

Oak Green School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110206
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	288598
Inspection dates	10–11 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Charalambos Loizou

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	391
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sue Newling
Headteacher	Mrs Sheila Rowan
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2002
School address	Oak Green Southcourt Aylesbury HP21 8LJ
Telephone number	01296 423895
Fax number	01296 431677

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Oak Green is a large primary school serving an area of social and economic disadvantage. The pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, the largest groups being of White British and of Pakistani heritage. The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is high compared with most schools. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is well above average. A large number of pupils join or leave the school at different times each year. The school has Nursery for three-year-old children who all attend part-time.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Oak Green is a good school working in challenging circumstances. Although standards are below average by the end of Year 6, they are improving rapidly and pupils achieve well. The teaching is good overall. Teachers and support staff take good care of the pupils and guide them well in their learning. Pupils enjoy school, 'It's really good, you learn lots and make friends', says one, and another commented on how teachers make lessons interesting and that they '...support and admire us'. There is good leadership, management and governance. Staff and governors share a common vision and continually strive to improve the school. The headteacher has guided good improvements to the school since its last inspection. The staff are committed to the pupils' all round development and work hard to ensure that they achieve as well as they can in a safe, secure and stimulating learning community. Information gathered from the monitoring of teaching and of pupils' performance is analysed thoroughly, and provides an accurate assessment of the school's effectiveness. Parents are very pleased with the school, 'It's a very good school. All my children have been to Oak Green. There are very polite and professional teachers', is one of many positive comments from parents.

Since the last inspection, the leadership team has devised an effective programme of training which has improved teaching and raised standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). Assessment has improved, allowing subject co-ordinators and governors to accurately check the progress pupils make and to set challenging targets. Pupils do not make as much progress in writing as in other subjects because they do not have the confidence to write independently and at length accurately, particularly in Years 3 to 6.

A knowledgeable and committed staff team work very hard throughout the Foundation Stage. They provide well balanced and stimulating activities for Nursery and Reception children. Rigorous assessments of the children's development ensure that they make good progress towards the learning goals expected by the start of Year 1. Throughout the school, good teaching and a well planned curriculum are having a positive effect on the pupils' academic and personal development. Most lessons are well planned so pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are challenged. However, a few lessons do not challenge pupils of average and higher ability enough to ensure that they all reach their targets.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are well behaved and relationships are good. Older pupils support others well, acting as peer mentors for younger pupils at break-times. The school involves pupils effectively in its development. For example, the school council contributed well to improving the environment when helping to plan the courtyard and gardens. Pupils are thoughtful and considerate to others in the community, as seen in their charity work and when performing or singing in local shopping centres. They show a good understanding of healthy living when participating in many sports and activities. The leadership team sets high expectations and has established a good partnership with parents, other schools and organisations. Parents feel involved and consulted so the staff are able to respond to any concerns raised. The school has good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the teaching has a greater impact on developing pupils' writing skills to raise standards by the end of Year 6.

- Plan tasks in all lessons that are better matched to the needs of pupils of average and higher ability.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well in relation to their low starting points in the Foundation Stage. Standards are still below average by the end of Year 6 but are improving rapidly. Last year's national assessments showed that standards were average by the end of Year 2, which represents substantial success and effective teaching that builds on the good start made in the Foundation Stage. Nursery and Reception children make good progress, especially in their personal, social and emotional development and early language, communication and mathematics skills. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout the school in English, mathematics, science and ICT. However, in Years 3 to 6, pupils make relatively slower progress in writing because of inconsistencies in teaching. Teachers and support staff provide good support for pupils in the early stages of learning English so that the vast majority of them reach or exceed their targets. Good support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, enabling these pupils to make good progress towards their individual targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy school, behave well and show good attitudes. There is a clear sense of fairness, racial harmony and respect for the views of others. Pupils reflect well on spiritual and moral issues in stimulating assemblies. Their good cultural development is fostered through music, art and sport, as well as residential visits and the celebration of different festivals. Pupils make a good contribution to the community through charitable fund-raising and joint activities with local schools and organisations. They take pride in representing the views of others through the school council and, as peer mentors, in helping improve the behaviour of others at break-times. Pupils know what is necessary to stay fit and make the most of the healthy options offered at lunch time. They understand how to avoid risks in school and the world outside. Pupils work well in teams and develop good basic skills, including a very good range of ICT skills that prepare them well for the future. However, some show a lack of independence when writing.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Foundation Stage staff understand the needs of three and four-year-olds, and plan stimulating indoor and outdoor activities that prepare children well for the next stages of learning. In Years 1 to 6, the pace of learning in most lessons is good. However, writing tasks in some lessons lack challenge, so pupils' progress is just satisfactory. Teachers question the pupils well to extend their thinking with good links made between subjects. Outstanding features were seen in a Year 6 lesson where the teacher made excellent use of ICT resources to sustain pupils' concentration and focus their learning. The consistent approach to teaching mathematics enables pupils to apply their number skills well to problem solving tasks. Teaching assistants give effective support, enabling pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities to succeed and work towards their individual targets. Assessments are accurate

and used well to plan tasks, although in some lessons, are not used precisely enough to accelerate the progress of average and higher ability pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. In the Foundation Stage, there is a good balance of teacher direction and activities that children choose for themselves. However, some children do not persevere long enough with tasks they choose because the staff do not always build this into their planning. In Years 1 to 6 the staff provide interesting topics that link subjects together well, for example, observational drawing in art when studying plants in science. There are well planned opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of healthy living and how to stay safe. Pupils make good progress in their reading development through independent research. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities to apply their writing skills in different subjects. Regular visitors and visits widen pupils' experiences and help them to work in the local community. A good range of clubs, sports and the arts enhances learning and pupils' awareness of world cultures. The school is proud of gaining the 'ICT Mark', reflecting the significant improvements to the ICT curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care and guidance to its pupils. Pastoral support is strong so pupils feel safe and at ease in school. They say that there is always someone to turn to if they have any worries. Good attention is paid to child protection and to risk assessments. Pupils most at risk are well supported through the strong partnerships the school has with different agencies. Assessment is used well to track pupils' progress and to assess new arrivals to the school. Pupils are beginning to understand their learning targets. One pupil said, 'I know that my green target was good because I understood that bit, the red targets are the hard ones'. Pupils have a reasonable understanding of how well they are doing, although, in some lessons, the stages of learning and targets are not broken down into small steps to help pupils understand what comes next.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has established a cohesive and effective leadership team who share in her high expectations and vision. Planning for improvement takes full account of the views of pupils and parents. Accurate analyses of pupils' performance and the teaching are rapidly improving standards, although the monitoring of writing standards is relatively weaker than for other subjects. Governors provide good support and work closely with the staff to assess the effectiveness of the school accurately. There are good systems in place to ensure that governors monitor the school's performance. Together with the headteacher and leadership team, they are always looking to improve, which is reflected in the good improvements to the teaching and curriculum since the last inspection. Effective staff training, changes to the science curriculum and improvements to ICT teaching broadened the curriculum.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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	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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	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?	2

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.

Annex A

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	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

20 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oak Green School, Aylesbury, HP21 8LJ

The inspectors were very pleased to visit your school. I am writing to thank you for making us feel really welcome. I would also like to thank the school council members who spoke to one of the inspectors.

It is clear that you enjoy coming to this good school.

There are many good things about your school so that it is hard to pick out the very best. However, these are what inspectors were pleased with most:

- you are well behaved and try hard in lessons
- your teachers are good at helping you to do well in your studies
- you enjoy school and make lots of friends
- your parents are pleased with you and your teachers and the school is good at explaining to them what it does for you
- the staff take good care of you and make sure you are all safe and happy
- your headteacher, staff and governors manage the school well and keep looking for ways to make the school even better.

I have asked your teachers to:

- help some of you do better with your writing
- to make sure that, in all lessons, everyone is provided with work that is challenging enough to help you do even better and to raise standards further.

The inspectors were very pleased to see that you are trying hard to come to school on time and that you help make the school look nice when planning the new courtyard and gardens. We were also impressed with the way you and your parents have chances to suggest ways to improve your school.

Well done, and I wish you all the very best.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou Lead Inspector