



Oakthorpe Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119945
LEA Leicestershire
Inspection number 280692
Inspection dates 2 November 2005 to 2 November 2005
Reporting inspector Roger Sadler RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Street
School category	Community		Oakthorpe
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Swadlincote, Derbyshire DE12 7RE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01530 270383
Number on roll	109	Fax number	01530 274925
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Nicola Busbie
Date of previous inspection	5 June 2000	Headteacher	Mr Norman Jones

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 2 November 2005 - 2 November 2005	Inspection number 280692
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds, only a few are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is a little above average. When children start in Reception they have lower than expected skills, particularly in speaking and listening. An above average percentage of pupils have special educational needs and more pupils leave and join the school after Reception than is typical.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that provides satisfactory value for money. Children receive a satisfactory start in Reception and make reasonable progress. However, they do not reach the expected standards by the time they start Year 1. In other year groups there is too much variation in the progress pupils make. It is good in Years 2, 3 and 4 because teaching meets the needs of pupils of different abilities but slows in Years 5 and 6 where a few of the older, middle ability pupils do not achieve as much as they should because the teaching is not demanding enough. Attainment remains below average by the time pupils leave Year 6. Results in mathematics are better than in English with science the weakest of the three. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils make good progress.

The school has a reasonable understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, although its own evaluation of providing a good education is over generous. The leadership of the school concentrates its work on improving pupils' personal development and creating a happy school. It has been successful in this and pupils behave well, relate well to each other and to adults, they enjoy school. There is not enough attention given to improving levels of achievement. Teaching is satisfactory but there is too much variation in the quality of assessment and in how assessment information is used to plan lessons. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory although marking of work is still not consistently helpful. The school's success in improving pupils' personal development demonstrates it has satisfactory capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that lessons in all classes are sufficiently demanding and meet the needs of all pupils.
- Improve progress particularly in science, English and mathematics.
- Make better use of information about how well pupils are doing to plan future work.
- Focus leadership and the work of the school on improving the achievement of all pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children in Reception make sound progress in most aspects of learning. They make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. This is because, as parents correctly point out, children work in a secure, caring environment. However, by the end of Reception many children are still below the expected level for their age. In Year 1 pupils continue to make satisfactory progress. For many pupils progress speeds up in Year 2. Although test results for seven year olds up to 2004 have lagged behind the national average, the current Year 2 pupils are doing well and are on track to reach standards expected nationally.

From Year 3 to 6 most pupils make satisfactory progress but leave the school with standards that are below average in English, mathematics and science. In 2005 pupils generally met their targets, but these are sometimes not challenging enough. There was some improvement in the number of pupils achieving higher levels, a few middle attaining pupils could do better if more attention was given to boosting their performance. The current Year 3 to 4 pupils are making better progress than the present Year 5 to 6 pupils because the teaching is more challenging.

Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils often make good progress due to the good teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants. In a mathematics lesson in Year 5 to 6 very sensitive support by the learning support assistant in a whole class lesson enabled the lower attaining pupils to keep up with, and enjoy, some work on an area that would have otherwise been too difficult for them.

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good because the school emphasises these strongly. Social development is good. Pupils are friendly. In lessons, they work together effectively and outside they play and relate to each other well, such as in football games at break times. Pupils behave well in most lessons, and very well in the dining room and playground. Their spiritual, moral and cultural development is satisfactory and is emphasised through topics such as the recent one on the Tudors where pupils learned about religion, fashion, art, homes and great deeds and explorations.

Attendance has improved recently to satisfactory levels. Many parents confirm their children enjoy school and lessons. Pupils speak positively about many subjects such as drama and story writing, and about the many varied after school activities. Although the school has satisfactory informal ways of consulting pupils and involving them in running the school, older pupils are keen to have a school council through which they can express themselves more fully. One is planned, but not yet established.

Pupils learn how to adopt healthy and safe ways of living, such as avoiding harmful drugs and exercising well. These are emphasised through the good range of physical activities on offer in and out of school. The school encourages pupils to consider their place in the community, and to find ways of contributing to it. The good range of contacts with the local community includes visitors such as the retired policeman and a local gentleman who came to talk about the war. Pupils' growing confidence in information and communication technology (ICT) and their ability to cooperate well is preparing them effectively for later life.

Grade: 2

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall. There are examples of good teaching in the school that help pupils make good progress. For example, in Year 2 very effective assessment and planning for the full range of ability, enabled all pupils to make good progress in an English lesson. However, the quality of assessment and marking of work are inconsistent. For example pupils in Year 3 and 4 have a very clear idea of what they need to do to improve because the marking is informative and helpful. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are much less clear about what they need to do because the marking does not inform them about how to improve. This hinders the progress they might make, particularly in mathematics.

In all classes, pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils make good progress because their needs are accurately assessed and the information is used well by teachers and learning support assistants. Knowledge of middle attaining pupils, who are underachieving in English and mathematics, is not used consistently well to target extra provision to boost their performance to reach the expected levels for their ages.

Teachers generally manage pupils well and relationships in most classes are good. As a result pupils have good attitudes to learning and they enjoy lessons. Sometimes not enough is expected of the oldest pupils' behaviour or the way they present their work and this holds them back.

The frequent and effective use of resources and ICT, including interactive whiteboards, helps teachers with their whole class teaching and enables pupils to enjoy lessons.

Grade: 3

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Teachers work hard to make learning fun by planning interesting lessons. However, work is not always demanding enough for a few middle attaining pupils. Interesting work helps most pupils develop positive attitudes towards school and learning and also helps them sustain concentration in lessons. Provision for the development of literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory, with other subjects covered in a balanced way, often through topics. Pupils talk animatedly about their work on art, history, geography and religious beliefs of the Romans and ancient Greeks.

Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the good levels of support both in lessons and in smaller groups. Specialist teachers for pupils with learning difficulties come into school regularly to provide additional curriculum support.

Pupils have plenty of opportunities to use ICT and develop their skills in different subjects. They also take part in a good range of activities out of school hours, particularly sport-related ones. Pupils were particularly excited about the tag rugby

they play. Other activities include football, gymnastics, art, music, environmental activities and computer studies.

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Parents are rightly pleased with the help and care their children receive when they first enter school. Throughout the school pupils are well looked after, feel safe in school, are not bullied, and feel able to talk with staff if they have any problems. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the growing emphasis on healthy eating and understand why sweets are no longer given out as part of the school's rewards system. They also appreciate the increasing emphasis on physical activity in the school. Staff know their pupils well and set very good personal examples throughout the school. The arrangements for monitoring pupils' personal well-being are good, particularly for the children who have learning or other difficulties. Particular aspects of personal development are effectively taught in separate lessons by teachers and visitors such as the school nurse, but most often, personal development and citizenship topics are satisfactorily dealt with through the general range of subjects taught in school. These arrangements result in most pupils showing good levels of personal development and well-being. Although academic progress is soundly monitored, not enough use is made of this information in some classes to help pupils make better progress.

Child protection is overseen well, and procedures are effective. All staff have received effective training and understand their responsibilities.

Grade: 3

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and senior management team place great importance in promoting pupils' personal development and this shows in pupils' overall happiness, good behaviour, relationships and well being. Strong emphasis is also placed on support for pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils and this results in them making good progress.

The school has satisfactory systems to evaluate its effectiveness and these have given the school a sound understanding of where it needs to bring about improvements. However, there is not enough determined effort to sustain improvements in achievement. Although teachers are given support and training, there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. For example, the school has worked to improve marking but this is still not consistently effective in all classes and slows the progress of some pupils. English and mathematics are led by enthusiastic subject leaders who have brought about some useful improvements, but inadequate leadership in science, due to staff turnover has led to weaknesses in provision and progress.

The school is well regarded by parents and pupils, and consults parents effectively about how the school develops. The school has recently sent out a useful questionnaire to parents and pupils and is in the process of analysing the results to identify priorities for improvement.

The governing body is effective, knows the school well and works closely with the whole staff of the school to develop an agreed view of the school's future direction.

Grade: 3

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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	4	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	3	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	3	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	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

Oakthorpe Primary School School Street Oakthorpe Swadlincote Derbyshire DE12 7RE

November 2005

Dear Children

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for being so friendly and helpful.

What we liked most about your school:

You behave well, are kind to each other and play together sensibly in your playground.

You try hard and concentrate in lessons and are polite to your teachers.

We are pleased that you are learning how to lead healthy lives.

We think that your teachers look after you well and give you some interesting work.

Learning assistants work well with some of you to help you keep up in lessons.

The headteacher, other teachers and governors know what to do to make your school even better.

Your parents and carers are pleased that you come to this school.

What we have asked your school to do now:

Help you learn better in English mathematics and science.

Check that your work is hard enough for all of you.

Make sure teachers use information about how well you are doing to help you learn faster.

Make sure that all in the school concentrate harder on helping you do your best in your work.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn and we wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Sadler Mr Watts The Inspection Team