys among the underachievers.

Governance is satisfactory. Members of the governing body realise that they have, in the past, been overly dependent on the headteacher for information about the school's performance. They now have a far better understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the governing body has already begun to challenge as well as support the school. It has ensured that arrangements for pupils' safeguarding are good because they go beyond regulatory requirements, particularly in relation to the breadth of support given to vulnerable pupils and their families. Local community ties are strong but community cohesion is no better than satisfactory because links farther afield in the United Kingdom and overseas are at an early stage of development.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>



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<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>4</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership ensures that children are well cared for. Strong relationships and the well-organised, stimulating and welcoming environment contribute to children's enthusiastic engagement in Nursery and Reception. Children respond positively to the varied opportunities for exploration and investigation. They mix well and develop good levels of independence, as seen when the children in Nursery went to the outdoor areas on a 'safari'. They thoroughly enjoyed finding the soft toy animals and matching them to the pictures on their worksheet. Squeals of delight indicated their pleasure in learning, so much so that they decided to do the exercise all over again. The adults interact well to support children's learning when they select their own activities, for example extending children's vocabulary as they chose their own picture books to look through. Careful planning maintains a balance between these opportunities and good quality adult-led sessions. Children's progress is tracked rigorously and the information used to plan the next steps in their learning. The indoor and outdoor facilities provide a stimulating environment which enhances all areas of learning. Appropriate emphasis is given to developing children's reading and writing skills, and the teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) supports this well. Children have many opportunities to count and recognise numbers. However, more-able children are not robustly challenged to make the best possible progress and attain more highly.

*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

Parents and carers express positive views about almost all aspects of the school. They especially value the good arrangements for pupils' welfare and safety, and the support given to children to help them settle in quickly when they join the Early Years Foundation Stage. Inspectors judged all of these aspects to be good.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oxhey Wood Primary 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 103 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 318 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	50	47	46	3	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	56	54	46	45	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	51	50	51	50	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	49	47	46	2	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	46	45	52	50	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	42	41	56	54	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	46	52	50	3	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)	33	32	61	59	5	5	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	38	37	58	56	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	33	56	54	8	8	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	38	55	53	5	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	50	49	46	45	5	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	53	51	47	46	3	3	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](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.**

20 October 2011



Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Oxhey Wood Primary School, Watford, WD19 7SL**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school on our recent visit. We were pleased to see how well you all get on together and what a good start the children make in the Nursery and Reception. Your school is not doing as well as it should, however, because your attainment by the end of Year 6 is too low. This is especially the case in mathematics. You are not all making enough progress in lessons. For these reasons, we have given your school a notice to improve and we have suggested ways in which the improvements can be made over the coming year so that you make faster progress in lessons and your attainment in both English and mathematics is at least in line with what is expected nationally. You can all help by always listening as carefully as you can in lessons and by taking care to read and respond to the comments teachers write when they mark your work.

Although there are important points for improvement, we could see that there is much of which your school can be proud. I only heard one of the songs in your singing assembly, but we know that music is particularly strong at Oxhey Wood. You enjoy the way teachers are linking subjects together through topic work. Among the key reasons why so many of you told us that you feel safe and happy in school are the good arrangements for your care and welfare. Those of you who need extra help with your learning have generally made faster progress because of the support you and your families are given.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly on our visit, and our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Selwyn Ward  
Lead inspector

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