



Oatlands School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124994
Local Authority Surrey
Inspection number 281855
Inspection date 26 September 2006
Reporting inspector Nick Butt

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	St Mary's Road
School category	Community		Oatlands Park
Age range of pupils	4-7		Weybridge KT13 9PZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01932 843990
Number on roll (school)	180	Fax number	01932 830015
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Roy Taylor
		Headteacher	Mrs Patricia Beechey
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2000		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a popular two-form entry school. It serves a prosperous area on the outskirts of Weybridge, but many of the local children go to private schools. Children join the school from some twenty different pre-school settings. More than half the pupils in recent years have been summer-born, and have only had one term's full time education in a Reception class. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is average, but more have statements of special educational need.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with aspects of its work that are outstanding. The head teacher's excellent leadership has produced a happy school where all staff members work closely together for the benefit of the pupils. The deputy head teacher's comment, 'we live our values', sums up the very strong ethos of care and respect, which enables pupils to thrive and to achieve well.

The headteacher has a penetratingly clear vision and the highest expectations of all those involved in the school, including parents and governors as well as staff and pupils. Aply supported by her deputy and senior team, she has set in place robust systems and procedures for ensuring that the school runs smoothly, consistently and well for the benefit of the children. This means that teaching is good, and in the Foundation Stage it is outstanding. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn, and make lessons interesting and fun. They use the latest technology well to involve pupils in their learning. A well-planned curriculum contributes very well to pupils' outstanding personal development by linking subjects together and providing good enriching experiences. As one parent commented, 'staff work very hard to make the school is just that extra bit special'.

Consequently, pupils make good progress and standards are high. Provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding, because of the high quality teaching, a vibrant curriculum and the expertise of all those working in the Reception classes. Children get off to a flying start, and absolutely love coming to school.

Achievement is good, because of the effective teaching, and because pupils' progress is closely monitored. Any potential falling behind is picked up very quickly and support put in place to help these pupils to improve. The school deploys its senior staff very effectively to model good practice and to target groups of pupils, and this is helping standards to rise even higher. The one area where progress has been slower is in the writing of the more able pupils. Although standards in reading and mathematics for these pupils are well above the national average, in writing standards are only slightly better than average. The school is working hard to move pupils on who are very close to attaining the higher level in writing, and this is a focus for improvement.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and feel very safe and secure in school. They thoroughly enjoy their education and have many good opportunities to contribute to the life of the school community. They leave with very well developed basic skills and the confidence to move successfully to junior school.

The school has a good understanding of its strengths and those things it needs to do to get even better. However, the school development plan does not fully reflect the priorities that staff are actually working on, and is written before the impact of that year's national assessments is known. Much work has been done to improve the school building and grounds, so that pupils can learn in an attractive and modern setting, with much to interest and excite them. Although costs are low, the school is successful at attaining high standards and provides excellent value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the more able pupils attain high standards in writing that more closely match those attained in mathematics, reading and science.
- Ensure the school development plan reflects current priorities in English and mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are well above average and achievement is good. Children enter the school with a wide range of abilities that are slightly above national expectations. Even though many of the children are born in the summer months, they still reach their early learning goals because of the outstanding provision they receive while they are in the reception classes. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make good progress. The vast majority reach or exceed their targets, including those with learning difficulties or statements of special educational need. Where additional support is given this has a beneficial impact on pupils' achievement. The progress of pupils who might attain the higher levels in writing in national assessments sometimes varies because expectations of what they can achieve are not always consistent across the school. The school is aware of this issue and is actively tackling it.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school has promoted an approach to teaching values that is being adopted by a local confederation of schools, and involving parents and the wider community. There is plenty of awe and wonder in lessons, especially in the use of interactive whiteboards. Year 1 pupils were amazed when they touched dice on the screen and they began rolling automatically! Pupils have an exceptionally good understanding of their own and other cultures. On the day of the inspection, a visitor brought in a dramatic array of African masks for them to admire and draw. Pupils can talk freely about healthy living and describe how their meals have improved. They take a mature approach to their own well being. One pupil said, 'If you have a small problem you try to sort it out yourself first before you go to an adult. If it's really hard you take it to an adult'. Pupils act as buddies in the playground, serve one another in the dining hall and sit on the school council. They have excellent attitudes to learning and behave very well. Attendance is outstanding, a reflection of how much pupils enjoy coming to school. They are very well prepared for the next stage of their education and leave as rounded individuals with a love of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons interest and engage pupils because of the good use of resources, including new technology, and imaginatively planned activities. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn, and generally plan work well to meet the differing abilities of learners. Pupils are well involved in lessons, although they do not tend to discuss how they might achieve the learning goal for that lesson. In the Foundation Stage, teachers plan enthralling experiences across all the areas of learning, and children are absorbed in what they do. For example, they loved feeling contrasting natural materials such as bark chips and stones, and wet shingle and shells. Pupils are given ambitious targets for writing and while most reach them, some just miss attaining the higher levels in national assessments. The school is focusing on planning challenging work for these pupils that ensures they meet their goals.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Subjects are carefully linked together and teachers work hard to plan interesting activities for all pupils to enjoy. It is too early to measure the impact of a recent focus that uses information and communication technology in all subjects to enhance the curriculum. There is a good range of enrichment activities and after school clubs, including French, drama and dance. Pupils go on visits to local places of interest and meet many different visitors. The curriculum contributes very well to pupils' outstanding personal development and their moral and social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The family atmosphere of the school means that pupils learn in a secure and stable environment, and are known very well so that their individual needs are met. This particularly benefits the increasing number of pupils who have statements of special educational need. All child protection procedures and risk assessments are in place. The very detailed monitoring of progress that goes on ensures that pupils know what their targets are, and what they need to do to improve. These are reviewed and updated regularly with their teacher. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported by teaching assistants. Those who speak English as an additional language settle in very quickly and make good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The outstanding lead of the headteacher sets the values and direction of the school, and these are ably supported by the deputy and senior staff. The impact of management is effective, because of the consistency of approach of staff, and because of the good example of the deputy and senior staff in modelling good practice. A recent initiative has enabled all subject leaders to observe lessons and to influence what goes on more directly. The school's own evaluation of its work is too modest in the areas of teaching, personal development and care, guidance and support. Current priorities from self-review are not given sufficient prominence in the school development plan. Governors are supportive and ask searching questions. Many do not see out a full term of office because of work commitments, and the fact that their children are in school for only three years. The school has moved on well since its last inspection. Parents are very supportive of all the school does for their children. One said, 'Everyone at Oatlands has their foot on the pedal and is determined to go forward.' In view of their successful track record, this determination on the part of senior staff not to become complacent, but to press on to new heights, means that the school's capacity to improve is outstanding.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I enjoyed visiting your school and was sorry I couldn't stay longer. Thank you for making me so welcome. Yours is a good school and some things about it are fantastic. Your behaviour is excellent and you are really keen to learn. You care for one another very well. Your teachers make the lessons interesting and fun. I think the children in the reception classes get off to a flying start and settle in very quickly, because they are so well looked after and taught. You make good progress in your work and reach high standards. There is a lovely family atmosphere in the school, and the care you receive from all the staff is outstanding. The school grounds are very attractive, with plenty for you to do and see. The headteacher makes a real difference to how the school is run, and she is well supported by everybody. She expects a lot, but you rise to the challenge very well!

I believe that those of you who find writing easy could do even better with a bit of a push. So I have suggested that the teachers might like to think of ways of doing this. Perhaps you could tell them what you enjoy about writing and the kinds of things you like to write about.

Thank you once again for looking after me so well.

Yours sincerely

Mr N Butt

Lead Inspector