

# The Oaks Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	131169
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	381312
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Sheila Browning

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	380
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Lavender
<b>Headteacher</b>	Penny Forbes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25–26 November 2008
<b>School address</b>	Loppets Road Tilgate Crawley RH10 5DP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01293 527473
<b>Fax number</b>	01293 538323
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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	23–24 May 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	381312



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Sheila Browning

Additional Inspector

Cyndi Millband

Additional Inspector

Roger Parry

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 22 lessons or part lessons taught by 19 different teachers which totalled approximately 10 hours. This included dual observations conducted with the headteacher and senior members of staff. Inspectors held discussions with groups of learners, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at development planning, the school's web-site, self-evaluation information showing pupils' progress, teachers' lesson planning, and pupils' work. In addition the inspectors took account of 96 parental questionnaires along with those of pupils and 33 staff questionnaires.

## Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. Most pupils are White British and a small proportion are from Pakistani and Indian heritages. Few pupils speak English as an additional language or are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below that seen nationally. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. The Oaks Nursery provides full day care for three and four year olds; this and a breakfast club are managed by the governing body. There are more boys than girls in five out of the seven year groups. The school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery and two Reception classes. The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards for attainment and progress expected by the government. The school has a number of awards, for example Healthy Schools accreditation, Activemark and Sportsmark and an Eco award. In September 2012, the school will convert to academy status in partnership with one secondary and five other primary schools in the local area.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because there are a few inconsistencies in teaching quality and the progress made by pupils, especially in mathematics in Key Stage 2 and boys' writing at Key Stage 1.
- Children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with skills much lower than expected for their age. They get off to a good start within a stimulating environment. This good progress continues so they achieve well and reach above average attainment at the end of Year 6. Efforts to improve writing and mathematics show good impact but are not fully embedded.
- Teaching is typically good and is occasionally outstanding. Senior leaders acknowledge that there is still more to do to ensure best practice is shared to further improve teaching quality, help boys to use a wider range of vocabulary and become confident writers in Key Stage 1, and focus even more on problem solving activities in mathematics in Key Stage 2. Teachers use the creative curriculum most effectively to develop pupils' basic skills through exciting topics.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are typically good. Attendance is above average. Pupils from all backgrounds and abilities feel safe and integrate well into school life because of good leadership and very good care from staff.
- The school's leaders and the governing body are ambitious for the school and take effective steps to improve further, shown by the impact of a recent reading, writing and mathematics focus. The leadership of teaching and performance management targets for staff have improved teaching quality over time and are securing better achievement. Activities to monitor and evaluate the school's effectiveness are comprehensive. Excellent partnerships with parents, carers, schools, the community and other specialist services promote pupils' good spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal

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development very well.

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

- Raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress even further by:
  - embedding boys' use of a wider range of vocabulary when writing and encouraging them to be more confident writers in Key Stage 1
  - using more active learning and problem solving activities in mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Ensure that all teaching matches the quality of the best by extending the opportunities for teachers to plan, observe and reflect with colleagues.

### **Main report**

#### **Achievement of pupils**

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a positive start to their learning in the Nursery and Reception classes. They make good progress from their much lower starting points in aspects of communication, language and literacy, personal and social development and knowledge and understanding of the world. This is because they are nurtured sensitively so that they flourish, and learn and play together and independently with enjoyment. They concentrate well when working with adults, especially when learning is imaginative and fun. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is fostered well through role play such as when searching for Princess Goldilocks's lost throne, building her a castle or watering the fruit and vegetables they have grown. Children develop their knowledge of simple letters and sounds (phonics) while describing and writing about their superheroes. They developed a good understanding of mathematical shapes and measurement when making a car for Batman.

In Years 1 to 6, pupils are eager learners and are proud of their well-researched and well-presented individual learning journals on topics ranging from I'm a Survivor to The North West American Indians. Pupils learn particularly well when they are actively involved and tasks are interesting and well matched to their needs. Pupils are encouraged to talk about and share their ideas before writing and this is at the root of the improvement in their writing skills. A good example of this was when Year 2 used magnifiers to decipher a tiny letter asking for help and information about mini-beasts from imaginary little people who live in the school grounds called Oaklings. Pupils went on a fact-finding mini-beast trail and imagined how the Oaklings might feel. This increased their motivation and the quality of writing with sentences such as 'The fly seemed as big as a bird' and 'The swaying grass towered above'.

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Pupils build on their good progress so that by Key Stage 1, attainment has improved and is in line with national averages, including in reading. By the end of Key Stage 2, school data and inspection evidence indicate attainment has risen to above national averages, including in reading. Pupils' progress has accelerated rapidly in English and mathematics where writing and pupils' ability to use their mathematical skills to solve problems has been a focus for improvement. Although gaps in performance are narrowing rapidly compared with all pupils nationally, the impact of this work is still embedding in terms of encouraging boys in Key Stage 1 to use a wider range of vocabulary and to become more confident writers. Occasionally, pupils in Key Stage 2 do not apply their mathematical skills securely when problem solving. Different groups of pupils make the same, good progress overall. Well-targeted intervention and support help disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who are from minority ethnic origins. Inspection findings confirm the views expressed in the parental questionnaire saying that children are making good progress.

**Quality of teaching**

Teaching is typically good. The best teaching observed was characterised by stimulating, challenging and exciting lesson activities with good links to previous learning and well-targeted questions to assess the knowledge and skills of individual pupils. Occasionally, teachers miss opportunities for older pupils to apply their mathematical skills in practical problem solving tasks and work sampling shows that in Key Stage 1, boys' use of vocabulary is somewhat limited and opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage them to be more confident writers. Pupils enjoy learning because lessons are interesting and generally move at a good pace. For example in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, the teacher used lots of different resources and practical mathematical challenges to build on pupils' understanding of three-dimensional shapes and their properties. The teacher's interventions were well judged and promoted higher learning at a brisk pace. In a Year 5 English lesson, about using connectives, the teacher used video clips of life in a spacecraft and challenged pupils to explore and share their ideas before writing; this particularly appealed to the boys. Marking of pupils' work and targets provide clear steps to help pupils improve.

Teaching makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development especially in devising group activities, expectations of behaviour and in seeking pupils' views on the best ways of working. Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to pupils' learning and progress, especially for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Pupils' literacy skills are promoted successfully through the curriculum. The teaching of the sounds that individual and combinations of letters make is having a positive impact especially for younger pupils. Pupils read with enjoyment and confidence and use an appropriate range of strategies to access different kinds of texts. The broad and enriched curriculum promotes pupils' personal qualities very well, as they explore viewpoints on moral issues, values such as respect, and are given many opportunities to work collaboratively. Almost all parents and carers responding to the questionnaire said

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their children were well taught. Inspection evidence confirms this.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils are friendly, courteous and responsive. Behaviour in lessons and throughout the school is good over time. Even on the few occasions when activities meet their needs less effectively, they behave well and maintain their efforts. Most say behaviour is typically good. The school's behaviour records confirm this picture. Despite a very few parental concerns about bullying, which inspectors investigated, pupils themselves say this is rare and that it tends to be name-calling and is dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils know about e-safety and different types of bullying, such as the potential for cyber-bullying. Pupils say they love school, as reflected in their high attendance, high levels of involvement in all that the school offers and through 'Pupil Voice'. Pupils in need of any extra support are very well cared for and the school makes excellent use of support of other agencies. Almost all parents and carers who returned the questionnaire indicated that their children feel safe in school and this is confirmed by discussions with pupils. Inspection evidence supports these views.

## **Leadership and management**

The commitment of the headteacher and the senior leaders to achieving the best for the pupils is summed up well by the school's shared vision, 'Roots to grow and wings to fly; success and confidence for all'. Leaders ensure the school is outward-looking, as shown in the excellent partnerships with parents and carers, local schools, the community and other specialist agencies. Involvement in Family Learning, parental workshops on 'Keeping up with the children in both English and mathematics' and the school's website all help parents and carers to support their children's learning. Monitoring and evaluation activities are effectively delegated to senior and middle leaders. Good subject leadership and professional development have successfully improved the teaching of English and mathematics, although improvements are not yet fully embedded so not all teaching is of the highest quality.

Teamwork is strong at all levels, and while there are many effective opportunities for professional development, the school is aware of the need to tailor this more individually to sustain and improve teaching quality even further. The governing body is actively involved in the school and plays a strong role in shaping its strategic direction. Strengths and areas for development are known and understood, and are being effectively tackled. The school makes excellent use of the extensive grounds' facilities and resources, for example interactive boards, to motivate pupils' learning. The Nursery and popular breakfast club ensure children get a good start to their learning. Through the broad and well-enriched curriculum, and its focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, pupils' academic and personal development is very well promoted. The school also has several awards reflecting the quality and enrichment of the creative curriculum. These factors all demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve further.

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The school's procedures for safeguarding are good and meet requirements. Similarly, the school values all of its pupils equally and is committed to eradicating any discrimination, resulting in achievement gaps narrowing quickly. Support for specific groups of pupils, particularly those disabled and with special educational needs, promotes similar progress for all effectively. Such provision is a real strength of the school. Almost all of the parents and carers who made their views known to the inspection team were very positive about the school and almost all would recommend the school to others. Many commented on how appreciative they were of the school's work.



## 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](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.

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.**



25 May 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of The Oaks Primary School, Crawley, RH10 5DP**

Thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We were impressed with your politeness and good behaviour. We agree with you and your parents and carers that The Oaks is a good school. These are the main reasons why we thought your school was good.

- Children get off to a good start in their learning in the well-run Nursery and Reception classes. When we visited your lessons and looked at your books it was clear to us that you reach above average standards and that you are making good progress. Although you are doing better in your mathematics and writing, we have asked that you are helped to continue doing this.
- When we talked with you, you told us how much you enjoy school, feel safe and that your views are listened to. Well done to those of you in the 'Squabble Squad', eco team and school council! You really are making a great difference!
- You are well taught and we agree with you that your teachers make learning fun. You told us about the popular breakfast club, and after-school activities. We enjoyed listening to Year 4 playing their guitars and the choir practising for the Jubilee concert. We hope that Year 1 enjoyed their trip to the park.
- We agree with you that the curriculum is exciting with lots of fun activities.
- The school is well led and when we talked with your headteacher, staff and governors it was clear that they want to make things even better for you.

There are some things we have asked them to concentrate on to help them do this.

- We have asked that all the work that is being done to help you learn even better in mathematics in Key Stage 2 and to help boys in Key Stage 1 to become more confident writers is firmly in place.
- We also want teaching to be the best it can be and have asked teachers to share the very best practices in the school to make sure this is the case.

You can help by continuing to work hard, being such positive pupils and by doing your best when writing and problem solving in mathematics.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Browning  
Lead inspector

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