

Oak Meadow Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	104341
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	377068
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2012
Lead inspector	Declan McCarthy

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	351
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Walklett
Headteacher	Sara Morris
Date of previous school inspection	26 March 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Declan McCarthy

Additional inspector

Rowena Green

Additional inspector

Derek Gardiner

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Eighteen part lessons, taught by 15 teachers, were observed, six of which were observed jointly with individual members of the senior leadership team. Informal discussions took place and meetings were held with a few parents and small groups of pupils. Meetings were also held with senior leaders, subject co-ordinators and a few members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including school improvement planning, minutes of meetings, policies and procedures for safeguarding and samples of pupils' work. The responses to questionnaires returned by pupils and 75 parents were also scrutinised. None was returned by staff.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school situated on the outskirts of Wolverhampton. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also above average. The school meets the government's current floor standard for primary schools, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school runs the 'Funsters' after-school club which is managed by the governing body and was part of this inspection. Since the last inspection there have been significant changes. The school has recently moved into new purpose-built premises. The deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher were appointed shortly after the last inspection. The school holds the Sportsmark award and Healthy Schools status.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school which has made good improvement since the last inspection. It is not yet outstanding because a small proportion of teaching is still satisfactory, which slows the learning and progress of a few pupils.
- Achievement throughout the school is good. Pupils make good progress across the school from their below-average starting points to reach broadly average standards in English and mathematics. They make outstanding progress in reading to reach above average attainment by the end of Year 6. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress.
- Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and relationships with pupils are strong. Teachers provide good feedback to pupils in lessons and when they mark pupils' work. They nearly always use assessment well to match learning tasks to different levels of ability, but sometimes the match is not as close. They usually challenge pupils' thinking; however on a few occasions, there are missed opportunities to do so.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils, parents and carers agree and believe that bullying is rare. Pupils have good relationships with each other and positive attitudes to learning.
- Through the effective management of performance, all leaders have been successful in raising pupils' attainment and closing the gap in pupils' performance since the last inspection. Good leadership of teaching has raised its quality from satisfactory to good and there has been significant improvement in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This was inadequate at the time of the last inspection and is now good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Eliminate teaching that is less than good by:
 - ensuring teachers closely match learning tasks to the different abilities and aptitudes of pupils
 - ensuring teachers take every opportunity to challenge pupils' thinking in lessons to extend their learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire rightly think pupils are making good progress. The achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils throughout the school is good. All groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, girls and boys achieve equally well. Learning and progress seen in lessons and in pupils' work is generally good. Pupils concentrate well in lessons, listen carefully and follow instructions. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs generally make good progress because their learning is supported well by teaching assistants, who develop pupils' understanding and skilfully clarify and address any misconceptions.

Children enter the Reception class with attainment below the expectations for their ages particularly in communication, language and literacy. They respond well to the good teaching and good indoor and outdoor learning opportunities and are now reaching average standards by the end of the Reception Year. Pupils throughout the school make good progress in writing and mathematics. Reading standards are currently above average in Year 2. Pupils develop good knowledge and skills in the use of letter sounds to read unfamiliar words. National assessment results over the last three years show that from below average starting points, by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils reach broadly average attainment in writing and mathematics. Pupils make outstanding progress in reading to reach above average standards by the end of Year 6 because there is a strong focus on teaching letter sounds and on guided reading.

Learning in lessons is usually good and sometimes outstanding. In a mathematics lesson, all pupils made outstanding progress in the precise use of the language of probability to accurately predict the most likely and least likely outcomes, sometimes working in pairs, sometimes as a whole group or independently, with great enthusiasm. In an English lesson, pupils enjoyed the atmosphere created by eerie sound effects and stark images of a prisoner in chains, to create interesting similes and metaphors in writing a stanza for a horror poem. On a very small number of occasions pupils of different abilities were given the same tasks to complete. Consequently, a few less-able pupils found the learning difficult and some more-able pupils completed the task early; opportunities were missed to extend their learning further. Despite these examples of relative shortcomings, all pupils typically make good progress. In the 'Funsters' after school activities and in the lunchtime computer

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animation club pupils were engaged in a range of games and activities such as making computer generated animations, which stimulated their enthusiasm for learning.

Quality of teaching

Most parents, carers and pupils who completed questionnaires agree they are taught well. The school has an accurate view that teaching is good overall, yet variable. Most teaching seen was good and sometimes it was outstanding; only on a few occasions was teaching satisfactory. There has been good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, when it was satisfactory. Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage are now more skilled in developing children's language and literacy and their social interaction skills, through a well-balanced range of teacher-led and child-initiated indoor and outdoor learning activities. This stimulates children's enthusiasm and enjoyment for learning.

Teachers' good subject knowledge ensures pupils acquire new skills quickly. Good feedback in lessons on how well pupils are doing and in marking ensures that pupils always know their next steps for learning against their individual challenging targets. In most lessons, teachers ensure that tasks are matched well to the different abilities of pupils. Pupils' learning is consolidated and extended through regular homework and in discussion, parents and carers expressed that they are pleased with the homework set. Teachers use a variety of activities and learning resources effectively, especially information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils sometimes work in pairs, sharing their ideas, in small groups researching specific topics safely on the internet or consolidating their learning individually. For example in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, lower attaining pupils learned to share objects equally by making two castles and then sharing six flags equally between them. With the skilful use of support they accomplished this well and at the end of the lesson they were able to explain the concept of equal sharing. Other pupils worked in pairs in sharing out red and yellow counters while others worked independently using an ICT programme to share out equal numbers of cattle in three fields. As a result, all groups of pupils made equally good progress.

Teachers develop pupils' communication, literacy and numeracy skills well within the planned curriculum. For example, in a topic on the impact of the Japanese tsunami, numeracy was promoted by consideration of the Richter scale for measuring the intensity of an earthquake. Teachers provided good opportunities for pupils to use ICT to research earthquakes. Literacy was promoted well as pupils wrote descriptive and vivid accounts of the impact of the disaster on local communities. There are some examples of teaching that really challenges pupils' thinking. For example, a group of pupils were asked to use a video camera to record a scientific investigation for presentation to their peers, and this meant they had to think for themselves about the most important features of it. On other occasions opportunities to challenge or question pupils more deeply are missed.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Teachers ensure

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that pupils abide by clear moral principles, when considering the dangers of drugs and alcohol abuse, the risks of smoking to health and the safe use of the internet and mobile telephones. Frequent opportunities for reflection in lessons and in assemblies and for shared and independent learning promote good spiritual and social development.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour and safety in lessons and around the school are good. Outstanding behaviour was occasionally seen during the inspection, for example in assembly and in a few lessons where teaching was outstanding. Nearly all parents and carers believe that behaviour and safety are good, and feel that bullying is rare and, when it occurs, it is dealt with very effectively. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and know how to prevent it and the steps to take should it ever occur. They are kind and considerate to one another, with older pupils taking responsibility for looking after younger ones as playground helpers. Pupils manage risks well, moving around the school safely, using the internet safely and playing safely outside at break times and lunchtime. Children in the Reception class learn and play safely together and their behaviour is good. There have been no exclusions in the school and good promotion of attendance and punctuality is leading to a steady rise in attendance each term and punctual starts to lessons.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides strong leadership with a clear sense of direction for raising achievement and school improvement, with good support from the senior leadership team. Together, they have developed middle leadership well. Subject coordinators closely monitor pupils' achievement through regular progress meetings and assessing the impact of teaching on pupils' learning within their subjects. As a result of the rigorous management of performance and monitoring of teaching, together with effective professional development, there has been a steady fall in the proportion of teaching that is less than good and a corresponding rise in outstanding teaching term by term. The significant improvements since the last inspection demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve further.

Members of the governing body are regular visitors and provide good support and challenge for the school, through, for example, visiting science, mathematics and ICT lessons to see how well pupils are engaged in learning. They ensure statutory requirements are met, including those concerning the safeguarding of pupils. Procedures for vetting staff and visitors are rigorous, all training is up to date and the school provides high levels of supervision at all times to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. Equality is promoted well and this is clearly reflected in the school's effectiveness in narrowing the gap between lower ability pupils' performance and the national average.

The good curriculum is relevant to the needs of pupils and provides imaginative learning opportunities through good use of resources, particularly ICT. Leaders have

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ensured that spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well across the curriculum. For example, in a geography topic on St Lucia, pupils developed a deep understanding and awareness of the sense of fairness and the implications of fair trade, through the consideration of issues of low pay and comparing this to the historical impact of slavery on the sale of cheap goods.

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	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



28 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oak Meadow Primary School, Wolverhampton, WV11 2QQ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We were very impressed with your behaviour and your singing in assembly and particularly enjoyed watching your performance of 'Oliver'. Thank you for sharing your views with us and for telling us about your school in discussion and through the questionnaire. We agree with you, and your parents and carers, that yours is a good school. We found that you are making good progress in your learning and your achievement is good because teaching is good. Teachers provide interesting activities for you, particularly through the way you use computers. They tell you how well you are doing and show you how to improve your learning. Your behaviour is good and you know how to stay safe. You are polite, kind and considerate to others. Your school is well led and managed by your headteacher and staff. Members of the governing body are regular visitors to school and look closely at how well you are doing.

To make your school even better, I have asked leaders and managers to make sure that all teaching in the school is at least good. I know you all learn differently from one another and so I have asked the staff to make sure you are given different tasks which are exactly right, not too difficult and not too simple. I have also asked them to look for opportunities to make you think even harder. You can help by telling your teachers if the tasks are too easy or too hard.

Keep doing your best.

Yours sincerely

Declan McCarthy
Lead inspector

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