

Oatlands School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124994
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	340694
Inspection dates	2–3 March 2010
Reporting inspector	David Scott

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roy Taylor
Headteacher	Patricia Beechey
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent over a third of their time looking at learning; visited 16 part-lessons; observed all ten class teachers; and had meetings with the chair of governors, staff and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation documentation, monitoring and assessment information, lesson plans, school policies and analysed 79 parental and 17 staff questionnaires. The school's safeguarding procedures were also evaluated.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the impact of the quality of learning in lessons on pupils' attainment
- how well the school is using assessment data to secure improvement for all groups of pupils
- the provision for more-able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the impact of leaders and managers, at all levels, on driving improvements across both key stages.

Information about the school

Oatlands is an average-sized school which is oversubscribed and expanding. Just over three quarters of pupils are of White British heritage, the remainder being from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. One in ten pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average. Since the last inspection the school has gained the Values Based Education Quality Mark and the Silver ECO Award.

The Early Years Foundation Stage provision has two Reception classes. Children join Reception from over 20 pre-school settings.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Oatlands is an outstanding school. It has improved under the very positive leadership of the headteacher. She is enthusiastically supported by her staff and an effective governing body. The school has excellent links with the local community, particularly with a special school, its partner secondary schools and teacher-training universities. The school instils in its pupils a clear sense of values, self-belief and above all, a joy of learning; as two pupils said, 'Being in our class is very special because we can learn and make friends with each other.'

The school's motto 'Laying foundations for future success' is seen in all of its work and helps pupils to gain excellent levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve extremely well in their learning because the school has very high expectations of them. Staff work hard to eradicate any differences in the achievement of groups of pupils. Information on pupils' progress is accurately captured and tracked. More robust analysis by all staff would ensure that all pupils would make accelerated progress.

Oatlands has been successful in driving up pupils' academic performance and sustaining outstanding practice in supporting their personal development. Pupils feel extremely safe and secure and have a mature and very well-developed understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. The partnership with parents and other agencies is extremely strong and underpins the school's exceptionally good levels of care, guidance and support. As one parent commented, echoing the views of many, 'This is a fantastic school with a real sense of 'family' where each child is encouraged to push themselves to make the most of their abilities.'

Through the honest and accurate school self-evaluation, leaders have brought about many improvements. Concerted action, by all staff, has raised pupils' attainment and developed teachers' skills. As a result, teaching and learning are good, and in some instances they are outstanding. This has led to a rising trend in attainment over the last three years. Leaders also know that there are examples of good assessment practice, particularly of reading, although the quality across the school is variable. There is a need to develop further teachers' skills in asking probing questions, and to provide specific targets that enable all pupils to make consistently good or better progress. Behaviour throughout the school is exemplary, with pupils responding positively to the high expectations set. Since the last inspection the school has improved its self-evaluation, accelerated the progress of more able pupils and embedded a vision based on values. The school has excellent capacity to improve and fulfil its ambitious vision for the future.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maintain high quality provision and outcomes, and increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, by:
 - ensuring teachers use day-to-day assessments and review targets more systematically and effectively with pupils so they clearly understand how to improve, particularly for younger children
 - further developing the use of probing questions in lessons which give pupils opportunities to extend and explain their ideas fully
 - ensuring that tracking and monitoring information is analysed robustly by setting quantifiable measures against which to evaluate success.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

The quality of pupils' learning and progress in lessons is good. They behave extremely well, and mature into polite, thoughtful and considerate young people. The overwhelming majority of pupils are enthusiastic about their tasks and respond appropriately to teachers' requests. In Year 1, for example, a group of pupils thoroughly enjoyed their 'Silver independence time' where they made good progress by labelling a picture using exciting and new vocabulary which extended their literacy skills. In an outstanding numeracy lesson in Year 2, pupils responded well where they first visualised doubling and halving numbers using a number line and then worked with their 'talking buddies' on wipe-boards to further develop their problem-solving skills.

Attainment is high by the end of Year 2. In their 2009 assessments, more-able pupils performed well in all areas and summer-born pupils did better than spring-born pupils nationally. Despite this success, leaders are anything but complacent, being ever vigilant to continue to help boys to improve their writing skills and for girls to improve their numeracy skills. Pupils make good progress in their learning and their achievement overall is outstanding. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do as well as their peers because of the exceptional levels of care and support they receive, as do those who join the school with little or no English.

Pupils get on extremely well together and willingly take on responsibilities around the school. For example, they are proud to be school council members and every pupil in Year 2 acts as a caring buddy for younger children. Pupils are aware of the world of work and are very well prepared for their futures. The school has worked hard with both pupils and parents to emphasise the importance of good attendance. As a result, pupils' attendance is consistently high. Through the work associated with the national awards, pupils have a mature understanding of current conservation issues, by first-hand experience of growing flowers and vegetables as well as of recycling.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Classrooms are delightful, both indoors and out, with imaginative activities and vibrant displays to capture and respond to pupils' interests and enthusiasms. The environmental garden with its 'habitat hotel', 'hedgehog house' and pond provides a 'breathing place' for pupils' quiet reflection and the study of various ecosystems. As a result of these approaches and rigorous monitoring, teaching is good overall, with some lessons being outstanding. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and subject knowledge is strong so explanations are well structured and confident. New technology is used well to make lessons interesting. Within this positive picture, occasionally teachers' explanations are too long, which reduces the opportunity for pupils to explain their ideas, and target setting does always signpost clearly how pupils can improve their work.

The well-orchestrated curriculum meets the needs and interests of all learners exceptionally well. It is further enriched by visiting theatre productions, guest speakers, international dance and music extravaganzas and clubs ranging from country dancing to tri-golf. The Saturday morning football club, coached by parents and carers, is attended by almost half the school. A wide range of trips and visits provide excellent opportunities for pupils to broaden their personal and academic skills.

The school is rightly proud of its outstanding care, guidance and support. The most vulnerable pupils benefit greatly from excellent work the school carries out with external agencies. Staff can point to real successes in helping pupils overcome difficult histories

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and challenging episodes in their lives to again enjoy learning and make good progress. 'The school has helped me to work by myself and made me more confident,' commented one pupil. The inclusion team provides a wide range of support to enable vulnerable pupils to play a full part in school life and is very successful at engaging hard-to-reach families.

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 relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The determination, vision and clarity of purpose of the headteacher have created a welcoming and harmonious ethos which permeates throughout the school. As a result of a high degree of support and trust, staff are very well motivated and team work is of an exceptionally high standard. Leadership and management have many outstanding features: for example, in provision for staff development; in the rigour of performance management systems; in the smooth day-to-day running of the organisation and in maintaining the fabric of the building to a very high standard.

The headteacher and her middle leaders know the strengths of the school well. Their vision to improve achievement for all pupils through a values-led education has created confidence and a real sense of purpose throughout the school and among parents and carers. Its purpose is to equip each child with both the knowledge and vocabulary to understand and express their emotions with clarity. This has been recognised by the school gaining a national award for its work in this area. As a result, staff morale and commitment to the school are of a high order. As one parent commented, 'The headteacher is 100 % devoted to the school and this positive attitude filters down to her staff and children.'

The school ensures that every pupil has an equal chance to learn. Any discrimination is tackled rigorously. Senior and middle leaders guide staff so that equality of opportunity and inclusion are excellent. Governors are knowledgeable, supportive of the school and fulfil all their statutory duties. They visit the school and have an accurate understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. They have good understanding of the needs of the community the school serves. Nevertheless, because of the high turnover rate of governors, their involvement in evaluating the school's performance and driving its improvements has been restricted. The school has exemplary procedures for safeguarding, risk assessment and staff vetting procedures. Community cohesion is good because leaders have an effective understanding of their own community and the different faiths, ethnicities and cultures that exist within it. The school's international links promote good awareness of global issues, for example, through a variety of fund-raising projects in Africa which include supporting four children in a children's home in Kenya.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes. They settle in quickly and are keen to learn. Children play together and are well behaved. They enjoy learning in this busy environment. The school's data show that children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with a range of skills that are broadly expected for their age. By the end of Reception, they attain levels that are generally above those expected for their age and make good progress. They make most gains in their personal, social development and reading because of the greater focus on linking letters and sounds and the use of role play. This was demonstrated in an excellent numeracy lesson when children took the opportunity to first use their improved language skills in a warm-up game exploring symmetry. They then chose symmetrical objects from the 'feely bag' and placed them on an outline butterfly shape, laid on the floor and made from hoops and wooden blocks.

Children enjoy a range of stimulating activities, indoors and out, carefully chosen to meet their needs and enthusiasms. They are given the opportunity to select their own learning activities and respond well to encouragement and praise to explore and widen their choices. Teaching is good overall, with motivating lessons moving at a good pace in a friendly and safe atmosphere. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. High levels of care and welfare are provided for the children to ensure their well-being. Support for vulnerable children is of a high standard. Partnerships with parents and external agencies are strong so that specialist help is sought and provided when needed. Teachers and helpers are perceptive and note down significant moments of each child's progress, but the leader acknowledges that a higher degree of rigour is needed to ensure consistency of observations. These records are used well to ensure that each child's learning is moved forward.

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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

The school enjoys the support of the overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires. Almost all respondents were very positive about the school and feel that it keeps pupils safe and helps them maintain a healthy lifestyle. A small number of parents expressed that they would appreciate more opportunities to communicate with the school about their child's progress. Inspectors discussed these issues with senior staff and found there to be effective procedures in place to deal with this area of concern. Inspectors were also shown evidence of the school's own recent surveys of parents' views, and these too were wholly positive.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oatlands 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 79 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	68	26	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	61	76	19	24	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	29	36	49	61	1	1	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	43	38	48	4	5	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	51	64	28	35	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	52	65	28	35	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	51	64	27	34	0	0	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)	32	40	30	38	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	51	35	44	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	44	29	36	5	6	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	43	36	45	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	65	81	13	16	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	57	71	21	26	0	0	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in the Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



4 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oatlands School, Weybridge KT13 9PZ

This letter is to thank you for welcoming us so warmly to your school and for taking the time from your breaks to talk to the inspectors. We really enjoyed meeting you and seeing you at work and play. Many of your parents wrote to say how pleased they were with the school; as one parent said, 'I wish this school went on to Year 6!' and another commented, 'Oatlands is a happy, well-run school, which has great communication and honest feedback at parents' evenings.' Inspectors agree with these views.

We came to find out as much as we could about your school and now we would like to tell you what we said in the report we have written. You go to an outstanding school. Your headteacher and teachers make your school a very special and welcoming place. You and your parents told us that you like school and that it is a very caring and happy place where you feel really safe. You are respectful, polite and considerate towards each other. We especially enjoyed your enthusiastic and tuneful singing in assembly.

Your headteacher and teachers are determined to help you succeed, as are your parents and carers. We recognise that the school will have to work hard to keep up such high standards. Staff and governors know what they want to improve. So we have suggested to them that they:

- make your lessons even more interesting by planning work that will challenge and engage you, showing you ways to learn by yourselves
- give you clearer advice on how to improve your work so that you can achieve your very best.

Once again, it was very good to meet you all. We would like to wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Scott

Lead inspector

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