



# Oaklands Infant School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 114882  
**LEA** ESSEX LEA  
**Inspection number** 279462  
**Inspection dates** 26 September 2005 to 27 September 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs. Marina Gough LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Vicarage Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		CM2 9PH
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 7		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01245352166
<b>Number on roll</b>	134	<b>Fax number</b>	01245347098
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr. Alison Barnwell
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 May 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs. Alison Widgery

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 7	<b>Inspection dates</b> 26 September 2005 - 27 September 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 279462
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector who spent two days in the school.

## Description of the school

Oaklands is a small infant school that caters for 135 pupils between the ages of four and seven. Most pupils live in close proximity to the school but, because the school has a very good reputation for its work with pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language, a number of children travel some distance to attend this particular school. Most pupils are of white British heritage; however, a higher than average proportion of pupils has English as an additional language. The main languages of these pupils include Dutch, Urdu and Spanish. Although the percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below average, a higher than average percentage of pupils has a statement of special educational needs. The school caters for these pupils exceptionally well and works closely with a local special school where there is shared provision. The children's ability when they start school spans the full range, but taken overall is above the expected level for this age group. The school has a Healthy School Award and has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 1**

Oaklands Infant School is an outstanding school which provides a very good quality of education for all pupils. It is highly effective in the way in which it meets the needs of individual pupils. The school is extremely popular and often has a waiting list. Parents appreciate the sensitive way in which the school cares for their children and the additional provision and support that is made for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their main language. Standards in reading are exceptionally high by the time the pupils leave school, and are well above the level expected in writing and science. In mathematics, standards are above the expected level. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well. In the Reception classes, the pupils get off to a very good start, and make very good progress across all areas of learning. Teaching throughout the school is very good, and leads to the pupils becoming independent and reflective learners who are keen to tackle problems and to make confident choices and decisions about their work. The school has made outstanding progress since the last inspection and is very well placed for continued improvement. The school is very well led and managed at all levels. One of its significant strengths is the teamwork of staff and governors, which leads to a clear agenda for the school's future development, and a shared commitment to ensuring that all pupils do their best. The school's own evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses closely matches the inspection findings, and is open, honest and accurate. The school gives outstanding value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

As stated in the school improvement plan, the school should continue to help pupils to become more confident in solving word problems in mathematics so that standards are raised even further.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with special educational needs, English as an additional language and more able pupils, make outstanding progress as they move through the school. Standards in reading are particularly high, and in this aspect of their learning pupils of all ages and abilities make excellent progress. Reading enjoys a high priority in the school, and is presented as a 'fun' activity. Pupils are stimulated by exciting and challenging reading activities, and enjoy frequent success as their individual targets are met and exceeded. Standards in writing and science are well above the national average, and in these areas pupils make very good progress. Pupils of all ages enjoy writing, and respond very well to a wide range of very different stimuli, such as the recent visit from 'Florence Nightingale' that really captured the pupils' interest and led to imaginative and lively outcomes. In science, the pupils make very good gains in their learning and have a very secure knowledge because of the many opportunities for them to learn through first-hand experience. In mathematics, pupils

make very good progress, and their attainment is above the level expected for their age. This is not always fully reflected in the national test results, which, over the years, show standards in mathematics to be slightly lower than those in reading, writing and science. Through detailed analysis of national test results, the school has recognised that pupils need more practice in decoding word problems. However, in all other areas of mathematics the pupils are very competent and show a very good knowledge and understanding of number, shape, space and measure.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Oaklands' pupils have a real thirst and enthusiasm for learning. They show very high levels of independence and confidence and work very co-operatively. They agree that they like school very much, and that the teachers listen closely to their suggestions and ideas. They say that they enjoy the challenge of being given 'hard work'. Pupils are very well behaved, and sensitive to the needs of others, showing kindness in their role of 'playground buddies' when they spot a child who temporarily has no friend to play with. Attendance is above the national average, and systems for following up the persistent lateness and absence of a very small number of pupils are very good. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The pupils have a very good understanding of the need for simple rules to ensure that the school functions as a happy community, and show a very good appreciation of the difference between right and wrong. Teachers make time during the day for the pupils to reflect on their learning, and to enjoy spiritual moments. The frequent celebrations of different world faiths do much to raise the pupils' awareness of the richness of traditions that are different from their own. The school places great emphasis on the pupils knowing how to maintain a healthy and safe lifestyle. Discussion with pupils of all ages indicates that they understand why they have healthy snack options and playtimes, and that they are aware of the impact of exercise on their bodies.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teaching and learning are outstanding overall. Throughout the school, teachers are extremely effective in the way in which they meet the needs of different groups of pupils. They use assessment information very well to ensure that pupils are on track to achieve the standards of which they are capable, and swiftly intervene if a child is experiencing difficulties or is finding the work too easy. Questions are used very well to extend the pupils' learning and to probe their understanding. Teachers go to a great deal of trouble to make lessons exciting, and are always prepared to 'go the extra mile' in terms of preparing resources that will increase the pupils' enthusiasm for learning. For example, in one lesson seen during the inspection, pupils wore 'blood-stained' bandages to help them to bring the work of Florence Nightingale to life through role-play. Key skills of reading, writing, information and communication technology

and numeracy are taught very well and there are many excellent opportunities for the pupils to use these skills in their work in other subjects. Interactive whiteboards are used imaginatively to enliven both teaching and learning, and the pupils clamour to be chosen to use the 'magic pen' that enables them to click and drag pictures and icons on the classroom screens. The use made of learning support assistants is excellent, and they contribute much to the learning of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. They are attuned to the needs of both teachers and pupils and are sensitive and unobtrusive when giving help to individuals.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding and fully meets the needs of the different age and ability groups. There is an excellent balance of direct teaching and activities that are led and directed by the pupils themselves. Basic skills are taught very well, and there are many very good opportunities for the pupils to use the key skills of reading and writing in their work in other subjects. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is excellent and is a real strength of the overall curriculum provision. The work for these pupils is carefully matched to their stage of development so that they are constantly challenged but never over-awed by the tasks they are given. The school is also very effective in the way in which it stretches the higher attaining pupils so that they reach their potential and maintain their interest in learning. The school provides an extensive range of additional learning activities that significantly enhances and enriches the pupils' learning. The pupils are hugely excited about their weekly timetabled French lessons, and confidently try out new expressions and vocabulary with their friends. German tuition is also available as a lunchtime activity, and this club is very popular and well attended. Music is seen as a high priority, and pupils have many opportunities to take part in performances where they sing and play instruments, including recorders. The school provides a wealth of visits to places of local interest, and makes very good use of the resources of the local area, and the school grounds.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school provides outstanding levels of care, support and guidance. Pupils are encouraged to achieve their best, and to enjoy their learning. Staff know the pupils and their families very well, and do their best to meet the needs of all individuals. Pupils who are known to be vulnerable are closely monitored, and all staff are fully aware of their responsibilities in ensuring that pupils are safe at all times. Discussion with the older pupils shows that bullying is not a problem, and that occasional incidents are dealt with quickly and fairly. The use of assessment to track the pupils' progress is very well established, and enables the staff to monitor the pupils' academic and personal development carefully.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership for the school in a calm and measured way. She has created a very strong team of teachers and learning support assistants who share her vision for academic excellence, and who are committed to making learning 'fun' and exciting. The school has a strong commitment to ensuring that all pupils have equal access to the life and work of the school and this is one of its considerable strengths. The school knows itself very well, and the relative strengths and weaknesses identified in the school's self-evaluation closely reflect the findings of the inspection. However, in their self-evaluation, the headteacher and governing body do not always give themselves enough credit for the many aspects of school life that are outstanding. The school is very well placed for continued development. The role of curriculum co-ordinators has developed very well since the last inspection, and all staff make a very good contribution in terms of checking the quality of teaching and learning and in identifying the next steps for whole-school development. The school is a very reflective community that values and encourages the views of all stakeholders, including parents and pupils. Decisions are reached through a rigorous process of consultation, and change is very well paced and managed so that all those involved feel that they have ownership. Parents appreciate the way that their views are sought and taken account of, and value the easy accessibility of the headteacher and staff. Governors are very involved, knowledgeable and challenging. They fulfil their duties very well, and play a very good role in monitoring and evaluating aspects of the school's work. They manage the school's finances very efficiently and have strong measures in place for measuring the cost-effectiveness of major spending decisions.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	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	1	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

I would like to thank you very much for the help you gave me when I visited your school a short time ago. I really enjoyed my visit, and especially enjoyed sharing lessons with you, and talking to some of you in class and when you were playing outside. I am very pleased that you are all so happy about coming to school, and agree with you that your teachers go to a lot of trouble to make your lessons exciting. Some of you said that you like doing 'hard work', and I could see this when I sat in lessons watching how well you concentrated and how keen you were to get on with the jobs that had been set. Your behaviour is very good, and I like the way you are polite to your teachers and friends. You are all very friendly, and you made me feel really welcome. Mostly you all get on well with each other, but when there are problems, you know who to go to for help. You all like the 'buddy stop', and I agree that this is a very good idea. I think that the school is excellent in the way in which it looks after all of you and helps you to do your best, even when you have some difficulties. I am pleased you like all of the different activities that the school arranges to make your learning enjoyable, and know how much you all enjoy your French lessons and visitors such as Florence Nightingale. I can see that Mrs Widgery works very hard with the rest of the teachers and learning support assistants to make the school a happy place. Because of their hard work and the effort you put in, you are doing very well in writing and science, and very well indeed in reading. In mathematics you are doing well, but could do even better if you could untangle word problems a little more easily. I have suggested to Mrs Widgery and your teachers that they should help you even more with word problems, and I know that they have already started to do this.