

INSPECTION REPORT

OATLANDS INFANT SCHOOL

Weybridge

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 124944

Headteacher: Mrs P Beechey

Reporting inspector: M H Whitaker
1424

Dates of inspection: 10th – 11th July 2000

Inspection number: 188922

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St Mary's Road Weybridge Surrey
Postcode:	KT13 9PZ
Telephone number:	01932 843990
Fax number:	01932 830015
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	D Blundell
Date of previous inspection:	April 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Oatlands School is an Infant School for boys and girls aged between 4 and 7 years. It serves a pre-dominantly affluent area, on the outskirts of Weybridge. There are currently 178 pupils on the roll of the school. There are currently 32 pupils with special educational needs, two of whom have statements. This is broadly in-line with the average for other schools. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. There are ten pupils for whom English is an additional language. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is above the level expected of five-year-olds. They are well equipped to tackle the first stage of the National Curriculum.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Oatlands Infants is an effective school where pupils achieve high standards. They are very high in reading. Teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good, leading to positive attitudes and good behaviour amongst pupils. The headteacher and governors provide strong leadership and management and take steps to raise standards even further. Overall the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Reaches very high standards in English, mathematics and science compared with all schools.
- Develops and promotes very good attitudes to learning, very good relationships, very good opportunities for personal development and good behaviour.
- Has high expectations evident in the pre-dominantly good or very good teaching resulting in effective learning.
- Parents think very highly of the school.
- Makes very good provision for the social and moral development of pupils.

What could be improved

- The overall balance of the curriculum to ensure that pupils build on learning in the non-core subjects.
- The use of the assessment of what pupils can do to plan future tasks.
- The extent of the information provided for parents about what is going to be taught and when.
- The governors' annual report to parents should meet legal requirements.
- The evaluation of the affect developments have on the standards achieved.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvements since its last inspection in April 1996. Then it provided pupils with a sound start to their formal education. The school has continued to improve and standards in all areas of English and in mathematics, and in science are well above national averages. Their standards are consistently high year-on-year. Teaching is better overall than at the last inspection, being consistently good or better. Most of the key issues for action identified at the last report have been achieved. In addition, the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies have been introduced in a modified form to reflect the needs and abilities of the pupils.

STANDARDS

The table show the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	A*	A*	A*	A*
Writing	A*	A*	A	B
Mathematics	A	A*	A	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The standards achieved in reading are consistently in the highest 5 per cent compared with all schools, including schools with a similar level of free school meals. In writing and mathematics standards are very high compared with all schools and compared with similar schools. Standards in these areas were also in the highest 5 per cent of schools in 1997/98. The school sets challenging targets, which help to raise standards. Although results in mathematics and writing went down slightly in 1999, the trend of results has been broadly upwards alongside the national trend.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils in all year groups have very positive attitudes to school. They work hard and enjoy school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in classrooms and around school at break and lunchtimes is good.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships within the school are very good. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils' personal development.
Attendance	Although attendance has been below national levels, it is now broadly in-line with other schools.

By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed very mature attitudes to school. They work very effectively and independently when co-operating in pairs or groups. These characteristics are developed from the Reception Year and are an important development since the last inspection.

Attendance in 1998/99 was below the national average, although more recently this has improved.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5	aged 5-7
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching is good and often very good. As a result learning is effective throughout the school, particularly in English, mathematics and science. During the inspection, no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Almost 36 per cent was very good and 29 per cent was good. Teachers have high expectations and use questioning very effectively to extend pupils' learning. The range of teaching methods used has been developed and more opportunities are now provided for pupils to develop research and investigative skills, both independently and co-operatively. This enables higher attaining pupils to achieve even higher standards and allows lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs to develop necessary skills. These skills are not developed or extended in non-core subjects as effectively because of the limitations in planning within these subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Broad and generally balanced curriculum provided. It is currently being developed to ensure appropriate coverage of non-core subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good overall. It is very good in relation to moral and social development. Cultural development is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. However assessment information is not used well to guide planning despite good recording of pupils' attainment.

The school provides a broad curriculum, which is generally balanced, although planning is being reviewed in order to meet the national requirements for September 2000. Provision for non-core subjects does not currently ensure that pupils are able to build systematically on their previous learning, although the quality of work seen in these subjects was good. They are largely taught through topic work. The school cares well for the pupils. Detailed records are kept of what pupils know and can do in some subjects, such as reading, but these are not used well to guide curriculum planning or teaching. Teachers do know the pupils well.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The newly appointed headteacher is providing good leadership and management for the school. The role of subject co-ordinator is developing and teachers are taking increased responsibility for their subject.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Overall the governors fulfil their roles well. They are particularly strong on finance, although the evaluation of the effects of expenditure on standards is not yet satisfactory. The governors' annual report to parents does not meet legal requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's results are fully analysed now and areas for development, even when results are good, are identified and targets for improvement set.
The strategic use of resources	Financial systems in school are very efficient and the school is increasingly ensuring that financial allocations are in-line with achieving clear education targets.

The newly appointed head has made a good start in making the school even better than it is. She is providing good leadership and management and is well supported by a strong nucleus of governors. Subject co-ordinators have been given increased responsibility for developing the subjects and finance has been allocated in line with identified priorities. The evaluation of the effect of expenditure on the standards achieved by pupils is not yet fully developed, and the governors are trying to improve this area. The financial management of the school is strong and best value principles are applied well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like coming to school. • Their children make good progress. • The quality of teaching. • Behaviour is good and very good attitudes are promoted. • Expectations are high. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of information they receive. • An expansion of sporting and physical activity.

The findings of the inspection agreed with the largely positive views of parents. Pupils have positive attitudes, enjoy school and make good progress. The quality of teaching is predominantly good and teachers have high expectations of children. Behaviour is good. Inspectors agreed that the quality of some information to parents could be improved, for example; information about the planned curriculum and the governors' annual report to parents. However, reports about pupils' progress are good, although they have been developed and improved recently. Sporting and physical activity has an appropriate allocation of time within the curriculum. Some parents felt that this was often cancelled, but there was no evidence to support this during the inspection.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The school reaches very high standards in English, mathematics and science compared with all schools.

- 1 The school's standards are consistently very high. Results in reading in the national tests for the past 3 years have placed the school in the top five per cent of all schools. In writing, results were in the top five per cent in 1997 and 1998 and well above average compared with all schools in 1999 whilst in mathematics results were in the top five per cent in 1998 and well above average in 1997 and 1999. When compared with similar schools in 1999 results are in the top five per cent in reading and above the average for these schools in writing and mathematics. These are very commendable results. Although children enter the school with levels of attainment, which are above expected levels for their age, they leave the school with levels of attainment, which are well above average. This represents good progress. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels in reading and mathematics is very high in comparison with the national average indicating that higher attaining pupils are achieving well and making good progress in these areas. In writing the percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels was broadly average. This has been identified by the school as an area for further development and inspection evidence suggests that the present Year 2 will improve their results in writing. In the other areas very high standards are being maintained. Teacher assessments in science in 1999 showed that the percentage of pupils attaining at the higher levels was well above the national average whilst results overall in science were above the national average. Evidence from inspection indicates that the present Year 2, will continue this trend. The trends in reading, writing and mathematics in the past four years have broadly followed national trends although they dipped slightly in mathematics and writing in 1999. Trends in reading continued to rise.
- 2 Evidence from the inspection also showed that pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well, making good progress in relation to their previous attainment.

The school has high expectations apparent in the good or very good teaching resulting in effective learning.

- 3 Teaching is pre-dominantly good and often very good and this leads to effective learning, good progress and very high standards. A significant element in the teaching leading to these results, is the high expectations teachers have of pupils of all levels of attainment. In many lessons seen teachers used questioning skilfully to extend pupils' thinking making greater demands to extend their knowledge. In a Year 2 Literacy lesson, linked to a history theme pupils were looking at and talking about a painting. "How do you know it is a long time ago?" the teacher asked. "Because it's dark in the room" came the reply. "Well, why should that mean it's a long time ago?" "Because, they didn't have electricity" "The lights might be off" said the teacher. "Yes, but look at the old fashioned clothes" said the pupils. The teacher took great care to involve pupils of all levels of attainment in the discussion to extend their thinking. Similar situations occurred in the other Year 2 class when discussing Muslims and in a Year 1 science lesson, distinguishing between transparent, translucent and opaque materials. Although assessment is not used particularly well in planning, on-going judgements by teachers enables pupils of all levels of attainment to be extended in lessons.

- 4 Expectations were high in a Reception Year mathematics lesson, when pupils were challenged to make as many different patterns for two sails as possible for a yacht using only two colours. The task was extended for some pupils by having to make four sails. As a result of the challenge a wide range of solutions resulted, including one child who asked if chequered sails could be used!

The school develops and promotes very good attitudes to learning, very good relationships, very good opportunities for personal development and good behaviour.

- 5 The school has successfully created a very positive climate for learning where all pupils are keen to develop their knowledge and understanding and want to improve. In almost every lesson observed pupils had very positive attitudes and were enthusiastic about their work. In whole class discussions in every year group, pupils were bursting to contribute their ideas. For example, in Year 2 Literacy, history and religious education lessons, pupils wanted to share their ideas and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. In the Reception Year music lesson, pupils listened carefully to instructions and concentrated well on taped music to develop a steady beat using untuned instruments. They stuck well to their task and were delighted with their success.
- 6 Relationships throughout the school at almost every level are very good. Pupils relate very well to each other in class and around the school. They are polite, courteous and considerate to each other, staff and visitors. They respect the values and ideas of others and are willingly to help one another. Older pupils, who themselves are only seven, take on increasing responsibilities; for example, at lunchtimes. Pupils of all ages have very good opportunities for personal development through a range of “monitors” activities. Teaching and non-teaching staff provide good examples of appropriate behaviour, good manners and caring for each other and the environment of the school. High quality displays are evident in classrooms and pupils celebrate and respect these and talk with pride about their work on display.
- 7 Good behaviour is expected and is received. Pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected and they adhere to it.

Parents think very highly of the school.

- 8 Evidence from the returns to the Parents’ questionnaire and from the Parents’ meeting indicates that parents think very highly of the school. They feel that their children make good progress as they move through the school, as a result of the good quality of teaching they receive. They believe that the school promotes very good attitudes and learning and behaviour is good. The evidence from the inspection agreed with the views of the parents. They are rightly proud of the standards achieved by their children and the work of the school. Parents had some concerns, for example, the lack of information they receive about the topics, which does not enable them to effectively support learning in the areas covered.

The school makes very good provision for the social and moral development of pupils.

- 9 The social development of pupils is very well promoted in lessons and throughout the school. During lunchtime pupils behave in a very appropriate manner. Older pupils serve younger children with their lunch and they engage in good, social discussions developing good manners. In the playground at lunchtimes, pupils are encouraged to play together and lunchtime supervisors organise games and provide a range of equipment to promote this. In lessons, the range of teaching methods used has been improved and more opportunities are now provided for research and investigative work. This encourages pupils to work collaboratively and co-operatively in pairs or groups, taking turns and sharing and listening patiently whilst pupils express their ideas. For example, in a Year 2 history lesson, pupils worked very well together in groups discussing ‘special belongings’ they would bury in a time capsule. In a Reception Year mathematics lesson, pupils helped each other in a group deciding how many combinations of sails could be made for a yacht using only two colours.
- 10 Moral development is also very well promoted. Pupils learn about the importance of telling the truth and about the differences between right and wrong. For example, during a Year 2 religious education lesson, pupils held a good discussion about treating people properly and the morality of slavery. In assembly, where the theme was “we’re all special”, there was a good opportunity to talk about helping people and making the lives of others better and considering how one’s behaviour affects others. Consideration was also given to the fact that everyone cannot always win – a reference to Sports Day – and that it was important to celebrate the successes of others.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The overall balance of the curriculum could be improved to ensure that pupils build on their learning in the non-core foundation subjects.

- 11 The school provides a broad and generally balanced curriculum and meets the statutory requirements. There is a strong emphasis on the development of basic skills in literacy and numeracy and this has been effective in promoting high standards in these areas. Most other subjects are taught through topics which are negotiated and agreed in Year group teams. Planning in these teams ensures that all subjects are taught for an appropriate amount of time within the timetable. Work observed in the non-core foundation subjects through the scrutiny of work, school displays and classroom observations was of a high standard. For example, in a Year 2 class, pupils were developing a good understanding of the passage of time when discussing the features in a picture, which would provide an indication of when the picture was painted.

- 12 However, planning in this way does not ensure that within each year group an appropriate balance within the various aspects of each subject is maintained. Whilst pupils' attainment within these subjects is recorded, this information is not effectively used to plan future activities which would ensure appropriate balance. For example, in design and technology, the school could not currently guarantee that pupils within and between year groups build appropriately on the skills they develop in designing and making. Similarly, in history and geography, whilst skills are developed across the areas of study planning, this does not ensure balanced coverage since work covered relates the topics being covered rather than the skills development within the subjects. The school is aware of the need to review the teaching of the non-core foundation subjects to ensure a greater balance. Teachers are currently considering national guidance with a view to developing a greater coherence in these areas of the curriculum, so that planning can clearly demonstrate how pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in these areas of the curriculum, as they move through the key stage.

The use of the assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do could be used more effectively to plan the curriculum and teaching.

- 13 The school uses a wide range of testing strategies to determine the achievements of pupils and to measure their progress. Records are clear, well kept and used effectively to inform parents of the standards achieved by their children. However, for most pupils, they are not used within curriculum planning or teaching to set targets or learning objectives. For pupils with special educational needs who have individual education plans, the use of assessment to plan learning objectives and activities is more secure.
- 14 Teachers do know the pupils very well and in most circumstances have a good idea of pupils' attainment and intuitively use this knowledge to modify tasks and activities within lessons. There are good examples of teachers using this knowledge to modify questions for different levels of attainment, for example, in a Year 1 science lesson, exploring transparent, translucent and opaque materials, or in Reception when discussing different land masses. Both lessons were successful because teachers could adapt their teaching for pupils who exhibited greater knowledge, for example, where one boy wanted to distinguish between continents and countries rather than between land and water. However, the knowledge of pupils' attainment is not routinely used in planning, even though the information is available through the record keeping and testing. As a result, teachers cannot always be sure that they are challenging pupils sufficiently.

The extent to which parents are kept informed about what is going to be taught, and when, could be improved so that they can support learning more effectively.

- 15 Parents are generally kept well informed about the daily life of the school and they receive good quality reports about the attainment of their children and the progress they are making. However a significant number of parents through the questionnaires and a smaller number attending the parents' meeting felt that they received insufficient information about the curriculum. The findings of the inspection agreed with this. The school has detailed planning which identifies topics to be covered within each term and year group. Whilst planning does not ensure that pupils are able to build systematically on their learning in the non-core foundation subjects, it does identify what is to be covered in each subject of the curriculum within topics. For example a topic on water includes aspects of history and geography. Although this information is available in long and medium term planning it is not routinely shared with parents. Parents rightly feel that if they had a clear knowledge of what was going to be taught in each subject in the topic they could support the learning of their children more effectively. They felt that this could involve specific visits to places related to the work covered, references to work covered incidentally during visits for other purposes or even the opportunity to talk with their children about work covered, in the knowledge that it was part of the topic. This would develop their role as partners in the education of their children. The inspectors agreed with the views of the parents.

The governors' annual report to parents could be improved by ensuring that all statutory requirements are met.

- 16 Important statutory information is not included in the annual report by governors to parents. As a result, the Governing Body is not fulfilling its legal responsibilities and parents are not kept as well informed as they should be.

The evaluation of the effects development has on the standards achieved could be improved.

- 17 Good systems are in place for identifying the schools priorities for development. Subject co-ordinators now conduct audits of their areas of responsibility to identify issues for improvement. These lead to subject action plans and finance is allocated in-line with the plans and priorities. These then lead into the whole school development plan, which is largely an effective tool for managing the development of the school. There is a clear understanding of using the available finance to achieve educational objectives, amongst both staff and governors. However, there are weaknesses in the effectiveness of the school development plan. The criteria for evaluating the success of developments or improvements are not clearly linked to the expected impact on the standards achieved by pupils. It is currently difficult therefore for staff or governors to determine the effect of expenditure on standards achieved.
- 18 For example, one target within the current development plan, is to evaluate current reading provisions and amend it as necessary to meet the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. It does not say, for example, in order to ensure that high standards are maintained and developed, or does not have clear criteria against which to evaluate the effect of the review and any subsequent amendments on the standards achieved by pupils, other than pupils reading with greater confidence and fluency. A clear, more measurable outcome identifying which pupils are expected to improve and by how much, would enable the school to determine the value for money provided by the investment in the review. It would also enable the school to use the information to set the whole school improvement target. Within the school development plan, other areas would also benefit from this greater degree of specificity.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 19 In order to improve standards further the headteacher staff and governors should:
- (a) Ensure that pupils build logically on their previous learning by:
 - (i) Improving the balance within the curriculum through reviewing planning for non-core subjects.
 - (ii) Improving the use of assessment and testing information in planning and teaching.
- 20 Ensure that expenditure in relation to priorities within the school improvement plan has a positive effect on the standards achieved by having clear, measurable targets against which to evaluate success.
- 21 Ensure that parents can be more fully involved in the education of their children by:
- (i) Providing them with information about the curriculum, particularly what is going to be taught in topic work and when.
 - (ii) Making sure that the governors' annual report to parents, meets the legal requirements.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	14
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	35.7	28.6	35.7	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR-Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll	178
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	3

Special educational needs

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	32
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.6
National comparative date	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative date	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	28	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	26	26
	Girls	28	28	28
	Total	54	54	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93	94	98
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	26	26
	Girls	28	28	28
	Total	54	54	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93	98	98
	National	82	86	87

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	91
Any other minority ethnic group	1

25 families did not provide information on their ethnicity.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.1
Average class size	29.7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	99

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	354831
Total expenditure	332160
Expenditure per pupil	1978
Balance brought forward from previous year	7259
Balance carried forward to next year	29930

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	180
Number of questionnaires returned	64
Percentage analysed so far	36

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	17	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	29	29	1	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	28	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	13	34	13	0	4
The teaching is good.	36	22	0	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	15	30	15	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	38	22	2	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	32	25	1	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	19	37	7	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	25	31	0	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	34	28	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	31	4	0	2