

Ocklynge Junior School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	114462
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	395465
Inspection dates	17–18 May 2012
Lead inspector	Robin Gaff

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	840
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Cranch
Headteacher	Mark Trott
Date of previous school inspection	30 September 2008
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Age group	7–11
Inspection date(s)	17–18 May 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Robin Gaff	Additional Inspector
Sarah Beales	Additional Inspector
Sandra Herring	Additional Inspector
Peter Thrussell	Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors watched 28 part lessons taught by 27 teachers, observing 2 lessons jointly with senior leaders, as well as making a number of shorter visits to classrooms in order to observe groups of pupils at work. Inspectors talked to pupils and looked at their work. They held meetings with groups of pupils, school leaders and representatives of the governing body. The inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. In addition, they reviewed documents provided by the school, including safeguarding and attendance records, monitoring files and planning documents. They considered questionnaire responses from pupils and staff, as well as 270 completed questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

Information about the school

Ocklynge Junior is much larger than the average primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much lower than that found nationally. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The main groups represented are of pupils who have specific or moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. Since its last inspection, it has been re-awarded Healthy School and International School 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 where pupils achieve well because teaching is predominantly good. The school is not yet outstanding because teaching does not enable pupils to achieve outstandingly well.
- Pupils make good progress overall because they are taught well and the school uses its well-developed assessment procedures very effectively to identify and support those pupils who are at risk of underachieving. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well because of the effective support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants.
- Teaching is typically good. Teachers relate well to, and have high expectations of, pupils, and most provide a good range of activities in their lessons. Occasionally they do not plan tasks with sufficient challenge for all abilities, and they do not always ensure that pupils know what they need to do to improve their work and reach their targets.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, and their positive attitudes contribute well to their learning. They feel very safe because they have few concerns about bullying and report that it is dealt with quickly and effectively when it does occur. They gain an excellent understanding of different cultures through the school’s extensive links with schools in other countries.
- Leadership and management are good. Leaders have successfully addressed the weaknesses which have led, in the past, to some pupils underachieving. The school promotes pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely successfully. The leadership of teaching and the management of performance, including professional development for teachers, are effective. Leaders provide good opportunities for teachers to share effective practice. They do not always focus sharply enough in lesson observations on specific weaknesses, which restricts pupils’ capacity to make outstanding progress.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By December 2012, accelerate pupils' progress in lessons by ensuring that all teachers:
 - provide all pupils with tasks that are specifically matched to their interests and abilities, to ensure that they are challenged sufficiently
 - give pupils sufficiently detailed written feedback to enable them to know the next steps they need to take to improve their work.
- Make more effective use of lesson observations to identify and address those features of teaching which are preventing pupils from making outstanding progress.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils make good progress from their broadly average starting points. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 has risen steadily in recent years and is now above average in writing and mathematics, and well above expected levels in reading. Pupils read accurately and fluently, and with an obvious sense of enjoyment, and develop good writing and mathematical skills. Regular and thorough assessment of pupils' attainment leads to individual weaknesses being quickly identified and addressed effectively. There are no significant gaps in attainment between different groups. Those who speak English as an additional language, as well as pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, achieve as well as their peers. Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs make good progress because they receive effective support from teachers and teaching assistants, which enables them to take a full part in classroom activities.

Pupils achieve well in a range of different subjects and disciplines. They enjoy communicating in Spanish in lessons and develop their writing skills by exchanging letters with pupils from their link school in Spain. The many examples of pupils' high quality art work on display around the school demonstrate pupils' well-developed skills in this area. The school uses information and communication technology facilities well to enhance pupils' learning. For example, Year 3 pupils developed good thinking skills by comparing two mathematics programs in order to establish which one helped them to learn most quickly, and were able to justify their choices sensibly and confidently.

In the classroom, pupils display positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to respond to questions and to volunteer ideas of their own. Their good social development is evident from their ability to work cooperatively together and to listen to, and learn from, one another as well as from their teachers. When learning is slower, this is usually because pupils are not being given tasks which challenge all of them sufficiently in order to enable them to reach their full potential.

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Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agree that their children are making good progress, and inspectors' findings endorse this view. The skills and aptitudes pupils develop ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of teaching

Teachers have high expectations of pupils in terms both of work and behaviour, and establish an orderly and purposeful atmosphere in their classrooms. This promotes pupils' social development well and enables lessons to proceed at a good pace. Teachers have good levels of expertise in, and are enthusiastic about, the subjects they teach, and succeed in communicating their enthusiasm to pupils. They plan a good range of activities in lessons and include sufficient opportunities for pupils to learn for themselves and from each other by, for example, working on pair and group tasks. The teaching of reading is particularly effective because teachers make good use of a range of suitable resources and activities, modelling good practice for pupils by, for example, reading aloud accurately and with expression. They also use a variety of questioning techniques effectively to check pupils' understanding and to extend their learning.

For instance, in an outstanding English lesson, Year 4 pupils made excellent progress in developing their communication skills in preparing and making presentations about various gadgets they had devised. The teacher made sure that the pupils had a very clear understanding of the key features of persuasive writing. She carefully monitored the progress of different groups, asking well-directed questions which challenged pupils to develop their ideas. Pupils with special educational needs were given specially adapted materials and individual support, which enabled them to participate fully in the activity and make as much progress as their peers. In a small minority of lessons, however, teachers provide all the pupils, inappropriately, with the same tasks without modifying them to cater for pupils' different levels of attainment or their interests, limiting the progress of those who find the work either too easy or too hard.

Teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly and accurately, and provide pupils with feedback which ensures that they know how well they are doing. Teachers do not always include sufficiently detailed written comments in their marking to enable pupils to know the next steps they need to take to consolidate their learning and to improve their work.

Most pupils, in meetings with inspectors and in their questionnaire responses, expressed positive opinions about their lessons and the help they receive from their teachers. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers believe that their children are taught well, and inspectors' findings support these views.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Taking into account a wide range of evidence, including pupils' opinions and comments as well as those of parents and carers, inspectors judged that behaviour and the extent to which pupils feel safe in school are typically good. A small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about bullying or behaviour in class but inspectors found little evidence to support this. Pupils behave responsibly in corridors, the dining hall and play areas. In assemblies, pupils listened attentively to a visitor who explained the role and functions of a national charity, and responded in ways which showed their maturity and their excellent moral development. Pupils have good opportunities to develop leadership and team-working skills, for example as members of the school council or as sports captains.

Pupils behave sensibly and cooperatively in lessons, where they work purposefully in whole class, group and individual activities, requiring very few reminders to maintain their level of focus. Occasionally, their attention flags when activities do not challenge them appropriately, which limits their engagement and active participation. Pupils report that they feel very safe in school. They show a well-informed understanding of different types of bullying, including those related to prejudice and misuse of the internet, but have very few concerns about it in school because incidences are rare and are dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff.

The school has developed consistent and effective systems for promoting good behaviour and attendance. The number of pupils who have to be excluded is low, and leaders can point to examples of steps they have taken which have resulted in significant improvement for those concerned. Pupils' attendance is above average.

Leadership and management

School leaders have high expectations of staff and of pupils, which they have succeeded in communicating to them and which are widely understood and shared. They have established good links with parents and carers, who are highly supportive of the school, as well as with a range of outside bodies, including local secondary schools. Together with the governing body, they are strongly committed to ensuring that the school continues to provide a high standard of care, as well as a very broad range of opportunities for all its pupils. Middle leaders are enthusiastic about their role in helping to improve the quality of provision, and are keen to develop their own practice and to support colleagues in developing theirs.

Leaders' successful promotion of equality of opportunity is evident in the way in which variations in performance between different groups have been effectively addressed. The school is an inclusive and harmonious community, and there is no evidence of any discrimination. The governing body provides an effective link with parents and carers and with local organisations, and its membership includes a good range of expertise and experience. Members know the school well, and are prepared to hold leaders to account as well as to support them. They also ensure that arrangements for safeguarding pupils, including the vetting of staff appointments

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and up-to-date child protection training, are robust. Leaders closely monitor pupils' academic progress and regularly observe lessons. They understand what constitutes good and outstanding teaching, and have improved its quality in areas where they had identified that pupils were achieving less well, including in mathematics. They have not focused strongly enough on the extent of pupils' progress when evaluating teaching in order to use the results of their observations to raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding.

The broad and balanced curriculum provides pupils with a good range of experiences and contributes well to the school's excellent promotion of pupils' spiritual and cultural development. This is particularly evident in the very strong impact which the school's links with institutions in Spain, Egypt, India and Jamaica has on pupils' thorough understanding and appreciation of different ways of life. Pupils also benefit from a wide variety of enrichment and extra-curricular activities, including many opportunities to develop their musical and other artistic talents.

School leaders' accurate self-evaluation, as well as their success in remedying weaknesses they have identified and in raising pupils' levels of attainment, indicate that the school has the capacity for further improvement.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.

21 May 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Ocklynge Junior School, Eastbourne BN20 8XN

Thank you very much for being so welcoming and helpful to the inspection team when we visited your school recently. Thank you, too, for filling in the questionnaire. The purpose of this letter is to tell you about what we found.

Yours is a good school. You told us that you feel very safe there because there is little bullying and when it does occur the school deals with it well. You behave sensibly and cooperatively in lessons, and around and outside the school. You have excellent opportunities to learn about different ways of life from the pupils in your partner schools in Spain, Egypt, India and Jamaica. We were very much impressed by the displays of your art work around the school, and by the way many of you enthusiastically take part in musical and sporting activities.

You make good progress and reach standards which are above average by the time you leave, and the school prepares you well for the next stage of your education. You work hard in class and get on well with your teachers, and you say that they help you a lot. The teachers give you a good variety of things to do in lessons, but tasks do not always match closely enough your different interests and abilities. You are given some good advice in some of the teachers' marking, but some is not so helpful.

The headteacher, all the staff and the governing body want to make the school even better. To help them to do this, we have asked them to make sure all the teachers include activities in their lessons which fully meet your different needs and keep you interested all the time. We have also asked them to make sure that all the teachers give you more information about what you need to do improve your work.

You can help by telling your teachers what you think would help you to learn more quickly and make lessons even more interesting.

We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Robin Gaff
Lead inspector

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