

INSPECTION REPORT

**OAKFIELD CHURCH OF ENGLAND AIDED
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Ryde

LEA area: Isle of Wight

Unique reference number: 118193

Head teacher: Mrs Y E Brannan

Reporting inspector: Mr. R. Greatrex
19924

Dates of inspection: 11th – 12th March 2003

Inspection number: 247851

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M. Wilkins
Date of previous inspection:	9 th March 1998

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Oakfield is a medium-sized Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School with 207 boys and girls on roll, from four to nine years of age. These pupils enter school with a wide range of attainment levels but most are well below average. There are 58 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, a proportion well above the national average. Most have learning difficulties, four have a statement outlining this need. The vast majority of pupils are of white heritage backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school during the school year is relatively high. Very good links with the local playgroup ensure children settle quickly and easily into school life.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Oakfield is a good school overall. It is a fully inclusive school, welcoming all pupils to its school family and generally tailoring a curriculum to meet their needs. Standards when pupils leave at the end of Year 4 are above average. This is very good progress from when pupils first join. The quality of teaching is good overall and very good in Year 4 when pupils make most progress. The head teacher is effective and works closely with governors who fulfil an important role in shaping the future of the school. In the recent past, the school has suffered from relatively high levels of staff absence. The head has managed this well. Even so, it has had an adverse effect, particularly upon continuity of teaching and rate of school development. The school nonetheless gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils do well at Oakfield and generally make good progress.
- All staff take very good care of their pupils.
- Teaching in Years 1-4 is good. This leads to a good rate of progress by pupils.
- Pupils themselves contribute much to their learning and the school community as a whole.
- The head leads and manages the school effectively. She and the governing body know most of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- Parents are very supportive of the school, and the school of them. This is beneficial to how well pupils achieve.

What could be improved

- Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is insufficient and standards are too low.*
- Planning and assessment in reception needs further improvement.
- Provision for homework is insufficient.*

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

** These areas for improvement have already been recognised by the school and changes planned.*

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress since it was last inspected in March 1998. Standards have continued to improve steadily. In most classes and activities, pupils have much better opportunities to think for themselves and plan their own work. Pupils also have many more worthwhile opportunities for real involvement in their school community and decisions that directly affect them. Reports now fully conform to requirements. There is much detail of work covered, especially in English and Mathematics. Overall, the school is well placed to improve further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	D	A	D	B
writing	C	A	B	A
mathematics	C	A	C	B

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

Overall, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average in Year 4, pupils' final year at Oakfield. These pupils have continued to make good progress since their national tests two years ago. As reported at the last inspection, Year 4 is where pupils make most rapid progress and achieve particularly well. Parents, at the meeting and in questionnaire responses, stated that they feel standards are high in all subjects.

National tests results fell in Year 2 fell in 2002. Even so there is much evidence that these pupils made, and are continuing to make, good progress compared with how they have done previously. National test results were above the national average in writing, average in mathematics, but well below average in reading. The school has recognised this and altered the curriculum to give greater emphasis to reading, particularly basic skills. When results are compared with schools with a similar pupil profile as Oakfield, they are above average in reading and mathematics and well above average in writing. Oakfield clearly adds value to pupils' learning.

Standards when pupils join Year 1 cover a wide range but are well below average overall. In Reception children make satisfactory progress overall. Many of the most and least able however do not achieve as well as they should. This is largely because tasks are not matched accurately enough to their differing knowledge, understanding, skills and needs.

Standards in literacy are good by the time pupils leave the school. Standards rise steadily and pupils make good progress, often from a very low starting point. Pupils enjoy the excellent opportunities to write expressively in Year 4, but even there the work of many is still punctuated by basic mistakes and choice of vocabulary is much more restricted when they write for themselves. Standards in numeracy are also good by the time pupils leave the school. Good use is made of both national strategies to ensure pupils have activities matched to their needs. Standards in ICT are below average, largely because pupils have insufficient opportunities to use equipment and software.

Pupils with special educational needs do well and generally meet the targets set for them. They do particularly well when supported by adults. Pupils for whom English is an additional language do well too. The most able pupils, too, do well in Years 1 to 4 where activities are at just the right level to see they are working productively. They thrive on the challenge. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very keen and enthusiastic. They mostly want to learn. They try their best at challenging work. They are very interested in everything the school offers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Nearly every pupil behaves very well in lessons and around the school. They take care of one another. Oakfield is a very harmonious school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Girls and boys of all ages get on very well together. They work together very co-operatively. They work very well with teachers, support staff and volunteers alike. Pupils are very keen to take on any responsibility and to play a very active role in the life of the school. They leave Oakfield well-rounded individuals.
Attendance	Attendance has improved steadily and is now satisfactory. Most pupils are punctual and the day gets off to a good and purposeful start.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Reception	Years 1-2	Years 3-4
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	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.

Teaching is good overall and pupils make good progress in their learning. This is similar to the picture at the last inspection in 1998. In the meantime, however, there have been important improvements in pupils' involvement in their own learning. Now many more tasks and activities ensure pupils think for themselves and plan their own work, such as science investigations. Consequently new learning is better and pupils have a greater understanding. All parents who responded to the questionnaire also feel teaching is good.

As in 1998, the best teaching is in Year 4. Here it is consistently very good. Teachers enthuse pupils and challenge them to push themselves to their limits, for example in their choice and use of descriptive vocabulary in 'Writers' Journal'. Pupils thrive on this stimulation and in a subject few find easy-respond with great effort, determination and perseverance. In Years 1-3 teaching is good. Much is done to develop pupils' reading skills particularly. In the most effective lessons teachers make sure that pupils' limited vocabulary does not hinder their progress in other subjects. In Reception, teaching is generally satisfactory in lessons but the quality of planning is not. Many tasks are insufficiently matched to the needs of pupils. The most and least able are particularly affected and the learning of some of these is sometimes at a slower rate than it could be. Teaching of literacy and numeracy are generally good. The national strategies are used effectively. Pupils make good progress in their learning although most start from a very low base, particularly in reading. Extra help is given to many pupils. This is most effective when staff leading the group recognise opportunities to reinforce and extend learning, rather than just following a pre-planned schedule.

In most classes, pupils with special educational needs are well taught by teaching and support staff. They have tasks carefully matched to their needs so that they make the

progress of which they are capable. Good numbers of well trained adults means pupils get the support they need when they need it.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. A good range of work is provided across all subjects except ICT, where some elements are missing. There are good links between subjects. Both result in a rich and stimulating curriculum that gives pupils a broader education than found in many schools nationally.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Most pupils' needs are accurately identified and work carefully planned to meet them. Progress is regularly checked to ensure that tasks are pitched at the right level and each of these pupils does as well as can be expected.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. These pupils are well catered for with a tailor-made curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good and much improved since the last inspection. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and to play a fuller and more active role in school life. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong. Boys and girls work particularly well together. Pupils' social and moral development is very strong.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Staff are very caring, the protection and safety of pupils central to their thinking. Staff know their pupils very well and provide an environment in which the vast majority of pupils blossom, flourish and achieve all that can be expected of them.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very good overall. Parents and school work very closely together in many ways. This is very beneficial to pupils' progress and development in school particularly. However, the homework policy is still too vague.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher offers very good leadership. She has led the school successfully through a difficult time of staff absence. There is a clear vision for Oakfield's future. Staff are fully involved and there is a very strong sense of teamwork. The good number of able and experienced teaching assistants is used effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors know their school well. They work effectively as a team and with the headteacher to shape Oakfield's future. They strike the right balance between supporting and questioning the school. The school's anti-racist policy is effective.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Oakfield's is a school that regularly checks on how well it is doing. It knows most of its own strengths and areas for improvement. For example, it has recognised that reading standards need improving and has begun to tackle this.
The strategic use of resources	Head and governors have a clear vision for Oakfield. They use resources accordingly, planning their use to meet agreed aims and priorities such as maintaining low pupil numbers in each class and building a computer suite. To this purpose the school has kept back a relatively high proportion of its budget. Principles of best value are used with increasing effectiveness. The school is in two main buildings, on a hill-side. This presents difficulties, such as the steps into, out of and in some classrooms. Nonetheless the school does much to use the accommodation imaginatively to best advantage and no space is wasted.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents feel comfortable raising questions or problems • Teaching is good • Pupils are expected to work hard and do their best • The school helps pupils mature and become responsible • The school is well led and managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clearer policy about homework, so they know exactly what is expected of them and their children • A better range of activities outside of lessons

Parents feel the school is improving steadily. They speak very positively about the school, and say it is always trying to do what is best for their children. They feel it strikes the right balance between supporting and caring for their children, expecting them to achieve well academically and developing the 'whole child'. Parents feel that the school works closely with them and encourages them to play a full and active role in their children's schooling. Inspectors agree that the homework policy and procedure needs updating. In an attempt to be sensitive to parents differing circumstances, the school has a policy that is too general. Consequently it is unclear and can result in younger children having more to do than their elders. Parents state that it would be more helpful if it made clear when parents should expect their children to bring work home and how much their children should be expected to do. The school has already recognised that changes are necessary. Inspectors feel that the range of activities outside of lessons is of good quality and appropriate for a primary school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils do well at Oakfield and generally make good progress.

1. Pupils leave Oakfield as generally “well rounded” individuals with academic standards that show good improvement since they joined the school. They enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum that leads to good achievement and gives them experience across many areas, for example writing to pen-pals in Leicester and Germany.

2. In English, standards improve steadily from a generally very low starting point so that the present Year 4 are working at above average levels. In Year 4, pupils know that ‘calmly’ and ‘swiftly’ are adverbs. Some know that let’s is shortened, and not for possession. In Year 3, the least able pupils manage most letter sounds but confuse a small number such as ‘p’ for ‘q’. In Year 2, nearly all pupils join in reading aloud. Many are less confident reading alone. They enjoy books nonetheless and can describe the meaning of words such as ‘blurb’. A few know an exclamation point is used when ‘something is exciting’, and about half know compound words are words ‘stuck together’. When writing, many are still unable to write with a consistent size and shape to their letters. Spelling errors are regular and vocabulary limited. Most have a better understanding of the use of capital letters and how to construct a sentence. About a quarter can order words alphabetically, including when two words start with the same letter. In Year 1, letter formation of many pupils is still at an early stage. Although staff model good size and shape, and include flicks ready for joining, pupils still struggle. Less able pupils can often accurately recognise the sound of the first letter of a word such as ‘pear’. They are learning sound blends such as ‘ight’, although most struggle. When working independently most tend to focus on the sound of the first letter of any word and guess the rest, for example reading ‘hexagon’ for ‘heading’.

3. In mathematics, standards also rise steadily through the school and are generally above average when pupils leave at the end of Year 4. In Year 4, pupils are beginning to understand the difference between obtuse, acute and right angles. Some pupils’ mental strategies are limited and, for example, they are unable to find a quick and simple way to add numbers such as 69 and 22. Year 3 pupils can make the biggest and smallest numbers from three digits. Some have a good understanding of how an event can be judged likely or unlikely. In Year 2, the less able pupils know one more than eight is nine. They struggle to subtract one from 10 or two from five and need a lot of guidance to share twelve between four. In Year 1, the most able can count confidently and accurately to fifteen, some to twenty. Most of the least able can count to ten independently, to twenty with support. In Reception, the most able know that if there are 21 in the class and 19 are present, then two are absent. Most join in to read aloud one to 20 and find something “shorter than” or “taller than” themselves. With good adult support, they can measure one another’s height using large building blocks.

4. In science, Year 4 pupils know what is meant by a fair test, and can explain how a test is fair. They can make predictions based on careful use of their existing scientific knowledge and observation, for example of the tread on trainers. The vast majority know that a force is needed to make an object move, and that some things grip while others slip and slide. Year 1 pupils know that transparent means ‘you can see through it’. They know the senses and can accurately judge materials rough or smooth.

5. In line with the stated aim and objective of developing the ‘whole’ child, the school also offers good quality extra-curricular provision. The right balance is struck between developing skills in activities such as chess and soccer, and social development.

6. Provision for more able pupils in Years 1-4 is good and they achieve high standards. These needs are recognised and work tailored to meet them. They often receive individual or small group support with a curriculum, such as in Year 4 mathematics lesson, carefully planned to meet their specific needs.

7. Pupils with special educational needs do well in terms of reaching their targets. They do particularly well when supported.

All staff take very good care of their pupils.

8. Relationships are excellent. Pupils are very confident of the adults that help them. There is very much the feel of a small school about Oakfield, where all staff know their pupils as individuals. Despite the relatively high mobility, staff know all pupils very well. The pupils care and well being is always uppermost in staff thinking.

9. Pupils and staff work together very productively. In Year 3 for example, teachers are able to use humour to good effect and pupils understand that this is appropriate.

10. Pupils are quickly made to feel welcome and part of the 'Oakfield family'. A pupil who has just joined is delighted when his teacher beams at him, "I am so pleased you have joined our class".

11. The school places great importance on maintaining a high level of staff and other adult support. This good number of adults enables pupils to have the help they need when they need it. This is advantageous to pupils' progress.

12. The school recognises that many pupils have non-educational needs that need to be met, without impacting on teaching time. For example, a popular 'breakfast club' offers children a wholesome breakfast and the opportunity of extra learning. It also ensures that these pupils are present for a punctual and calm start to the day.

13. Parents are very confident in the guidance offered to their children by staff on issues such as moral development.

Teaching in Years 1-4 is good. This leads to a good rate of progress by pupils.

14. Subject knowledge has improved since the last inspection and is good overall. Subject knowledge in music is excellent in lessons taught by the specialist. In an excellent Year 2 lesson, the clarity of explanation and guidance in how to hold certain instruments enabled pupils to succeed and progress in their learning at a good rate. The detail and anecdotal illustration interested and enthused pupils so that a large group with little extra help made very good advances in learning. In ICT, the very good subject knowledge of teachers, support staff and volunteers enables pupils to learn effectively.

15. Challenging teaching demands a lot of pupils and leads to faster progress and better achievement, even in subjects many pupils struggle to master. In an excellent Year 4 'Writers' Journal', the teacher challenges pupils to make their writing 'incredible', 'astonishing' and 'extraordinary'. A very positive atmosphere is created with a real 'buzz' about the room. Learning is of very high quality. The teacher's challenge to 'have fun with writing', a constant theme through the session, leads to sentences such as, 'Before yesterday an albatross astonished me for he was cooking fish and chips'. The teacher skilfully goes on to show pupils how to re-draft and refine writing. A very productive session ensues.

16. Most teachers use questioning well. For example, in a very good Year 2 literacy lesson, open-ended questions are used to challenge pupils and make them think carefully. One or two teachers will ask pupils who respond correctly to give further answers. Given the relatively low standards of speaking and listening, this is particularly beneficial and leads to better progress. In a good Year 2 numeracy lesson, the teacher regularly asked questions to find out how pupils had come to their answers. This was very beneficial. It helped pupils clarify thinking, gave many in the class an alternative strategy and reinforced the pupils' speaking and listening skills. In a good Year 3 mental starter to a lesson, both teacher and support staff worked closely together to encourage pupils quick and accurate responses. Good discussion of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division led to good gains in learning and improved use of mental strategies.

17. In the most successful lessons, pupils are fully involved in their own learning. In a very good Year 4 science lesson, pupils readily accepted the many opportunities to be involved in their own learning. They used existing scientific knowledge well to discuss ideas for the organisation of an investigation. They clearly understand the need for a fair test and how to find an effective testing method.

18. Most effective teaching caters for the limited English knowledge of many pupils by giving good support so that this does not adversely affect progress in other subjects. In a good Year 1 science lesson, independent tasks are designed to require the minimum of language to understand the instructions and become involved in the scientific learning. Elsewhere in the lesson, subject specific vocabulary is introduced carefully and regularly reinforced. Pupils are challenged to use these words themselves. Good learning takes place.

19. In Reception, teachers use stories effectively to encourage dialogue. Pupils' enjoy discussing the illustrations and teachers extend their thinking successfully through questions such as 'how would you feel if'. Given the low level of English of the vast majority of pupils, this successfully targets their needs.

20. Targets are used particularly effectively in some classes. Here they are referred to regularly and form a real and practical focus for pupils' work. In Year 2 for example, a target to 'join letters in compound words' is reinforced effectively by the teacher who models what to do.

21. Where teachers are enthusiastic themselves, they enthuse and inspire pupils. In Year 4, pupils are constantly fed a series of well thought out and relevant tasks that interest them. In these classes the rate and quality of learning are high.

22. Most teachers constantly and consistently set a good example of what they want and expect from their pupils. In a very good Year 2 literacy lesson, the teacher frequently shows pupils what she is expecting from them, for example how to correct or change words when drafting or how to join writing.

23. Pupils' behaviour is very well managed so that lessons proceed smoothly and no time is wasted. In a good Year 1 mathematics lesson, the teacher regularly looks to 'find children being good' and uses praise to encourage others to follow.

24. Teachers are very encouraging of pupils' successes and quick to praise and reinforce. When a Year 2 pupil refers to 'sections' of a book, his teacher is quick to pick this up and uses the word herself in subsequent discussion.

25. Group work clearly demonstrates teachers know their pupils well and have a good understanding of their different needs. Clear lesson objectives determine how groups will be organised.

26. In most classes, a good number of additional adults are used productively and give good support. These staff offer good guidance to pupils, for example in a Year 1 literacy group. They are generally fully prepared by teachers. Consequently they are confident in what they are doing, what they are seeking to achieve and how to spot how well pupils are progressing.

Pupils themselves contribute much to their learning and the school community as a whole.

27. There is a calm but purposeful atmosphere in the school. From the moment the day begins, pupils and staff are focused on lessons. This is advantageous to the pace of pupils' learning.

28. Pupils' very good behaviour contributes much to their own learning. In Year 2, for example, a relatively large group in a confined area moves easily and quickly around the room. When the teacher moves from whole class discussion to group work, pupils are quickly to work without time being wasted. They have a strong work ethic and work purposefully whether closely supervised or not.

29. Behaviour in the playground is generally very good. Equipment such as skipping ropes is shared as pupils play well together. Others choose to sit and chat in the quiet areas provided.

30. Pupils show a great deal of care for one another, and for their school. A pupil who falls over in the playground is immediately surrounded by others eager to help and showing great concern. Even the youngest show this impressive commitment. During the inspection, a Reception child passing a poster hanging from the wall showed his concern for the school environment by picking up the detached end and reattaching it before continuing on his way.

31. Pupils accept responsibility willingly. The School Council gives pupils excellent opportunities for involvement in the life of the school. Pupils discuss topics of interest, such as the playground, in their classes. Representatives then take these views to the Council. Many pupils have been given this worthwhile opportunity.

32. Much is done out of school to develop further pupils' self-confidence. For example pupils regularly perform in dramatic productions, read in church and provided a tea party to raise funds for charity.

The head leads and manages the school effectively. She and the governing body know most of the school's strengths and areas for development.

33. The headteacher leads the school very well. She knows the background of her pupils thoroughly, and is developing the school to cater to their differing needs whilst raising standards further. For example she has introduced a 'family support worker', seen as very beneficial to pupils and parents alike. Management is equally effective.

34. The governing body has continued to play an increasingly important role in the school. Governors know their school well. They have a broad picture of how the school is doing and the information they need to make informed decisions and judgements. They clearly know their priorities, such as maintaining small class sizes and providing a computer suite, and plan to bring their aspirations to a reality. Governors work well together as a team and with the headteacher. Every governor's strengths are recognised and increasingly utilised in the role they play in the school.

Parents are very supportive of the school, and the school of them. This is beneficial to how well pupils achieve.

35. Parents are very supportive of the school, and the school of them. This is very beneficial to how well their children do in school. Many parents help in school and individual parent's particular strengths, for example in ICT, are recognised and fully utilised by the school.

36. "Family Learning" is very advantageous to the progress of pupils. Parents are first shown how to work purposefully with their children on tasks that are stimulating and beneficial. Tasks fully involving parents and their children then follow under close supervision of staff. Finally, parents and children are encouraged to continue this pattern at home.

37. Many parents benefit personally from the scheme. Some participating parents have poor memories of their own schooling which can adversely affect their attitudes to their children's education. The scheme gives them a second chance at Education and enables them to gain confidence in their ability to be successful learners. Many go on to further study, ranging from soccer coaching to university degrees. In turn this benefits their children, both reinforcing a positive attitude to schooling and demonstrating that learning is life-long.

38. Imaginative tasks and activities are beneficial to pupils' learning and help enormously to create a sense of community. School works closely with parents and children on many worthwhile tasks, such as a large community event like carnival or 'family weekend'. Pupils and their parents have many fond memories of these, and pupils can remember what they learnt and did very clearly.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Provision for ICT is insufficient and standards are too low.

39. Although pupils are given many worthwhile and relevant ICT tasks, and teaching is generally of a good quality and improved since the last inspection, standards are below those expected for pupils' age throughout the school. This is largely because there are insufficient opportunities provided for pupils to develop competence and skills to the expected level.

40. Most classes are engaged in worthwhile activities. These are relevant to their experience and link with other curriculum areas. During the inspection for example, able Year 3 pupils used the computer effectively to extend their work on probability. At the same time, Year 4 pupils were scanning their own photographs into the computer to support work on 'portraits'. Both of these activities were relevant to their studies and used ICT meaningfully. Even so, this was the first time Year 4 had used the scanner, and it did not work with the classes' computers. These pupils also write emails regularly and use the Internet for research, for example about the Chinese New Year. Even so, a lot of pupils use the keyboard laboriously and have limited understanding.

41. There is a generally broad curriculum with sufficient coverage of most aspects of ICT. Given the limitations of equipment, the school provides experiences and activities in most areas of the ICT curriculum. Some, however, are limited. For example, many pupils have little understanding of control and very limited knowledge of how ICT is used in the wider world.

42. Knowledge and understanding is very varied. Terms such as 'cut and paste' or 'highlight' are not understood by all pupils who should know them. Pupils have too little experience of using equipment and standards are consequently lower than they should be. In Year 1, some pupils use the keyboard heavy-handedly, pressing the key so hard that the letter is repeated many times. In Year 2, pupils type laboriously, generally using a single finger only. Even when emailing in Year 4, pupils often use one finger to type. Pupils demonstrate better skills when using the mouse. Some Reception children, for example, can draw satisfactorily using a mouse and graphics program.

43. The lack of hardware limits 'hands-on' experience and progress. In a satisfactory Year 3 ICT whole class instruction, the teacher gave a very good demonstration and explanation, but not all pupils could see the screen and some who could struggled to see what was happening on it. Despite the high quality teaching, limitations of equipment made whole class teaching difficult and had an adverse affect on pupils' progress and learning.

44. Plans exist to improve provision. Given the good quality of teaching, this should enable pupils in the future to have the access necessary to enable them to develop sufficient competence.

Planning and assessment in reception needs further improvement.

45. Although planning covers all six areas of learning and is broadly based upon the nationally-recognised curriculum, it is often insufficiently matched to children's levels. It takes too little account of information about children's previous learning, interests and experiences. Objectives are linked directly to the curriculum, but are not broken down into small attainable gains in learning.

46. Planning for most literacy and numeracy sessions is satisfactory and makes good use of the advice and guidance given. In other subjects, planning more rarely shows a clear purpose to the activity, or what it is that children are intended to learn.

47. Daily planning is often insufficient to make the best use of the time spent on an activity. Learning objectives are often far too broad and do not make clear precisely what pupils are expected to learn. They are not specific enough to enable activities to be purposeful. For example, a group may play in the café for 30 minutes without any clear focus or direction. In many activities seen, children playing with basic equipment provided every day such as, sand, bricks or paint were not given additional challenges from one day to the next, to build upon their thinking, experiences or knowledge.

48. During activities, staff seek to modify tasks or give extra support and encouragement through their questioning, so that all children are fully included and their needs catered for. However, this is done insufficiently at the planning stage and is consequently less systematic. Planning rarely includes how children's knowledge, understanding and skills will be extended. It is rarely adapted to suit children who learn at different rates or who have particular needs. Some tasks are insufficiently matched to children's abilities, experiences or needs. Consequently less is sometimes achieved than ought to be the case. More able children can repeat learning whilst the less able flounder.

49. Good learning opportunities are regularly created, but the value of them to pupils can be partly lost. For example, when looking at the features of a flower, pupils were given a good selection of objects with different smells to experience. However, they were not asked for words to describe them and opportunities to develop vocabulary and for other gains in learning were lost.

50. When planning clearly indicates how adult support will be utilised, learning is more productive. For example, children were able to measure one another's height successfully using large building blocks because they had adult support. The skill of the adult, particularly in the open-ended questions asked to provoke children's thoughts and get them to come up with solutions, was very effective. For example, deciding how to accurately measure height when the last brick was either too low or too high led to a very good discussion. However, this is not always the case.

51. Provision for outdoor play has improved since the last inspection. Children now enjoy using a good range of small apparatus. However, although the activity plan may be clear, for example stating that there will be 'focus on balancing/play routes', there is no evidence of this in either the choice of apparatus nor in the teaching input.

52. Role play areas are not well used, and there has been little improvement since the last inspection. For example, children in a 'castle' play very co-operatively, but to no particular purpose.

53. Recently, in one of the classes, opportunities are being taken for observation and assessment to be used more usefully. One of the intentions is to better match the next similar activity to the child's achievements in this. This is a recent development, following training.

54. Otherwise, most assessment is of the lesson, not children's progress. Even then assessment is not always used rigorously to inform planning. For example, a comment such as 'role play needs to be led more' following one lesson is not followed up in a subsequent lesson. Children often do not know what is expected of them when they start these activities.

55. Summing-up at the end of the lesson is rarely used to assess children's achievements. When children's work is shown, it is not used in reference to learning objectives and the teachers' targets for pupils' learning.

Provision for homework is insufficient.

56. Some work done outside school is of very high quality. 'Family Learning' is very advantageous to the quality of work done outside of school by the pupils whose parents take part. This is a comparatively small but growing group. Homework is generally relevant to work done in school and set at the pupils' levels.

57. Many parents do not know the school's homework policy sufficiently to benefit their children. The school has rightly done all it can to encourage parents to attend the first, introductory parents' meeting of each school year. Part of this meeting has been a discussion of what the pupils will do through the year, and how homework is organised. The school recognises that this good intention is only effective if all parents attend, and that some cannot. Changes to this policy, so that information is sent home, are therefore planned. Information about the curriculum, too, is readily available but not currently sent home to all parents.

58. Parents do not know what is expected of them or their children on a daily or weekly basis, and consequently are of limited support to their children. The school has issued helpful 'homework guidelines' that list the general expectations of each year group. However, many parents would like more specific and practical guidance. The amount as well as the frequency varies. Sometimes pupils are given a great deal to do all at once. Sometimes homework is irregular and parents do not know what is expected, nor when. Furthermore, the general nature of the expectation can lead to pupils in a younger year group being asked to do more than their elders. This in turn does not prepare pupils sufficiently for the next stage in their learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. In order to ensure that Oakfield continues to improve, the school should:

- (1) Raise standards in ICT by providing:
 - Sufficient coverage of the full range of the National Curriculum requirements
 - sufficient access for pupils to equipment so that they develop the necessary competence and skills(Paragraphs: 39-43)

- (2) Improve provision for reception-aged children by better planning for all six areas of learning so that it adequately indicates:
 - what precisely children are expected to learn in that particular session and in that particular activity
 - how the plan is modified for children with special educational needs in this area
 - how the plan is modified for children for whom English is an additional language
 - how knowledge, understanding and skills will be extended
 - how observation and assessment will be used to evaluate what children have learnt and help identify the next steps in learning
 - what activities are adult-led, and how this adult support will be utilised
 - how summing-up sessions will be used to reinforce children's learning and check their progress(Paragraphs: 45-55)

- (3) Use homework more effectively by providing a clear policy so that parents and carers know precisely what is expected of their children.
(Paragraphs: 56-58)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	11

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	5	9	10	0	0	0
Percentage	4	20	36	40	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents four percentage points. NB One lesson was not graded because the length of the observation was too short.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	207
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	59

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	58

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	45
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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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
	2002	18	24	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	17	16
	Girls	17	21	23
	Total	31	38	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (88)	90 (95)	93 (98)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	15	17
	Girls	20	21	20
	Total	33	36	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (88)	86 (93)	88 (95)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	195	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	8	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.7
Average class size	20.7

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	328

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	566 405
Total expenditure	578 030
Expenditure per pupil	2 820
Balance brought forward from previous year	54 992
Balance carried forward to next year	43 367

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	207
Number of questionnaires returned	53

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	26	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	31	2	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	46	6	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	33	17	6	0
The teaching is good.	76	24	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	30	9	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	17	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	31	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	56	39	6	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	72	26	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	37	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	43	15	0	0