

Oakridge Junior School

Oakridge Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 5RR

Inspection dates 23–24 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils do not make equally good progress throughout the school in mathematics and English, particularly high-ability pupils and those needing extra help.
- Teaching in Year 3 and Year 4 is not consistently good.
- Some leaders and managers are new and developing their roles. They are not checking sufficiently the learning and progress of different groups of pupils.
- Although governance is adequate, many governors are new to the role. Not all governors are contributing as well as they should to helping the school improve.

The school has the following strengths

- Standards are rising and the rate of progress made by pupils is improving, particularly in English.
- In 2012, a high proportion of pupils in Year 6 reached the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics.
- Teaching in Year 5 and Year 6 is typically at least good.
- The school is successfully closing the gaps in standards between different groups of pupils.
- Behaviour in the school is much better than it used to be and is now good.
- The attendance of pupils has improved significantly and is now high.
- The school has a strong and effective senior leadership team.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 parts of lessons taught by seven teachers, and two sessions, led by teaching assistants, that provided extra help for pupils.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils, senior and middle leaders, teachers and support staff. The lead inspector spoke by telephone with the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and the school's leadership and learning partner from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of nine responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and staff responses. They also spoke informally with some parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors took account of letters left for them by pupils in Year 6 who were on a residential visit during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' achievement, their workbooks, teachers' planning, the school's planning and monitoring documents, performance management procedures and outcomes, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Gehane Gordelier, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sandra Hayes

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Oakridge Junior is smaller than the average-sized school.
- The proportions of pupils who need extra help or who have a statement of special educational needs is high.
- The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals has risen over the last few years and is now in line with the national average. The number of pupils eligible for additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, has risen and is broadly average.
- Most pupils have a White British background.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been staff changes since the previous inspection particularly in Years 3 and 4.
- At the time of this inspection most of the pupils in Year 6 were on a residential visit with teachers from Year 6 and the deputy headteacher.
- On the first day of the inspection pupils in Year 5 attended an on-site enterprise day run by an outside provider.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4 is consistently good or better by:
 - improving the quality of teachers' planning so that it fully reflects the needs of more able pupils and those who need extra help, and specifies what pupils of different abilities will be learning
 - filling in as quickly as possible any gaps in pupils' learning, particularly pupils' knowledge of sounds and the letters they represent (phonics) and pupils' understanding of the value of numbers and how to calculate
 - using additional adults in lessons to best effect to support and develop pupils' learning
 - always using quality practical resources to support pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills, particularly in mathematics.
- Make sure that all pupils make equally good progress in English and mathematics by:
 - providing greater challenge to those pupils who find their work too easy
 - displaying words that are unfamiliar alongside an explanation of their meaning to enable pupils of lower ability to use the language they need to help them with their work
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their reading, writing and mathematical skills to a range of contexts.
- Develop the role of leaders and managers, including governors, who are new in post so they have a greater impact on helping the school to improve by:
 - ensuring they make good use of data to check on the progress of different groups of pupils
 - developing plans for making improvements so they include information about how pupils are expected to benefit and targets so that progress can be measured.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is typically significantly above average; however, some pupils start with lower levels.
- Pupils have underachieved in the last three years, given their starting points, but the school is successfully turning this situation around. By the end of Year 6 in 2012, most pupils made expected progress. This led to a high proportion of pupils reaching levels above those expected for their age in English and mathematics. However, fewer pupils whose starting points were low when they joined the school made the same amount of progress.
- The achievement of pupils across the school and in different year groups is uneven. Pupils make more rapid progress in Years 5 and 6. Work in these year groups has helped those who have not made enough progress in Years 3 and 4 to make up for lost ground, particularly in English.
- The work in pupils' books shows that rates of progress are improving. However, this is not the case for all pupils, particularly more able pupils and those who need extra help, especially in Years 3 and 4.
- The progress made by pupils with special educational needs and who need extra help mirrors that of their peers and so is better in Years 5 and 6. The school is making effective use of the pupil premium to pay for resources and additional support for those pupils who need extra help.
- In mathematics, pupils in Year 5 learn about the properties of three-dimensional shapes and how to work out the mode for a set of numbers. In English, they discuss how to improve their writing, such as adding punctuation and extending sentences. Pupils enjoy doing practical investigations in science, such as in Year 4 when they compared the different materials of a range of objects and classified them according to their different properties.
- Some of the pupils in Years 3 and 4 struggle with their reading and spelling. This is because their phonic knowledge is not well developed. Those pupils who can read, but are still not reading well enough for their age, are not making good use of punctuation or making sure they understand what they are reading.
- Younger pupils who struggle with mathematics do not always know the value of numbers; this makes it difficult for them to do calculations. Younger and older pupils do not always understand the meaning of mathematical words; this makes it hard for them to make good progress in their lessons.
- Pupils of higher ability across the school are not always provided with enough challenge, particularly in mathematics. However, there are signs that this is already improving, particularly in upper school.
- Pupils do not yet have enough opportunities to practise using their reading, writing and mathematical skills in different subjects and for a range of purposes. This is beginning to develop with the introduction of a greater variety of activities during lessons.
- Pupils recognise that homework helps them to improve because it makes them practise what they have been learning in class. They appreciate the time and effort teachers put in to providing them with helpful feedback.
- Pupils believe they are doing well with their work. Among the messages left by pupils in Year 6 for inspectors one pupil wrote, 'I think this year I will achieve more.'
- Although most parents agree that their children make good progress at the school, a small minority do not. Inspectors found that not all pupils make good progress, and that pupils who are in Years 5 and 6 make better progress than in Years 3 and 4.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because there are weaknesses in Years 3 and 4 which are slowing the progress of pupils. Pupils of higher ability are not always given work that is challenging enough to extend their learning. Pupils who need extra help, for example with their

phonics and basic mathematics, do not always receive good enough support during lessons to make up for the gaps in their learning. Some teachers do not display key words alongside an explanation and this makes it difficult for pupils, particularly those of lower ability, to progress as well as they could with their learning.

- Teachers' planning in the lower part of the school varies in quality. Typically, it does not include enough guidance for teaching assistants about their role and how best to support learning in lessons. This prevents additional adults from being as effective as they could be in helping pupils with their work. Planning does not always identify how the needs of pupils of different abilities will be met. Planning for some lessons only identifies the activities pupils will be doing, as opposed to what pupils are expected to learn.
- Teachers do not always make best use of practical resources, such as cubes and counters, to help pupils who find calculation difficult.
- The additional support provided to pupils outside of the classroom helps them to improve their basic skills in reading and spelling. Well-trained teaching assistants use colourful practical resources to help pupils with their basic mathematics skills, such as recognising patterns and to identify repeating patterns.
- Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is a strength of the school. Teachers in this part of the school have high expectations of their pupils and cater well for their needs. Pupils say they find their lessons 'interesting and challenging', and their teachers 'very helpful'. Teachers in the upper school are providing pupils of higher ability with more complex work. Pupils have noticed this and appreciate their efforts.
- Pupils value having targets; this helps them to know what to aim for.
- All teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and provide clear next steps so pupils know what they need to do to improve. They use visual aids to make lessons exciting, such as showing graphs of different coloured toys to help pupils in Year 3 make comparisons about how many more or less toys there are of each colour.
- Teaching across the school helps pupils to learn about, and appreciate, other cultures and faiths, such as the work of pupils in Year 4 about India. Teachers encourage pupils to learn how to help themselves and each other. They are clear and consistent about their expectations concerning pupils' behaviour.
- Most, but not all, parents believe their children are well taught. Inspectors found that, although the quality of teaching in the school is improving, not all classes are taught equally well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils are confident that the adults in school will help them if they have any concerns or problems. This helps pupils to feel safe in school. Pupils are polite and show consideration and respect to each other and to adults.
- Everyone in the school manages behaviour well. Pupils understand, and like, the clear system of rewards and sanctions. One pupil told an inspector how this helps him to calm down when he is having difficulty behaving well.
- In lessons pupils are keen to learn and typically show good levels of concentration, acting sensibly when moving from one activity to the next. On the rare occasions, when behaviour in lessons is less than good, a few pupils fidget and stop paying attention. This is because teachers have spent too long talking or have provided work that is not pitched at the right level for pupils.
- Pupils behave equally well whether they are working with their usual class teacher or with another adult. A good example was seen with pupils in Year 5 who behaved very well and worked hard for a visitor during their 'Super Smoothie Challenge'.
- Pupils can talk about and recognise different types of bullying. They know how this is different from having a disagreement with a friend. They understand that bullying can be about people's differences and that this is wrong. Pupils confirm that the school deals sensitively and well with any bad behaviour, including bullying, although incidences are now extremely rare.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their high levels of attendance.

- Staff and the vast majority of parents believe that the school manages behaviour well and deals quickly and effectively with any concerns raised.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads her school with passion and total commitment for what is best for pupils. Staff and governors share her high aspirations for the school and are working effectively as a team.
- The strong senior leadership team is working hard and successfully to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards. As a result, the gaps that previously existed between the performance of different groups of pupils have reduced significantly, particularly by the end of Year 6.
- School self-evaluation is generally accurate and helps those in charge to target their efforts where they are needed most. A good example of the impact that leaders and managers are making is with the high standard of English reached by pupils last year. Leaders and managers have correctly identified the need to continue to improve pupils' spelling.
- Senior leaders are good role models for other staff, helping them improve as teachers and leaders. This has enabled leaders and managers, such as those responsible for English, mathematics and special educational needs, to become increasingly effective in raising standards across the school.
- Some leaders with particular responsibilities are not making best use of information about pupils' progress to produce high-quality plans, aimed at helping to raise standards. This is because these plans do not all include targets that will help staff to measure the progress of different groups of pupils. Some plans do not state clearly how pupils will benefit from any planned changes.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching and deal swiftly with any significant weaknesses. Only the most effective staff have been awarded the higher pay scale.
- Staff changes lower down the school have hampered efforts of securing consistently good teaching in Years 3 and 4. However, the remaining shortcomings are being dealt with firmly and with success. The effective management of teachers' performance has contributed to the consistently good teaching for pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- The headteacher provides staff with clear feedback about their practice. This is done in a way that helps them to reflect on how they can improve; and when additional training is needed, it is provided. Leaders and managers have improved how different subjects are being taught. There is clear guidance for teachers about how to help pupils to develop their knowledge, learning and skills, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Exciting additional activities with, for example, a focus on healthy food, help to provide pupils with a well-rounded education.
- Concerted efforts by leaders, managers and governors have led to the significant rise in pupils' attendance, particularly in the last year.
- Behaviour has not always been as good as it is now. The good work of leaders and managers, alongside the support provided by the local authority, has helped to transform the behaviour of pupils, much of which is now exemplary.
- Leaders and managers make effective use of additional funding, such as the pupil premium, to support pupils with their learning and progress. For instance, the purchase of additional books has cultivated an interest in reading, especially among boys; employing additional support staff has provided extra help to small groups of pupils who struggle with their reading, writing and mathematics. This has contributed to the significant rise in standards, particularly by the end of Year 6.
- Senior leaders keep a close eye on the extent to which all pupils are provided with equality of opportunity, and tackle discrimination effectively. This helps pupils to feel highly valued and very well supported. The headteacher was already aware of shortcomings in the quality of teaching and learning lower down the school and is making changes to improve the situation.
- Staff and pupils are proud of their school and believe it is very well led and managed. This is a

view that is shared by most parents.

- The local authority considers the school to be 'low risk'. In the past the school was categorised as 'medium risk' and received support to improve behaviour and the quality of teaching and learning.

■ **The governance of the school**

- Governance is not yet as good as the rest of the school's leadership and management. Governors have a higher profile in the school than in previous years. They contribute to the school's positive level of engagement with parents by seeking their views and responding to queries. They ensure safeguarding procedures are secure. Governors challenge the headteacher about the work of the school. However, they do not always ask questions that are searching enough, especially about the progress of different groups of pupils. They are aware of how additional funding through the pupil premium is being used to improve the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics for pupils who need extra help. Governors set targets for the headteacher aimed at improving the school. However, targets are not precise enough to enable governors to measure the progress made in improving the quality of teaching and learning and in raising standards across the school. This is largely due to the inexperience of some new governors who have yet to fully develop their role.

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	115974
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	401549

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	8–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Terri Bickford
Headteacher	Diane Charman
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 November 2009
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