

Oakham CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120181
Local Authority	Rutland
Inspection number	379973
Inspection dates	9–10 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Sue Aldridge

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	283
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Tummon
Headteacher	Joan Gibson
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed 16 lessons. Altogether 12 teachers were observed and teaching was seen in all classes. Inspectors met informally with parents and carers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at policies, plans, school records, tracking information and data on pupils' attainment. Questionnaires completed by 58 parents and carers, pupils in Key Stage 2 and staff were scrutinised.

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

- How successfully does the school meet the learning needs of boys, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and higher attainers?
- How successfully are school leaders using their evaluation of the performance of different groups to identify necessary developments and raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics?
- Has the new building and associated development of a federation affected the progress of school improvement in any way?

Information about the school

Oakham CofE Primary School is larger than average. Most pupils are of White British heritage; there are few who speak English as an additional language. There is specially resourced provision for 20 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and consequently the proportion of these pupils is higher than usual. This provision is managed by the school. The majority of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are boys. A high proportion have a statement of special educational needs, mainly for autism, moderate or severe learning difficulties, or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Pupils with additional needs are taught wholly in designated classes, partly in these, or full-time in the main classes. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. A high percentage of pupils join or leave partway through their primary school education, particularly in Key Stage 2.

Since September 2011, the school has moved into new purpose-built accommodation and is in a 'soft federation' with a special school housed in the same building. The headteacher leads both schools and there are two separate governing bodies with a joint committee that oversees the work of the federation. A privately run nursery, The Ark, is also housed in the school building, but was not included in 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Oakham CoE Primary School is a good school. Its greatest strength is the strong vision shared by the headteacher, governing body and staff, which results in an inclusive ethos and a determination to enable all pupils to succeed whatever their needs. In part, this is manifested by a splendid new school building, which is very well adapted to meet the needs of all groups that the school serves. Getting the 'Little Build' project from the governing body's original idea to reality has been the result of a great deal of hard work, particularly in the last three years. Pupils were fully involved in planning for the new school, and are delighted with it, as are the staff and the parents and carers. There is high parental confidence in the school and almost all pupils enjoy attending.

Because good provision is mostly well matched to their needs all groups, including boys and girls, those eligible for free school meals, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their widely varying starting points. The designated provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well integrated and is led and managed well. Pupils who are taught full-time in the designated classes also make good progress, although their attainment generally remains low because of the nature and extent of their learning difficulties. Teaching is good, although there are occasional inconsistencies, particularly in the extent to which teachers plan to meet individual needs, how well they make use of time and teaching assistants' skills, and the quality of feedback given to pupils.

Pupils' outcomes are mostly good, and the extent to which they embrace healthy lifestyles is outstanding. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, contribute particularly well to the school and local communities, acquire enterprise skills and develop their basic skills well, so they are well placed to enter secondary schools when they leave. Staff provide a very high standard of pastoral care to pupils, particularly those whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable. Parents and carers see the staff as 'caring and dedicated'.

The school has a good capacity to improve further. The issues identified at the last inspection have been addressed well, including developing a curriculum that is more enjoyable for pupils. The roles of middle leaders in monitoring and evaluation have been strengthened so that all are fully involved in these activities. As several parents and carers noted, the transition to the new school building has been very well managed. The setting of challenging targets and rigorous monitoring and evaluation

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of pupils' progress have been instrumental in ensuring that pupils continue to make good progress. However, the tracking and evaluation of the progress made by pupils with the lowest starting points is not providing a true picture of this; the setting of realistic targets for this group is recent. While the headteacher and governing body have been much occupied with the new building and matters relating to the federation, other improvements have continued, but evaluation of developments has not been consistently linked to measurable intended outcomes. As a result, the school is not easily able to show the impact of all its improvement work.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make the quality of teaching and learning consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - all lesson planning shows clearly how the needs of pupils of different abilities are to be met throughout the lesson
 - whole-class teaching allows ample time for pupils to complete tasks
 - teaching assistants' skills are used to best effect in every lesson
 - feedback given to pupils always informs them clearly about how they can improve their work.

- Strengthen the effectiveness of self-evaluation by:
 - using national guidance to set realistic and challenging end-of-key stage targets for pupils who are working well below national averages, then tracking and evaluating their progress against these targets
 - identifying measurable success criteria for all planned developments and using these to demonstrate the impact of developments undertaken.

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

Children enter Reception with knowledge and skills that are broadly at the levels expected nationally for their age, although the literacy levels of a significant minority are low. Children get off to a good start and achieve well by Year 6. The quality of learning was typically good in the lessons observed, and school data and the work seen show that attainment is broadly average. However, this is not the full picture. A high proportion of the pupils who have low starting points join the school during Key Stage 2, and most who enter at expected levels attain standards that are above average because they make good progress through both key stages. The school sets challenging targets for all pupils, although realistic target setting for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is at an early stage of development. As a result, the school's tracking misleadingly shows a high proportion of pupils who are not making 'expected' progress. In reality, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are met well.

Pupils' behaviour is good, and on occasions it is outstanding. The school welcomes those who have been excluded from other schools or are at risk of this. These pupils

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make good progress in improving their behaviour and emotional adjustment. In lessons, pupils show interest and enthusiasm for learning and are keen to answer questions and talk with partners about topics so that they learn from one another. They listen carefully to staff and to one another, and show respect for and understanding of those with differences. They support one another in class. When working independently, they do so sensibly and complete a good volume of work. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities co-operate well with the adults or other pupils who support them. They are not over-reliant on adult support because staff ensure that they do as much themselves as possible. Many benefit from the role models provided by other pupils.

Pupils’ social development is particularly strong. All develop their oral communication skills well and standards of speaking are high for many. There are good opportunities for all pupils to shine. During the inspection, an excellent assembly featured a very professional presentation by one of the designated classes that showed the challenging outdoor activities they had enjoyed during a recent residential school journey. Pupils develop a good understanding of other cultures and customs and the school is a harmonious and cohesive community. Older pupils actively promote healthy living in their roles as Olympic Ambassadors and by running the school’s Fair Trade tuck shop.

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	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
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	3
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Key strengths of teaching include good working relationships with pupils, and secure

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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management of their behaviour. In some cases, teachers have excellent rapport with pupils who have found learning difficult in other schools, and this supports pupils' learning well. Teaching makes effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) to present information, enabling pupils to interact with it and learn at home. Resources are good and are generally used well to support learning. Tasks and resources are varied to suit pupils' needs, but occasionally this does not go far enough. At its best, there is suitable work provided for those who are particularly advanced, such as algebraic equations for those in Year 6 who have already reached the higher levels. Most lessons proceed at a good pace although occasionally, whole-class teaching leaves too little time for pupils, particularly the most able, to tackle independent tasks. This also means that the skills of teaching assistants are not always used to best effect. Teachers usually give oral feedback and mark pupils' work thoroughly, but this does vary, so that a few pupils receive justified praise but few pointers for improving their work. Nonetheless, most pupils are aware of what their learning targets are.

Skilled teaching for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is supplemented by good quality support from teaching assistants across the school. Staff successfully use approaches such as signing and symbols with text to support pupils' communication skills, as well as visual timetables to alert pupils to changes of activity. Good quality individual education plans support those with more pronounced difficulties, and targets from these appear in lesson planning. All pupils benefit from suitable interventions or additional programmes, such as booster classes and speech therapy. Provision has been considerably enhanced by the new accommodation. The hygiene room, hoists and tracking in classrooms, the hydrotherapy/swimming pool and sensory room support pupils' needs well.

By linking subjects together and taking account of pupils' interests, the curriculum has become more appealing. Literacy and ICT skills are developed particularly well through the topics. However, the school has yet to formally evaluate this innovation, so its full impact is not yet evident. Extra-curricular clubs offer a good range of sporting activities and opportunities for pupils to develop their interests; visitors, visits and school residential journeys add enjoyment and help to bring learning to life.

Pupils are well supported in making the move from one class to the next, as well as preparing to leave school. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are consistently applied and effective. The school is successful in encouraging attendance, although this has not been better than average for the last few years.

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	2

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relevant, through partnerships	
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and governing body work well together to articulate high expectations that are shared by the staff. Leaders use data effectively to diagnose strengths and weaknesses, but are not always able to show the impact of developments undertaken because planning does not consistently include measurable success criteria. Staff are held to account for the progress that pupils make. Teaching is monitored regularly with a particular focus in mind, and evaluated in terms of its effectiveness in promoting pupils’ progress. Despite clarity about what is expected, full consistency across the school has not yet been achieved.

The governing body contributes strongly to the school’s strategic direction, and through its committees keeps the work of the school under review. Its members are most supportive, visiting the school regularly and leading some extra-curricular activities. They take part in the processes of development planning and self-evaluation but in recent years, while several have been active in managing the building project and preparing for federation, they have not systematically checked that all policies are up to date. They ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and reflect good practice. Child protection arrangements are good and staff are well trained in safeguarding matters. For instance, key staff are trained to carry out physical intervention and those who work with the youngest have training in paediatric first aid. Suitable checks are carried out on staff when they are recruited and these are correctly recorded.

The strong commitment to inclusion is reflected in the careful checking that pupils in all groups perform equally well. Suitable action is taken to ensure that any gaps in achievement are closed. For example, provision to encourage boys’ writing has been enhanced, and this has had a positive effect on their attainment. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Planning to develop this area has lacked detail about intended outcomes and so little evaluation has been carried out of the impact of the actions taken to promote it. Nonetheless, related outcomes are good and there is a strong impetus for the school to play a central role in overall community provision. Staff share their skills and expertise, such as in assessment, with other schools in the area and suitable further work is planned, for example with partners such as the children’s centre.

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	2

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school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Preparation for starting school effectively involves children and their parents and carers, so children settle well. Because the provision is good, children make good progress in all areas of learning. By the end of Reception, they achieve particularly well in speaking and listening, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development. The curriculum reflects children’s interests so they are keen to learn. The new accommodation offers far more opportunities for learning outside. Staff are taking advantage of this, but as yet not all areas of learning are equally well represented indoors and out. Staff set challenging targets for children. Robust assessment is used well to plan a good range of appealing activities, most of which are chosen by children. These enable children to practise and extend their skills. Children develop good independence skills, learn about hygiene and how to stay safe, and enjoy physical activity. Sessions led by adults are taught well, and children’s different needs are met well. There is a good range of ways of involving parents and carers in children’s learning, and each child has an electronic ‘learning journal’ which is readily accessible to parents and carers.

Leadership of the provision is good. The leader has built an enthusiastic team of staff. Evaluation is used effectively to identify further developments. For instance, leaders recognise the need to work more extensively with pre-school settings to boost children’s early literacy skills on entry, and liaison has already begun.

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

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In a relatively low return of completed questionnaires, parents and carers were generally very positive about the school. Those who spoke informally to an inspector were similarly positive. Through the questionnaires, high proportions indicated that their children enjoy coming and are confident that children are safe at school. A small but significant proportion raised concerns about the information they are given about children's progress and timely communication between school and home. A similar minority were not happy with opportunities for them to support their child's learning. Inspectors looked into these concerns and judged that the school has a good range of ways in which it communicates with parents and carers about events and about children's progress. Although there is a strong reliance on electronic communication, almost all parents and carers have agreed to the use of this method, and those who have not are provided with paper communications. Similarly, there are good opportunities for parents and carers to be involved in helping their children to learn through electronic means.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oakham CofE 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 58 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 283 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	84	9	16	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	86	8	14	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	36	62	15	26	6	10	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	53	23	40	4	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	36	62	19	33	3	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	26	45	25	43	7	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	50	24	41	2	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)	31	53	20	34	4	7	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	33	57	20	34	4	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	45	28	48	3	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	48	22	38	2	3	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	33	57	24	41	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	46	79	11	19	0	0	1	2

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 8 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.



11 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oakham CofE Primary School, Oakham, LE15 6GY

Thank you for welcoming us to your 'new' school and for telling us how you are finding things now that you have moved in and settled down.

We found that yours is a good school. The new building is splendid and you have played an important part in deciding what it will be like. We were impressed with how well you adopt healthy lifestyles, eating and drinking healthily at school, taking plenty of physical exercise and spreading the word as Olympic Ambassadors and through the Fair Trade tuck shop. Another really positive thing about the school is the way the headteacher and governing body have worked together to achieve the building of the new school. We were pleased to hear that most of you feel safe in school. You do a good deal to help your school community and those in the local area. You also make good progress in your basic skills, as well as learning enterprise skills so you are well prepared to go on to secondary school. You told us how much you enjoy school and that you find topics interesting and enjoyable. The staff take good care of you. They guide and support you well. We were particularly pleased to see that the children who do not find it easy to learn are included well in the school's life and activities, and that everyone gets on well together.

The headteacher, governing body and staff work hard to improve the school. The teaching in most lessons is good, but we have asked them to make sure that it is good or better in every lesson. For those pupils who find learning particularly difficult, we have asked staff to set targets that the pupils are more likely to achieve and to follow their progress and see how well they do at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The staff are also going to set targets in their plans for development, so that they will be able to show whether the work they have done has had a good effect.

You can help the school to improve by attending as often as you can. Have a happy Christmas.

Yours sincerely

Sue Aldridge
Lead inspector

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