

Oakfield Primary School

Scott Drive, Wickford, SS12 9PW

Inspection dates 11–12 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, staff and governing body work extremely well together as a team. Teachers' performance and ongoing training are very well managed.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding; this has contributed strongly to pupils' consistently improving attainment over time.
- Achievement is good. Standards are average by the time pupils leave and are continuing to rise, particularly the number of pupils achieving the higher levels. The rate of progress made by pupils is good and improving in all key stages and across all subjects.
- Behaviour is excellent and pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are very polite to adults and to each other and work extremely well together.
- Attendance is consistently high and pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. They are very proud of their school.
- Teachers' marking and feedback are consistently good so that pupils know exactly how well they are doing and how they can improve their work.
- Pupils really enjoy all the clubs and other activities offered by the school. They particularly like the sporting activities and excel in competitive sports against other schools.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is still some variation in the quality of teaching, particularly where less experienced teachers are still learning their craft at this stage in the school year.
- The school does not yet have a secure track record of pupils achieving better than expected progress across Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6 in reading writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They visited 22 lessons.
- Inspectors met with the Chair and other members of the Governing Body, the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders, the special educational needs co-ordinator and a representative from the local authority.
- The views of 58 parents and carers were analysed through the Parent View website. A wide range of other parents' and carers' views were sought at the beginning of each day. A summary of the most recent parent and carer questionnaire were also looked at.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including the school improvement plan and the school's self-evaluation. They also examined work in pupils' books from last year as well as the current year, together with that on display.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in Year 1 and Year 6, as well as pupils reading as part of their lessons.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils, including representatives of the school council.
- The school has received a significant number of awards and was the first school in Essex to achieve the Equalities Award.

Inspection team

Nichola Perry, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Faheem Chishti

Additional Inspector

Fatiha Maitland

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is significantly larger than average.
- Six new members of staff were appointed in September, two of whom are Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs)
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium) is significantly below the national average.
- Most pupils are White British. There are significantly fewer pupils from minority ethnic groups than in most schools of this size.
- The percentage of pupils who are identified for school action is significantly higher than average.
- The proportion identified for school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics so that the majority of pupils in all year groups are making better than expected progress by:
 - raising further all teachers' expectations of what pupils can do across the school
 - increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- In the Reception classes, children achieve well from their low starting points. They settle very quickly and make good progress in all areas of learning especially in communication, mathematical skills and in their emotional development. Attainment by the time they leave the Reception classes is in line with expected levels.
- Achievement is improving in Years 1 and 2 and is now good. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is average overall, and rising consistently year on year. Mathematics is now above average. School assessments show that the upward trend is continuing for current pupils and this is supported by inspection evidence.
- Achievement across Years 3 to 6 has recently improved more rapidly. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is average overall and rising. In the 2011 national assessments, English was above average for the first time. Attainment in reading and writing in 2012 indicates a similar pattern. Attainment in mathematics rose significantly in 2012 and was above average for the first time. School assessment data and work seen in lessons and in pupils' books indicates that the upward trend is likely to continue in 2013.
- Reading is taught effectively across the school; pupils are developing into confident, accurate and increasingly fluent readers. Most pupils make good use of their knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics) to help them interpret unfamiliar words. Pupils read regularly in school, both formally and during lessons, and are encouraged to read more frequently to family members. Increased emphasis on reading has led to significant improvement for pupils in all ability groups and this in turn is contributing strongly to pupils' greater confidence in their writing. The many opportunities for high quality discussions at whole-class level, group and one-to-one level are also extending pupils' learning well.
- Pupils make good progress in most lessons. They thoroughly enjoy their learning. Pupils are reflective learners, very eager to do well and prepared to 'have a go'. The school ensures that there is a good balance between whole-class, group and independent work so that the learning needs of all pupils are well catered for. Pupils particularly like the greater emphasis on practical learning and are completely engaged in the interesting approaches to topics and themes. Pupils also make good progress in art, physical education (PE), and information and communication technology (ICT) which is used confidently to support and enhance their learning in and out of class. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the progress their children are making.
- Extra funding is used exceptionally well to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Wide-ranging additional activities, including those within the wider community, and high levels of outstanding adult support ensure that these pupils, as well as disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress along with the other pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good. There are some examples of outstanding teaching. The school is working consistently to ensure good and outstanding teaching is the norm. Sharing of best practice is well established to develop teachers' confidence and extend their skills. Coaching for less experienced teachers, new to the school, is already in place to help them develop effective practice. Some teachers who consistently produce good lessons still lack the confidence to incorporate more exciting approaches into their teaching. Not all teachers ensure that the level

of work is sufficiently well-structured or demanding, especially for more-able pupils.

- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. Well-focused additional sessions and excellent support from support staff is ensuring that all pupils make equally good progress. The monitoring of progress made by pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable is excellent and has led to rapid improvements in their attainment and attendance.
- Planning is good and effectively matches the learning needs of all groups of pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well incorporated into all aspects of their learning. Significant improvements within teaching, most notably the use of assessment, have led to pupils making more rapid progress in both Year 1 and Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Improved assessment practices are ensuring that data now provide a more accurate overview of progress year on year. This is contributing to teachers' raised expectations of what pupils can actually do.
- In an excellent Year 6 lesson where pupils were writing their own poems, the teacher expertly modelled the writing of a poem, emphasising the key skills expected to be seen in the pupils' own work. This brought learning alive for the pupils and they quickly followed suit, producing work of a high standard. Where teachers are not modelling these strong links between the skills pupils are being taught and the work they are producing, learning becomes disjointed. As a result, opportunities for extending their learning and making more rapid progress are missed.
- Teachers' marking and feedback is consistently good and is building an excellent dialogue with pupils. Comments both encourage pupils' efforts and indicate ways in which they might reach the next steps in their learning. Teachers make expert use of questioning to extend pupils' learning. Teachers increasingly extend marking in literacy and numeracy so as to provide greater challenge, consolidation or support for pupils. This, and the good opportunities for pupils to mark their own and each other's work, is involving them progressively more in their own learning and assessment of their performance. Pupils are very clear about how they can improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are extremely well behaved and polite wherever they are in and around the school, reflecting the high expectations of staff. They are welcoming and speak confidently to adults in the full knowledge that their contributions are highly valued. Pupils are very proud of their school and there is a real sense of them wanting the school to do well.
 - The school places a very high emphasis on pupils' personal development, including involving them in contributing to whole-school behaviour management. The behaviour policy is fully discussed with pupils and changes agreed, including the introduction of a new reporting system for pupils who receive a yellow card and need to report to the headteacher.
 - Pupils demonstrate very high standards that they use to judge their own and each other's behaviour and their keen sense of right and wrong. Parents and carers are also very positive about pupils' behaviour at the school.
 - Records show that bullying of any sort is extremely rare. Exclusions are also rare. Pupils speak with great confidence and good knowledge about bullying. They fully understand what bullying is and what to do if it should occur. In respect of homophobic bullying, discussed fully with
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pupils in Years 3 to 6, one pupil stated that, 'We don't do that here because our headteacher doesn't like it.'

- There is an excellent, regular poster campaign which raises pupils' awareness of unacceptable behaviour or attitudes. It is highly successful in ensuring that pupils have an exemplary understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe, and are respectful, courteous and well-mannered towards each other. Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of e-safety.
- Attendance is consistently high, reflecting pupils' love of their school and eagerness to learn. The school works very closely with families to promote regular attendance.
- Highly effective support is provided for pupils and for families whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The school excels at giving pupils a fresh start, particularly those with significant emotional and behavioural issues and where they may have experienced difficulties elsewhere.
- Parents and carers, including those spoken to during the inspection, feel very confident that their children are safe and well cared for in school. Excellent safety procedures were evident during the inspection in the outstanding care taken to ensure the safety of all pupils, including the smallest children, when working outside.

The leadership and management are good

- Aspirational leadership by the headteacher has engendered a sense of commitment and pride in all who are involved in the school. The school is a vibrant and exciting place and has good capacity to improve further. The rapid increase in pupil numbers and the many changes of staff during the last academic year have been managed extremely well so that the progress in improving teaching and pupils' achievement has not been impeded. New staff are already feeling part of the 'Oakfield team'.
 - Self-evaluation is excellent. Judgements are highly evaluative, honest and realistic and based on strong evidence. Development planning focuses very clearly on continued improvement and raising standards. Improvement since the last inspection has been good in all areas.
 - The senior leadership team work well together to ensure that appropriate structures are in place to enable staff to perform to high levels. Performance management and training for staff are used rigorously to ensure improvement in teaching and leadership. Staff value highly the opportunities they have for training to further develop their practice. Whole-school monitoring procedures are excellent with all staff held to account for improvements. All staff receive regular, focused feedback on their performance with clear expectations that improvements will be put in place. Raising achievement meetings are well established with clear objectives for improvement agreed. The school's good practice in this is regularly shared with other local schools.
 - Subject leaders responsible for English and mathematics are excellent. They are knowledgeable and challenging so that action plans are totally focused on improvement at all levels. They have high expectations of all staff to improve their teaching to ensure learning is made ever more enjoyable and relevant to the pupils' own experiences. Staff now have a good understanding of the use of data which increasingly helps them to ensure a better match of activities to pupils' learning needs.
 - The special educational needs coordination is also strong. Pupils achieve well from their starting
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points with the help of a wide range of additional support programmes. Progress is monitored very closely to ensure this assistance remains relevant. Support staff are very well trained and highly effective as a result.

- Good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage provides a comprehensive and well-resourced curriculum and accurate assessment so that pupils get off to a good start and achieve well.
 - The curriculum is very effective, built around a range of topics and themes; it is linked across several subjects so that learning is brought alive because of its relevance to pupils. Teachers are careful to extend pupils' learning beyond individual subjects to help to make spiritual, moral, social and cultural development a strength. Stunning displays throughout the school stimulate and support pupils and show their engagement in their learning. Displays illustrate the richness of the curriculum and show that all groups of learners have equal access to learning.
 - All aspects of safeguarding meet requirements.
 - The local authority provides a low level of support for the school as required because it has been judged as a 'light touch' school. The headteacher is regularly used by the local authority as an executive headteacher to support improvement in other schools.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - is effective because there is strong commitment, support and challenge from an articulate and increasingly knowledgeable governing body
 - uses the wide range of skills each governor has to maximise its effectiveness
 - is kept extremely well informed about achievement and attainment, and is fully involved in evaluation and strategic planning for the school
 - manages the school finances very effectively ensuring that funding, including the pupil premium funding, is used to good effect.
 - Partnerships with parents and carers are effective. All those spoken to are overwhelmingly positive about what the school offers their children. The comprehensive website keeps parents and carers very well informed about all school matters. It provides good guidance on how they can help their children at home. There is good support for the recently introduced Learning Partnership meetings which aim to keep parents and carers up-to-date with their children's learning, as well as helping to engage a wide range of parents and carers, including those who are hard to reach.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	131806
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	403636

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	414
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dave Faulkner
Headteacher	Pauline MacMillan
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2007
Telephone number	01268 734343
Fax number	01268 561704
Email address	admin@oakfield.essex.sch.uk

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