



Oak Meadow Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104341
LEA Wolverhampton
Inspection number 277136
Inspection dates 21 February 2006 to 22 February 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Allen AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Ryan Avenue
School category	Community		Ashmore Park Wednesfield
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV11 2QQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01902 558517
Number on roll	371	Fax number	01902 558520
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr David Bull
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Sara Morris

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Oak Meadow Primary School is larger than average but the number of pupils on roll has fallen over the last two years with a declining birth rate. The majority of pupils are of White British background, with a very small number from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's effectiveness is satisfactory. This agrees with the views of senior managers, who have a realistic view of how the school is doing. There are significant strengths in the pupils' personal development and the quality of pastoral care. Pupils enjoy school and benefit from the many interesting activities provided outside lessons. They behave well and grow into sensible, responsible individuals. Parents are pleased with the education their children receive.

In Years 1 to 6, pupils make satisfactory progress and attainment is broadly average. The school is beginning to raise standards, for example, in writing in Years 3 to 6, and is strongly committed to raising them further. Pupils' achievement varies according to the quality of teaching, which is satisfactory overall. In several of the classes, teaching is good, but a lack of challenge in others means that progress for some pupils is not as good as it should be. This has been recognised through the monitoring of teaching, but insufficient steps have been taken by the leadership to improve its quality. Teachers are only just beginning to track pupils' progress and make effective use of assessment information to set challenging targets for individual pupils.

The quality of the provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. It provides a good start to the children's learning in literacy and numeracy but the lack of a secure outdoor play area limits the development of their physical skills.

Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory, although attendance is still below average. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior managers have successfully established high expectations for pupils' care and personal development and are committed to raising achievement. The action taken so far shows that they have the capacity to continue to move the school forward. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop more rigorous procedures for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching to promote good achievement
- Further develop the tracking of pupils' progress and the use of target setting to provide pupils with a clearer understanding of what they need to do to improve
- Continue to work with parents to improve attendance
- Improve the provision for outdoor learning for the Reception classes.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they reach broadly average standards, although there are some slight variations between year groups. In Reception, children make satisfactory progress overall from average attainment on entry. They make good progress in literacy and numeracy and by the time they enter Year 1 most have reached the goals expected for their age.

By the end of Year 2, standards are slightly above average. Attainment in reading, which has dipped over the last two years, is now above average as a result of better reading materials and more opportunities to hear pupils read. Standards in Year 6 were above average in 2005 in mathematics and science, while those in English fell to below average because of weaknesses in writing, particularly amongst boys. Strategies put in place to improve boys' writing are having a positive effect and pupils are now on track to achieve broadly average standards in English. Across the school there are no other significant differences between boys' and girls' attainment. The very small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as their classmates, as do those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils' achievement in Years 1 to 6, although satisfactory overall, varies according to the quality of teaching. Pupils in some parallel classes make better progress over the year than those in the other class. The school has recently begun to set challenging targets for individual pupils, which are being met, but further improvement is needed.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school's caring ethos pervades all aspects of its life and contributes strongly to pupils' good personal development. Pupils have positive attitudes, are confident and enjoy school. They support each other well and behave sensibly in lessons and around school. The vast majority have good attendance records but there is a significant minority whose attendance is poor. In spite of the school's best efforts, attendance is below average because a few parents do not ensure that their children attend school regularly.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are given a good understanding of the multi-cultural world in which they are growing up. They take responsibility willingly. The class and school councils have a significant impact on school life, for example, by introducing new games to improve playtimes.

Pupils gain a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They are given good opportunities for exercise, including a wide range of sporting activities. Involvement in the local community includes performances by the choir and visits to local businesses. These activities, together with their well-developed social skills, prepare pupils satisfactorily for the world of work

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although there is good teaching in several classes, it is not good in others and consequently the overall picture is of satisfactory teaching and learning. In some year groups, one of the two classes benefits from more effective teaching than the other.

In the best lessons, teachers' expectations are high and work is set which is challenging and stimulating. It captures pupils' interest and they achieve well. In some lessons

there is not enough challenge for higher-attaining pupils to reach their full potential, for example, in writing. In these lessons, too little is expected of the lower attainers.

Teachers have very caring relationships with pupils and teaching assistants are used well, often to provide effective support to pupils with learning difficulties. The school makes good use of the expertise of staff through specialist teaching in music, physical education and information and communication technology, which promotes good standards in those subjects. Teachers are beginning to make effective use of interactive whiteboards to make good quality presentations and engage the pupils well.

The quality of marking is variable. Where it is good it shows pupils clearly how to improve, but sometimes only brief comment fails to provide any guidance. The school has only recently begun to develop its systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress through setting individual targets, initially in writing and mathematics. These systems have not yet had time to impact significantly on pupil achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school has recently made good improvements to make the curriculum more interesting for boys, such as opportunities to write poems about sporting heroes. Good opportunities to develop writing skills in a variety of subjects are helping to raise standards. However, the curriculum does not always meet all pupils' needs, such as when there is insufficient challenge for higher attainers.

The curriculum in Reception is well planned to promote progress, especially in literacy, numeracy and personal development. However, the lack of a secure outdoor play area and resources places constraints on children's physical development.

The school is effective in teaching pupils how to stay healthy and safe. A wide range of visitors and visits, including residential education, contributes significantly to pupils' personal development, as do the very good opportunities for regular performances involving dance, drama and music. The very good number of out-of-school activities serve to enrich the pupils' school lives.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

While the school offers good levels of care, the guidance and support for pupils' academic progress are less effective. Children are welcomed into the warm, secure environment of the Reception classes where they are made to feel special. Throughout the school, each child is valued as an individual.

Appropriate procedures are in place for ensuring pupils' safety. One pupil summed up the views of many when she said, 'There's no bullying and if there was a tiny bit the staff would put a stop to it straightaway'. Support for pupils is enhanced by effective communication with parents and outside agencies.

Procedures for guiding and supporting learning are not yet rigorous enough to ensure that each pupil makes the best possible progress. Systems to track academic progress

are still developing. The assessment of learning has yet to become firmly established and the pupils' own involvement in setting and checking their targets for improvement needs further development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Although there are important strengths, leadership and management at all levels are satisfactory. A strength of the headteacher's leadership is her successful promotion of the high level of pastoral care, as reflected in the very good relationships and pupils' good personal development. Parents and pupils' opinions are valued and they are regularly consulted for their views of the school. Well supported by the deputy, the headteacher has correctly identified the school's strengths and weaknesses. The recently introduced system to track pupils' progress is beginning to have an impact on raising standards, for example, in boys' writing in Year 6. However, the school's procedures for checking how well it is doing are not always rigorous enough. The school improvement plan identifies the most significant priorities for development, but does not always provide sufficiently clear targets. Progress across the school is uneven because the quality of teaching is inconsistent and the monitoring of teaching is not yet having insufficient impact on improving its quality.

Governance is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. The governing body recognises that it needs help to plan for the declining numbers and is appropriately seeking the guidance of the local education authority.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection, although, in spite of its best efforts, attendance remains below average. Senior managers and governors are steadily moving the school in the right direction and have a satisfactory 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?	3	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	3	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	3	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	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	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	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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	3	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	3	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	3	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

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school. We liked talking to you very much. What you said to us was important and helped us to write about your school.

What we liked about your school: •We are pleased that you enjoy school, behave well and get on well with each other. •All the adults look after you well and they give you good advice about how to keep healthy and safe. •There are lots of exciting things to do outside lessons such as all the clubs, the teams and the performances you give. •You enjoy some really interesting visits which make your learning more fun.

There are some things we think your school should be working on: •Making all the lessons as good as they can be. •Checking your progress more closely so as to give you even more helpful targets to improve your work. •Making sure that all children attend school as regularly as most of you do. •Providing an outdoor play area that is especially for the Reception children.

We thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and watching you learn. We wish you well for the future.