



# Oakfield Primary and Moderate Learning Difficulties Resource Base

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 106180  
**Local Authority** Tameside  
**Inspection number** 287432  
**Inspection date** 5 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Sarah Drake

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

|   |                    |                         |                   |
|---|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Primary            | <b>School address</b>   | St Mary's Road    |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community          |                         | Hyde              |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 3–11               |                         | Cheshire SK14 4EZ |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed              | <b>Telephone number</b> | 0161 3683365      |
| <b>Number on roll (school)</b>            | 229                | <b>Fax number</b>       | 0161 8829183      |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body | <b>Chair</b>            | Mr S Buck         |
|   |                    | <b>Headteacher</b>      | Mrs R Williams    |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 12 November 2001   |                         |                   |

|                  |                        |                          |
|------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Age group</b> | <b>Inspection date</b> | <b>Inspection number</b> |
| 3–11             | 5 March 2007           | 287432                   |

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This average size school serves an urban community that has significant areas of deprivation. The proportion of pupils eligible to receive a free school meal is almost double the national average and above average numbers are in the care of the local authority. Few pupils belong to minority ethnic groups and a very small number is at an early stage of learning English. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities but well above average numbers have statements of special educational need. The school incorporates a resource base for nine pupils who have moderate learning difficulties. For the first time this year, this includes pupils below age seven. The school holds the silver Eco award and the Healthy Schools award for emotional health and well-being.

## 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 that puts its mission statement 'Achieving our best together' into daily practice. It serves its pupils and their families very well and provides good value for money. When they enter the Nursery, children's all-round skills are poor but they make good progress throughout the school and by the end of Year 6, pupils reach broadly average standards. This represents good academic achievement. Pupils also achieve well in their personal development so that they leave the school with high self-esteem. Consistently good quality teaching, an interesting, relevant curriculum and a very supportive environment with much individual care and guidance, ensure that pupils want to learn and that they make good progress. Good leadership and management at all levels, under the clear-sighted, calm direction of the headteacher, means that all staff understand their roles, carefully analyse current practice and have both the confidence and competence to effect improvement. The school's high expectations of itself and the potential of its pupils led it to underestimate the quality of its effectiveness and much of its provision. However, it has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development, has taken effective action to bring about improvement and has good capacity to improve further.

Parents highly praise the school and the way that it helps their children to grow in confidence and knowledge. They commend the 'friendly, caring staff', the 'fantastic Nursery' and the fact that, 'if there is a problem, it is sorted out.' Parents whose children are educated in the Resource Base are also very satisfied; the comment of one reflects that of others, 'my son's progress since starting there is brilliant, he's a different child.' Pupils in the Base take a full part in school life and other pupils treat them, as they do visitors, staff and their peers, with friendly respect. Because of the strong emphasis placed on pupils' social, emotional and health education, they behave in a safe manner, enjoy eating healthily and take energetic part in physical activity. They are proud to contribute to the community and understand that attending regularly and working well with others are important for their future economic well-being.

Since the last inspection, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6) have risen at a faster rate than the national trend but results at the end of Key Stage 1 remain well below average. Teachers make good use of all the available time in lessons. The curriculum has been adapted well to ensure that all subjects are taught in sufficient depth. Teachers monitor pupils' progress closely and mark some of their work with helpful comments. However, this does not apply in all classes or in all subjects. Above all, the children's well-being remains at the centre of all that happens in the school; this is the secret of its success.

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

- Raise standards at Key Stage 1.
- Ensure that when teachers mark pupils' work they give regular, precise guidance about what improvements are required.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils of different abilities and who face a wide range of difficulties, including those in the Resource Base, achieve well. When they enter the Nursery, the great majority of children have particularly weak communication and social skills, with many still very self-centred and disinclined to collaborate with others. Responding well to the wide range of enticing activities and skilful staff encouragement, children make good progress but still have well below average skills by the end of the Reception year. The extension of the Foundation Stage curriculum into Year 1 is proving effective in helping these young pupils to consolidate their skills. This means that they achieve well and that they develop a solid base for future learning. Despite pupils' good achievements, results at the end of Key Stage 1 indicate well below average standards especially in mathematics.

In Key Stage 2, pupils build well on their previous work. They become increasingly independent and confident learners and, with well targeted support, the overwhelming majority of Year 6 pupils reach or exceed their challenging targets. In 2006, the percentages reaching the higher level were in line with the national average in English and science. In mathematics, pupils achieved particularly well, exceeding the average for those reaching the higher level.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils really enjoy being at school, describing it as 'brilliant', 'marvellous' and 'terrific'. Their attendance is satisfactory. They quickly grow to understand that being friendly towards others is rewarding and makes life much more fun. They eagerly participate in playground games and share ideas willingly with their classmates in lessons. They are very welcoming and polite to visitors. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good in response to the strong emphasis the school places on creativity and emotional awareness. Pupils behave well and say that, although sometimes they fall out, bullying is very rare. They find 'thinking time' very useful in helping those who find self-discipline difficult. The school council and Eco team have a strong presence, for example, in seeking pupils' opinions about possible improvements and reminding everyone to conserve energy and eat healthily. They decided on the willow weaving project that adds interest to the school grounds. Trained peer mentors and playground leaders responsibly help those who are feeling isolated and pupils are generous contributors to charity. Their personal skills develop in leaps and bounds during their time at Oakfield.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers throughout the school monitor pupils' progress very carefully and make effective use of the information gained when planning work to suit the needs of different groups and individuals. They organise activities that spark pupils' interest and make good links between subjects so that learning makes sense. For example, in a Year 5 lesson on sentence structure, the teacher asked pupils to think about what they already knew about the life cycle of a butterfly from their science lessons. She then injected a real sense of wonder by talking about 'this fantastic change from a caterpillar' that inspired pupils to add zest to their writing. Teachers' probing questions and keen enthusiasm encourage pupils to try harder and grow in independence. Good pace, effective use of support staff and information and communication technology (ICT) ensure pupils sustain their concentration and work purposefully. In the Resource Base, staff use a range of interesting visual and tactile resources particularly well to clarify pupils' understanding, for example, in distinguishing between heavy and light, soft and hard.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The regularly reviewed curriculum is well adapted to broaden pupils' horizons and help them see the relevance of learning. The emphasis placed on developing speaking, listening, reading and writing skills has a positive effect on all other subjects, for example, pupils' increasing ability to solve problems in mathematics. One-to-one and small group work effectively supports both those who are struggling and others who can be stretched further. In the Foundation Stage, all areas of learning are covered both inside and outside, with boys showing a strong preference for, for instance, developing their writing skills outdoors. A creative thread runs throughout the whole curriculum. Pupils' mosaic portraits depict different emotions with references to Roman life and Andy Warhol. The 2006 Arts week included visits to a temple, mosque, synagogue and church and considered both the use of symbolism and of art to tell stories in different religions. Good quality displays and extra activities such as French, craft club and a residential visit, further enrich the quality of pupils' learning and add to their enjoyment.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

In the words of a parent, the way in which staff 'take an active interest in each child' enables them to grow in self-confidence. The work of the learning mentor is particularly effective in helping both pupils and many parents to cope with challenging home circumstances so that pupils can concentrate on learning. Pupils are confident to express their concerns, either face to face or through the worries box, because they

know that they will be taken seriously and acted upon. Arrangements are in place to ensure child protection, health and safety, including safe staff recruitment. Good quality, individually tailored support ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those in the Resource Base, make good progress from their starting points and are well prepared for change. Pupils know their individual targets and some are beginning to assess their own and others' work accurately in mathematics. However, teachers' marking does not always provide pupils with sufficiently precise guidance on how to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school's good leadership and management have created a strong sense of teamwork among staff. This means that, as a parent commented, 'the school runs like a dream' and always in the best interests of the pupils. The school analyses the quality and impact of its provision rigorously which enables it to make effective improvements. For example, the employment for one term for an extra teacher to support Year 6 pupils, the funding of the learning mentor and the provision of classes for parents are all paying dividends in improving behaviour and raising standards. The deputy headteacher makes a valuable contribution to many aspects of the school's management, particularly in leading the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the programme to develop pupils' emotional health and well-being. Other senior managers lead by example in their classroom practice and subject leadership. Through their year group links, twice termly meetings and good quality information from the headteacher, governors support and question the school in a knowledgeable manner. Led very well by the determined headteacher, all those associated with the school work effectively to 'achieve their best together'.

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## Inspection judgements

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | <b>School Overall</b> |
|---|-----------------------|

### 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> | 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  | 2   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 2   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements  | 2   |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection   | Yes |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 2 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 3 |
| 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

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 2 |
| The attendance of learners  | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community                                    | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 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  | 2   |
| 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**

Thank you for welcoming me so warmly to your school recently. I enjoyed talking with you and in particular would like to thank members of the school council and Eco team who gave me such a clear idea of why they think that your school is 'brilliant'.

My visit was part of the inspection system for the whole country that assesses how well pupils are learning. Lots of things helped me to agree with you that yours is a good school. Staff look after you very well so that any problems are sorted out swiftly. Teachers organise interesting things for you to do and make good links between different subjects so that your learning makes sense to you. Last year's Arts Week was obviously really interesting. They make clear what the point of the lesson is and, because they ask you relevant questions, you increasingly think for yourselves. Mrs Williams and senior staff are good at looking at how much progress you are making in your work and deciding what they can do to help you even more. You enjoy school, get on well with each other and behave well too.

In order to make your school even better, I have asked your teachers to make sure that pupils in Years 1 and 2 raise their standards even more in reading, writing and mathematics. I have also asked teachers throughout the school to make clearer to you, when they mark your work, exactly what you need to do next to improve it.

You can help too, by continuing to enjoy learning, behaving well and attending regularly.