



Oakridge School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110289
Local Authority Buckinghamshire
Inspection number 288622
Inspection dates 16–17 November 2006
Reporting inspector Nick Butt

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Oakridge Road
School category	Community		High Wycombe
Age range of pupils	3–11		HP11 2PN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01494 520341
Number on roll (school)	344	Fax number	01494 520341
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Christine Croft
		Headteacher	Miss Margaret Jordan
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	16–17 November 2006	288622

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger-than-average school serves a close-knit community, with over three quarters of the pupils of Pakistani heritage. It is situated in a mixed residential area. More than nine out of ten pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, an exceptionally high number. The vast majority of pupils speak English as an additional language. The number with learning difficulties is below average. More pupils than usual are eligible for free school meals. The school accommodation has recently been extended.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory level of education. Its pupils are eager to learn and well behaved. One pupil said, 'They expect us to do our best'. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, with good gains in personal skills. The headteacher and deputy head have built a committed team of dedicated staff who work together well. They have identified and tackled the key areas for development, with a positive impact on standards and achievement in 2006. By the end of Year 6, standards are average in mathematics and a little below in English and science. Achievement is satisfactory, but inconsistent across the school. In particular, the level of challenge for more able pupils and the marking of pupils' work varies from class to class. This is because not enough monitoring of the work of the school goes on. Recruitment difficulties this term have meant the deputy head has had little time to be released from her class to carry out some of her management responsibilities.

Teaching is satisfactory, with elements of good teaching. Teachers are enthusiastic and plan lessons carefully to interest and involve pupils. They make good use of new technology to make learning fun. They successfully ensure that girls achieve as well as boys through adapting their style of teaching to include them. This has helped to reverse a trend of underachievement among older girls. While speaking and listening is a focus for the younger pupils, in Years 3 to 6 teachers sometimes miss opportunities to encourage pupils to talk about their learning. Pupils enjoy school, and have a good awareness of healthy lifestyles. They are considerate towards one another, and take on a wide range of responsibilities. Attendance is low, mainly due to extended holidays to Pakistan by some families. Consequently, authorised absence is too high.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher gives the school clear direction and is well supported by the deputy head. Subject leaders check planning and work in books but have not had opportunities to watch lessons, or to ensure that recommendations are being carried out. The governing body is supportive of the school, but tends not to ask probing questions about its work. There have been improvements in achievement and standards in the past year as a result of innovative work with girls. Consequently, the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Expand the scope and rigour of monitoring by all leaders so that teaching is consistently challenging for more able pupils.
- Encourage pupils to discuss their learning more, especially in Years 3 to 6, and ensure marking is consistently used to help pupils to improve.
- Take further steps to ensure attendance improves and that parents understand the importance of their children being in school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Standards are a little below average by the end of Year 6, although they are average in mathematics. Pupils meet their challenging targets. They enter the Nursery with skills and abilities generally below those expected, especially in language and communication. They make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and develop good personal skills. Progress in Years 1 to 6 varies, but is at least satisfactory. Pupils who join the school in the Nursery tend to do better by the time they leave Year 6 than those who join in later years. There is inconsistency in the level of challenge for more able pupils, even within higher attaining sets. The school identified girls' achievement as an issue in Years 5 and 6 and introduced single sex teaching groups to tackle this. The girls made better progress in their own group and the learning imbalance was successfully dealt with. Pupils at the early stages of learning English make appropriate progress as a result of the careful support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development and well being are satisfactory. Pupils are keen to learn and work well together and independently. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, and take plenty of exercise. Their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is satisfactory. They know about other faiths, but have little experience of the art or music of different cultures. Some of the cultural resources need replenishing and renewing. Pupils feel safe and free from bullying. They find staff approachable and caring. The school council enjoys having a voice. One pupil commented, 'At first I was shy, but being on the school council has helped me to speak up for others'. Pupils of all ages help with jobs around the school. Pupils take part in wider events in the community. One child recalled performing at a local theatre: 'At first it was quite nerve-racking, but once you got on stage it was fun'. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their basic skills of literacy and numeracy and grow in confidence, so that they are ready to move on to the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but with some inconsistent practices in challenge for more able pupils and in marking. Relationships are good. Pupils are keen to learn and in most lessons work productively. In good lessons, pupils clearly understand what they are expected to learn and activities are well matched to their needs. One pupil said, 'I like the way teachers get you to learn by explaining things well'. Year 5 pupils

were enthusiastic after visiting a local open air museum and learning progressed at a good rate as they wrote about their day in the form of a newspaper article.

The good use of interactive whiteboards by teachers really helps those pupils who are learning English as an additional language. This visual approach means pupils can understand more easily and learn new vocabulary that is specific to the lesson. In some classes, there is insufficient challenge for the more able pupils, and opportunities are missed for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills. A reason for this is that there are too few teaching assistants to help pupils in their learning. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory but teachers do not use the information from their assessments consistently enough. As a result, they do not always match tasks to meet pupils' needs, especially among the more able. Teachers' marking does not always show pupils how they can improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and all statutory requirements are met. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, but the Nursery does not make enough use of the outside play area to stimulate the children's creativity. The school places an emphasis on the development and use of English and mathematics skills. The introduction of 'talking partners' in younger classes has resulted in pupils making better progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. However, opportunities to develop these skills are sometimes missed in Years 3 to 6. There is not enough extension work to provide challenge for the more able pupils. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of clubs that contribute well to pupils' personal development, including chess, drama and cooking. The school does not make enough use of visitors to come and share their experiences with pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. A parent commented, 'Teachers understand the pupils well'. There are robust procedures for child protection. Careful checks are made on the adults working with children. All staff are aware of their responsibilities for pupils' health and general welfare through effective training. The school rewards good attendance but does not do enough to dissuade parents from taking their children on extended breaks in term time. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory. Pupils' needs are identified at an early stage and sound intervention programmes result in pupils making satisfactory progress against the targets in their individual education plans. Provision for pupils at the early stages of learning English is satisfactory. Recent initiatives involving outside agencies are improving provision for those pupils who need extra support in developing their language skills. The school tracks pupils' progress and identifies groups and individuals in need of more support. This process does not happen frequently enough at present. Pupils are aware of the importance of their learning targets. One pupil said, 'They target the place where you are weak in a subject and help you get better'. Some targets

are not specific enough for pupils to know what exactly they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leaders work very hard to support pupils and to ensure they make satisfactory progress. However, there is not enough monitoring of the school's work, and this reduces the influence leaders have in raising achievement. Teachers do not have enough time away from their classes to observe what is going on elsewhere in the school. The school has a huge budget surplus as a result of monies accumulated for building projects that did not need to be spent after all. This has not been reduced in recent years, even though the school needs more teaching and support staff. Difficulties in recruitment are partly to blame. Governors are involved well in the life of the school, and have developed expertise in their subject areas. They are very supportive, but do not ask probing questions to ensure the school's resources are targeted on raising standards. The senior leadership team know the key areas for development and have enjoyed some success in raising achievement of girls and in developing language skills among younger pupils. Strategic plans are comprehensive, but do not highlight these priorities sufficiently well.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	4
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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 very much for making us so welcome at your school. We really enjoyed visiting you. Your school is satisfactory and we think you behave well. You enjoy your lessons and you concentrate hard. You get on well with one another and are helpful, especially in all the jobs you do around the school. You have a good understanding of how to live healthy lives, and certainly know all about healthy food. It is good that you take plenty of exercise. We saw photographs of your productions and could tell that you were having a whale of a time.

It is a shame some of you are not at school more often, as we believe attendance could be better. We want your parents to understand how important it is for you to be at school, so that you learn, and so that they don't take you away in term time. We think the teachers work very hard and that they make lessons interesting for you. Sometimes the work is a bit easy for some of you, so we want them to give you harder work to do. We also think they could tell you how to improve when they mark your books. Perhaps you could tell them how you think you are doing, especially as we believe some of you older pupils could discuss what you are learning more in lessons. The headteacher and other leaders know a lot about the school, but we think they need to get about a bit more to see what is going on in different classes.

Thank you once again for all your help. Our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr. N. Butt

Lead Inspector