



Oakfield Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108329
Local Authority Gateshead
Inspection number 288067
Inspection dates 8–9 February 2007
Reporting inspector Arthur Allison

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Chowdene Bank
School category	Community		Gateshead, Tyne and Wear
Age range of pupils	7–11		NE9 6JH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 433 4086
Number on roll (school)	229	Fax number	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Alison Dixon
		Headteacher	Mrs Helen Gladstone
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2001		

Age group 7–11	Inspection dates 8–9 February 2007	Inspection number 288067
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized junior school serving an urban area. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and none is in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than in most schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to most schools. The proportion of boys to girls is higher than in most schools. Attainment on entry to Year 3 is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Oakfield is a good school. Some of its work is outstanding. It provides good value for money. The vast majority of parents have every confidence in the school. One wrote: 'I am proud that my daughter is able to experience such a high level of education.'

Pupils make good progress throughout the school to reach standards that are above average at the end of Year 6. This is due to the dynamic, perceptive leadership of the headteacher and good, sometimes outstanding, teaching that focuses sharply on what individual pupils need to do to meet the realistic but challenging targets that are set for them. However, standards are lower in writing than other subjects. A very strong feature of teaching is the high quality of marking that ensures that pupils know how well they have done and what they have to do to improve. The school keeps parents well informed of what it is doing and why. Consequently, the whole school community works together as a team. The good curriculum is enriched well and contributes enormously to pupils' achievement and enjoyment. Despite the good planning and the links with another school, the provision for information and communication (ICT), particularly in the very cramped ICT suite, restricts learning opportunities. The very high level of pastoral and academic care and support encourages pupils to give of their best and makes them feel valued for their contribution to school life.

Excellent personal development and good basic skills prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education and beyond. Pupils are extremely well behaved, very polite and know how to stay safe. They love coming to school because they know that all staff want to help them to do their very best and make learning enjoyable. They have an excellent understanding of the need for a balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider communities, notably through the school council and a high level of participation in events organised outside the school, for example, musical activities. Pupils take on responsibilities eagerly and maturely. Older pupils, in particular, are good at evaluating their own learning and strive to reach their challenging targets.

Leadership and management are good. The school's self-evaluation, based on thorough monitoring of its work, is very clear about what needs to be done in the drive to raise standards further, particularly in English. Given the very determined leadership and the sharp focus on priorities in the school's development plan, it is clear that the school has good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English by building on strategies to improve writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well. Inspection evidence and the school's very thorough assessment show that attainment on entry is broadly average. Pupils

make good progress throughout the school to reach standards that are above average at the end of Key Stage 2. This is confirmed by consistent results over time in national tests taken in Year 6. In 2006, results were above average in mathematics and science and broadly average in English. This was because standards in writing were lower than in reading. The school has identified writing as an issue across the school and action is being taken to raise standards in writing. The school met its challenging targets in 2006, except in English at the higher level (Level 5). Progress records for the current year and inspection evidence indicates that the school is on course to meet its targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils because their learning and pastoral needs are identified and supported effectively as soon as they arrive at school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development is outstanding. Pupils love coming to a school where they feel safe and highly valued. They thrive on the many exciting learning experiences that they are offered. Their behaviour is excellent. Pupils develop a very clear sense of right and wrong and work together very successfully. These are two of the many ways that the school is providing them with the skills that they will need in later life. They learn to offer their views in lessons and through the school council. They respond eagerly and maturely to positions of responsibility. Pupils gain a really good understanding of people and groups who are different from themselves and raise money to help those who are less fortunate. All these experiences contribute to their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils show their commitment to healthy lifestyles through choosing healthy eating options at lunchtime and enjoying lots of exercise. Pupils' attendance is good. The school takes a very positive approach to rewarding pupils as well as ensuring that the curriculum and good quality teaching inspire pupils to attend school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, and some is outstanding. This is a significant factor in pupils' good progress and learning. Characteristics of the outstanding teaching observed in a Year 6 English lesson were the unrelenting pace and challenging tasks that highly motivated all pupils. The room was a hive of activity. Personal and social skills were promoted very well. As a result progress was excellent. Teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise. They ensure that pupils understand what they have learnt by the end of the lesson. They also have high expectations of work and behaviour. Information gained from careful questioning is used very effectively to check on learning and to plan challenging tasks that are well matched to pupils' needs and ability. In some lessons, the pace is steady, not brisk. Pupils' learning is not as fast in

these lessons. Marking is of an exceptionally high quality, making clear to pupils what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Pupils say, 'School is fun and interesting'. Staff work very hard to meet the needs of learners, including the gifted and talented and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The carefully thought-out and relevant programme of personal, social and health education underpins the curriculum and encourages positive attitudes to all aspects of learning. It informs pupils imaginatively about important issues. A strong emphasis on the development of basic literacy and numerical skills through links with other subjects makes the use of these skills more meaningful to the pupils. Physical education, art and music provide powerful opportunities for pupils to develop physical and creative skills. This is recognised in the achievement of the Silver Arts Mark and the Sports Mark awards. Pupils participate in a range of musical activities and perform well. Although teachers plan well for ICT, the current provision limits learning opportunities. The computers are not as up-to-date as in many other schools and the school is dependent on a partner school to fulfil curricular requirements. Nevertheless, pupils achieve satisfactorily and reach the standards expected for their age. The curriculum is enriched well by a wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits, including exciting residential opportunities. These add considerably to pupils' enjoyment of school. They say, 'We really enjoy after-school clubs, "One World" week and being on school teams.' Very attractive displays in classrooms and around the school reinforce the importance that the school places on all aspects of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school's care, guidance and support systems are outstanding. Pupils are protected by procedures that meet current requirements for safeguarding their welfare. Practices are strengthened by outstanding partnerships with outside agencies. Parents hold the school in high regard and say that they are well informed about school matters. The work of staff with responsibility for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very effective. These pupils settle to learning quickly because the work is sharply focused on their exact needs and is suitably challenging. Guidance in academic work is outstanding. Teachers make very good use of well-developed assessment procedures to track pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. Assessment of pupils' achievement in other subjects is equally good. Pupils benefit also from learning to assess their own work and that of others, through the use of easily understandable criteria listed on target sheets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides dynamic and charismatic leadership. She has the full support of the senior management team and all the staff in her drive to raise standards further in a very caring environment in which every child thrives. The school's development plan accurately identifies what needs to be done to improve further. The school has a very good understanding of how well it is doing. This leads to action where weaknesses are identified. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in assessment procedures to ensure that all pupils work to their full potential. Teachers and teaching assistants are deployed very effectively. Support is carefully directed to the exact needs of pupils, promoting progress and encouraging independence. The roles of the subject leaders have been restructured making them more accountable for standards in their subjects. These changes have not been in place long enough for their effect to be measurable.

The views of parents are sought and acted on appropriately, for example through the 'Mathematics Café' that helps parents to understand more about the teaching of mathematics. The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They are knowledgeable about the school's performance. Governors support and challenge the school in its efforts to raise standards further.

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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?	1
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

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	2
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	2

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	1
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

Oakfield Junior School

Chowdene Bank

Gateshead

Tyne and Wear

NE9 6JH

10 February 2007

Dear Children

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school and for your help during the school's recent inspection. We thought you were very polite, courteous and extremely well behaved, and that you worked very hard in your lessons.

We enjoyed talking to you and listening to what you had to say about the school. You are in a good school where all adults work hard to help you to do your best. You told us that you liked your school and enjoyed your lessons. You know a lot about staying safe and being healthy from your work in school.

The displays of your work are good, particularly the art displays. You take part in a range of exciting activities which help you to learn about the world. We thoroughly enjoyed the assembly led by a Year 6 class and the singing by the choir at the end.

The school has the right ideas about what to do to improve further. We have asked your teachers to help you to do even better in your writing.

We wish you and the school every success in the future!

Yours sincerely

Mr Allison and Mr Shearsmith

The inspection Team