



Oak Cottage Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104056
LEA Solihull
Inspection number 277058
Inspection dates 17 January 2006 to 18 January 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Sadler AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Greswolde Road
School category	Community		Solihull
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		West Midlands B91 1DY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 7049123
Number on roll	241	Fax number	0121 7049123
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Paul Tennant
Date of previous inspection	23 January 2001	Headteacher	Mrs Karen O'Keefe

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Oak Cottage Primary School is located in Solihull. The area is relatively advantaged and few pupils receive free school meals. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are below average. On starting school, the pupils have above average skills for children of their age.

The school offers full day care for younger children in partnership with a private company.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The effectiveness of the school is satisfactory, a judgement with which school managers agree. It is also agreed that there are a number of significant strengths, including pupils' enjoyment of school, as shown by their attendance and behaviour in lessons. The school provides satisfactory value for money. Staff are very enthusiastic and the quality of the teaching is good and improving following recent changes. The quality and range of extension activities are excellent, especially in the field of the arts. The provision and use of information and communication technology (ICT) is good, a significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve well.

Standards and achievement in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory, with considerable potential for further improvement now that there is better collaboration between the school and the childcare provider. By Year 6, the pupils' standards are above average and their achievement is satisfactory. Reasons for a fall in standards of English and mathematics in 2005 have been analysed and steps taken to avoid a recurrence. The school is satisfactorily led and managed but the monitoring of teaching by subject leaders currently lacks rigour, and teachers underuse the valuable information they collect while tracking each pupil's progress. Overall, the school has responded well to the issues raised at the last inspection and has the capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievement in English and mathematics further by making fuller use of the information gathered through assessing and tracking their progress.
- Further develop the monitoring role of subject leaders through more precise identification of what needs to be done to improve teaching and the pupils' achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils reach above average standards on leaving the school and their achievement is satisfactory. In the Nursery and Reception classes, pupils make satisfactory progress and by the age of five, most can count to 20, carry out simple addition and are beginning to read and write. In Years 1 and 2 pupils' achievement is good. In Year 1, pupils can use computers skilfully, for instance to draw and colour pictures, and by Year 2, they can write their ideas in sentences with correct punctuation. By the end of Year 2, all are achieving the nationally expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics and most are exceeding these expectations.

In Years 3 to 6, pupils make satisfactory progress. In the past, they have achieved well above average standards at the end of Year 6 but in 2005, a significant proportion failed to do so in English and there was also a decline in performance in mathematics. Some pupils failed to achieve the targets set for them. Evidence from current pupils' work suggests that the schools' actions to ensure this is not repeated are proving

effective. Older pupils can write accurately and with style and they also read widely for both pleasure and information. They can use the internet effectively for research and can adapt what they find to make it relevant to their work. They are confident in the use of the full range of mathematical techniques.

The small proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress, often catching up with the standards achieved by their fellow pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. They have very good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is good. In class it is exemplary, with all pupils obeying their teachers' instructions. In the playground, boisterous behaviour can be annoying for some younger pupils, although pupils report that there is no bullying. Pupils enjoy school very much. Their attendance is above average and they value opportunities to express their opinions, for example through the school council. They take advantage of the wide range of opportunities on offer and are developing the skills they will need in adult life, for instance by using ICT. Pupils have good social skills and are confident and articulate.

Pupils are encouraged to lead safe and healthy lives and the school has recently achieved the National Healthy Schools Standard. They have many very good opportunities to contribute to the school and wider community, for instance through acting as monitors and through fund-raising for charity. Assemblies, and opportunities to celebrate the rich mix of cultures represented in the school, give good opportunities for spiritual and cultural development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils in terms of both learning and behaviour. They are explicit about what they want pupils to learn and ensure that all pupils in the class do so, for example in Year 5 where, in English, pupils learn how to recognise alliteration, metaphor, simile and onomatopoeia. New appointments have consolidated good teaching across the school. Teachers use ICT well to make lessons interesting, increasing the pace of lessons and involving pupils well, for instance when Year 4 learned various methods of addition rapidly and with enthusiasm by working with the teacher on the interactive whiteboard. Assessment of pupils' work is accurate although, as the school has recognised, teachers' marking sometimes lacks consistency. Pupils with learning difficulties are very well supported by both teachers and support staff.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum and associated activities offered by the school are good. The formal curriculum is satisfactory. All required elements are in place and teachers are beginning to make links that improve pupils' understanding of how the things they learn can be used in a range of situations. As an example, ICT is used well in this way, which is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

The range and quality of extension activities are outstanding. As well as competitive sport and residential activities, there is an exceptional range of high quality opportunities in music, drama and dance that have led to the school receiving the Artsmark Gold Award.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Children starting school are visited at home and a significant proportion of parents help in school on a regular basis. All staff know the children well and make sure their individual needs are met. There are good arrangements for child protection and to ensure pupils' health and safety. The school has good relationships with all local secondary schools and an especially strong partnership with one.

Some parents feel that pupils' learning difficulties are not identified sufficiently quickly. An approach by the Dyslexia Institute to work with the school in partnership should help to resolve this difficulty. Pupils' progress is now tracked carefully. The use of ICT to do this is a relatively recent development and the records are not yet always used to best effect in identifying potential problems. However, pupils have a growing understanding of the targets they are set and of how they might be achieved.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, staff and governors share a clear vision for the school as a place that prepares pupils well for secondary education and adult life. They have drawn up a good plan to achieve this. Reasons for the drop in standards at the end of Year 6 in 2005, including why this was not identified earlier, have been analysed and clear action has been taken to ensure this is not repeated. Subject leaders monitor the quality of what is taught in their subject but the findings of their monitoring do not always clearly identify the action needed to bring about improvement, which lessens the impact of this work. There is a strong commitment to including all pupils equally in what the school provides, as reflected, for instance, in the good achievement of those with learning difficulties.

Leaders and managers are developing the skills needed to have a precise view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and carry out this work satisfactorily. Senior staff have the necessary training and action has been taken, for example to improve the

quality of teaching and the provision in the Nursery and Reception classes. The views of parents and pupils are sought and the school is responding to these with increasing effectiveness.

There has been significant progress in the areas identified as needing improvement at the last inspection. The leadership and other senior managers, supported by the effective governing body, have the capacity to make further improvements.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

The inspectors who visited your school very much enjoyed talking and listening to you and seeing your work. We want to thank you for spending the time to do this. This letter is to tell you what we thought of your school and how it can be even better.

We think Oak Cottage is a satisfactory primary school. The best things about the school are:

- You enjoy school and always come unless you are ill
- There are lots of things to do at lunchtimes and after school.
- You are taught well by teachers, who like teaching you.
- You get on well with each other and with your teachers.
- Teachers listen to what you have to say and take notice of you.
- Pupils who find some work difficult get good help and do well.
- You behave well, especially in your lessons, and there is very little bullying.
- You have lots of opportunities to do things for each other and your community, such as by raising money for charity.
- Your parents are involved in helping you to learn and in improving the school.

We think the school could improve even more if:

- Teachers look carefully at how you are learning so that they can help you do as well as you can, especially in literacy and numeracy.
- Teachers use the things they know work well, to improve their teaching.

Yours sincerely

Mr Sadler Lead Inspector