



Oaks Primary School, The

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131169
LEA West Sussex
Inspection number 282178
Inspection dates 13 June 2006 to 14 June 2006
Reporting inspector Tom Shine AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Loppets Road
School category	Community		Tilgate
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Crawley, West Sussex RH10 5DP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01293 527473
Number on roll	358	Fax number	01293 538323
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	13 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Penny Forbes

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Oaks is a larger-than-average primary school in the centre of Crawley. It was formerly a first and middle school and became a primary school as a result of local authority reorganisation in 2004. It has therefore not been inspected before as a primary school. Most of the pupils come from the immediate area, which is socially mixed, while just under a fifth travel from further afield. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly average, as is the proportion of those who are in the early stages of learning English. When they enter the Reception, their attainment is generally below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that its overall effectiveness is satisfactory. The school has made satisfactory progress since it opened and because it knows what needs to be done to improve, it is secure in its capability to improve further. It provides satisfactory value for money.

The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. Much of it is good in both key stages, but it is not consistent enough to enable all pupils to achieve at constantly good levels. Higher-attaining pupils in particular do not always achieve as well as they could, especially in mathematics and science and in writing. Pupils therefore make satisfactory progress overall, but good progress in the classes and year groups where teaching is good. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress. Those in the early stages of learning English as an additional language are supported well and they also make good progress.

There is a welcoming, warm atmosphere in the school and pupils' personal development is good. The curriculum is good in Years 1 to 6 and is enhanced by a wide range of out-of-school activities, especially in sport, which are enjoyed by pupils. Children in Reception make good progress from their below-average starting point and most achieve the expected goals by the time they join Year 1. This is because provision in Reception is good and is well focused on the development of key skills.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, but the procedures to improve the quality of teaching, such as systems for monitoring, have not yet had sufficient time to make it more effective.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching throughout the school is consistently good in order to enable all pupils to achieve well, especially the more able.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Children enter Reception with key skills levels that are lower than normally expected for their age, especially in their language and social skills, which are particularly low. They make good progress as a result of the effective provision and most children reach the expected goals by the time they leave Reception. However, the development of language and social skills, although improved, is not as advanced. Throughout the rest of the school, pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils in the early stages of learning English as an additional language achieve well. Those with learning difficulties are supported effectively and make good progress.

End of Year 2 assessments in 2005 show that standards are broadly average in reading and mathematics but are below average in writing, although they are higher than when the school opened as a primary school in 2004. In 2005, the national test results for pupils in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science were broadly average and have improved steadily since 2004. The quality of Year 6 pupils' reading is good. The majority of pupils in Years 3 to 6 are making satisfactory progress. However, some of the most able pupils are not making the progress needed to enable them to reach the higher levels, especially in writing, mathematics and science. In 2005 their targets were not challenging enough.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They really enjoy being at The Oaks and attend regularly. "I wouldn't change anything, lessons are fun" is a commonly voiced view. Pupils bubbled with enthusiasm when talking about their 'Learning Journey' projects. They behave well and understand the need to get on well together, with the 'Squabble Squad' and the pupils of 'Oak Watch' trained to support children to sort out their own minor problems. Exclusions are only used as a last resort. Pupils feel safe and secure in school. Bullying is rare and quickly dealt with. Pupils know how to lead healthy lifestyles through, for example, the 'Drink to Think' initiative. They understand the responsibility of working together in the school and wider community through improving the school playground and community art projects. Strong business and community links help to develop an understanding of the skills needed in the workplace. However, the development of basic skills is not yet brisk enough.

Good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has a positive impact on the way pupils relate to, and understand, each other. They have good opportunities to reflect on, for example, the wonder of nature through art. Pupils show a great deal of empathy for others, which is reflected in their fundraising for charities. The 'Learning Journey' work and celebration of 'One World Week' help them learn more about other cultures. Pupils' strong moral and social development is exemplified by a comment a pupil made who had a new classmate from another country. She said "We were worried he wouldn't like this school and would be scared, so we are trying hard to be kind."

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, overall. Much of it is good but this is not consistently so throughout the school. Pupils make good progress in some classes and year groups in both key stages, although this is not sustained through the school. However, lessons in all classes are carefully planned. Questioning is aimed well at prompting thoughtful answers. Good relationships between adults and pupils give

pupils the confidence to explain their thoughts and feelings and, as a result, they are keen to learn and eager to take part.

Good teamwork features strongly throughout the school. Teaching assistants use their skills effectively in supporting individuals and groups in lessons, particularly those with learning difficulties. There is good support, too, for pupils in the early stages of learning English. These pupils respond well to this close attention and make good progress. However, in some lessons tasks are not matched sufficiently well to the different ability levels, particularly the more able. As a result, the more able pupils are not stretched enough and they do not make rapid enough progress. The quality of marking is variable. Teachers' comments are generally effective in praising successful work but some marking is not helpful in showing pupils how to improve their efforts.

Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage. Children in Reception make good progress. There is strong emphasis on developing children's language and social skills and other activities are very well organised. The variety of activities moves along at a rapid pace, supported well by the teaching assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, although its impact on progress is not yet felt fully. It stimulates pupils' interest well through imaginative topics that are linked well with various subjects. For example, pupils in Year 3 achieved well in their detailed drawings of flowers, which was linked imaginatively to a science theme. Learning is extended through a good range of special events, visits and visitors, including those from the local community. Good provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties, enabling them to learn well. There is good provision for pupils at an early stage of learning English. Their targets are well focused and reviewed frequently. Work is generally adjusted for pupils of differing abilities in each class, although in some classes it could be better matched to the needs of the more able pupils. The good curriculum in the Foundation Stage gives good emphasis to developing language and social skills.

Outside the school day, pupils are encouraged to take part in a good range of clubs and other activities. Sport is particularly well represented and popular with both boys and girls of all ages.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. A committed and caring staff ensure that pupils are safeguarded well. Child protection and health and safety procedures are a high priority and adults working with pupils have undergone the appropriate checks. The good quality care has a positive effect on behaviour and learning. Pupils who have specific behaviour, learning difficulties or English language needs receive good support and guidance and also benefit from close links with various outside agencies across the school. Good induction procedures enable children to settle happily. Parents are

helped to support their children through family learning groups and through the approachability of staff.

All staff know the pupils as individuals and give them effective academic guidance. However, the data from assessment is not used consistently to set challenging targets for all pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The headteacher leads the school well and it runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. She has accurately identified the school's most pressing priorities and is committed to accelerating the rate of improvement in pupils' standards and achievement. Together with the leadership team she is working well to raise achievement, especially for the more able. They all know that the key to pupils making consistently good progress is effective teaching throughout the school. Although there is a sound programme for monitoring teaching, it has only been successful in improving the performance of some, but not all, teachers so far.

There is a positive ethos, where staff work well as a team and contribute much to the good care, guidance and support for pupils. The management of the provision for children in Reception and for pupils with learning difficulties is good. The same applies to pupils needing support in learning English as an additional language.

The school's cycle of monitoring and review responds positively to the views of parents and pupils, for example, when they were consulted on changes to the timings of the school day. Pupils feel empowered by the school council and their ideas for playground development and rules. The 'Squabble Squad' and 'Oak Watch' are the result of the school's positive response to their suggestions.

The governing body is in a transitional stage, with the chair of governors about to retire. However, it has a number of eager, competent governors and is in a strong position to develop its role further, particularly in holding the school to account for the standards achieved by the pupils.

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	2	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	NA	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	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	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?	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	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

June 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for all the help you gave us when we came to your school recently. We liked talking to you and to your teachers and coming to your assemblies. Now we want to share with you what we thought about your school.

These are the things we liked most about your school:

You make a good start to your education in the Reception classes.

You are all very friendly and polite.

You told us you feel safe and well supported.

Your headteacher makes sure those of you who need extra help get it.

You enjoy school and attend regularly.

You also behave and get on well with each other and with all members of staff.

You are taught to realise the importance of exercise and healthy eating.

You enjoy the range of out-of-school clubs, especially those connected with sport.

But there is something that would make things even better:

We think that some of you could do much harder work if your teachers challenged you more.

Yours sincerely

Tom Shine Lead Inspector