



Oakwood Infant and Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112767
Local Authority City of Derby
Inspection number 289403
Inspection dates 15–16 November 2006
Reporting inspector Jane Melbourne HMI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Waldene Drive
School category	Community		Alvaston, Alvaston
Age range of pupils	3–7		Derby, Derbyshire DE24 0GZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01332 574192
Number on roll (school)	315	Fax number	01332 574192
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Ray Huckle
		Headteacher	Mrs Heather Watts
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Oakwood is a larger than average infant and nursery school in Derby City. Most pupils are of White British origin, although a few pupils speak English as an additional language. Attainment on entry is below national expectations with a significantly higher than average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Likewise, a higher than average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. All pupils make at least satisfactory progress in their personal development. The school gives effective support to vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties or disabilities, but sometimes it does not do enough to support more able pupils by providing sufficiently challenging work. Pupils' behaviour is always satisfactory and often good. Positive relationships exist throughout the school.

Standards are broadly average and given their starting points, pupils' progress and achievement are at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Teaching throughout the school is satisfactory overall, although insecure teaching in a few lessons results in more able pupils not doing as well as they should. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children have made reasonable progress and achieve the goals expected for this age group. Additional support inside and outside of lessons ensures that by the age of seven, most pupils achieve results which match national averages.

The school evaluates its effectiveness satisfactorily and has successfully brought about change in some areas, such as improving attendance and standards in writing. However, strategies to improve the quality of teaching have been slow to take effect in a number of areas. Arrangements for monitoring teaching and pupils' progress have not yet begun to raise standards in reading and mathematics. The school has clearly defined roles and responsibilities for subject leaders, but they lack the urgency needed to bring about further whole school improvement. The governors fulfil their roles satisfactorily. They are fully committed to supporting the newly appointed leadership team, but have not yet begun to take an active role in monitoring improvements to teaching and learning. The school is providing satisfactory value for money and has a sound capacity to improve in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that work provides sufficient challenge and takes account of all pupils' abilities.
- Ensure that capable pupils achieve higher levels.
- Ensure that school leaders involve all staff in creating a climate in which change and improvement is managed quickly and effectively.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils achieve broadly average standards. Over time in school, their achievement is satisfactory. Past test results demonstrate that satisfactory progress was made in core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Progress in lessons observed during the inspection was not always as good as it should be for the more able pupils. The most recent results match the national average in mathematics and are above the national average in writing. Standards are below the national average in reading. The school

met its challenging targets for writing and mathematics at the expected level for seven-year-olds.

On entry to Nursery most children start with skills that are below national expectations for their age. By the time they complete the Foundation Stage they are close to, or beyond, the goals expected for them in all but two aspects of literacy. Across the school, pupils' competence in speaking is insufficiently developed; not all pupils are able to communicate clearly. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets because they receive additional support. More able pupils are not always reaching their targets. Whilst they meet national averages, some are not attaining the higher levels expected of them in reading and mathematics. This is because they are not challenged sufficiently in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Most pupils behave well around school and in lessons. They are polite, helpful and are mindful of the school rules. Pupils enjoy good relationships with their peers and with the adults in school, setting a suitable atmosphere in lessons. When the teaching is dull, pupils continue to behave satisfactorily, although they tend to become restless as their attention wanes. However, most of the pupils enjoy school and attendance rates have improved in recent years to match the national average.

There is satisfactory provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has suitable arrangements to take account of the pupils' views. For example, the school council has a developing role in the school's decision making processes and has been particularly successful in making choices about making playtimes more exciting. The pupils know how to stay safe and appreciate the school's encouragement towards healthy life styles. When they have the opportunity, most pupils work well together and take responsibility well, but development of their initiative and independence is insufficient in lessons.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, which lead to average achievement and standards.. Teaching is satisfactory across the Foundation Stage but there is not always sufficient adult intervention to support pupils' language development effectively. The learning environment is stimulating in classrooms and outside.

The schools own monitoring and that of the Local Authority confirm satisfactory teaching, however, during the inspection, a few lessons were inadequate. Teachers' lesson introductions and explanations, although clear, were too lengthy and pupils were expected to listen for too long. They were given insufficient time to engage actively in their own learning, leading to restlessness.

Teaching assistants often provide effective support for pupils with learning difficulties. They are not always used as well during the introductions to lessons, when they do not actively support pupils' learning. In some lessons, teachers' expectations are too low which results in insufficiently challenging learning objectives and the low level demands made of the higher attaining pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The planning for the children in the Foundation Stage has improved and forms a sound basis for their learning. The curriculum is adapted satisfactorily for the pupils with learning difficulties. Although the school now has a much greater awareness of pupils' progress in English and mathematics, the data is not always used consistently to plan a stimulating curriculum which sufficiently challenges pupils, including the higher attaining pupils, to ensure they reach their potential.

The school is developing the links between subjects to make learning more meaningful, but it lacks a clear plan to ensure that the cross-curricular links are made systematically. For example, the use of computers to support learning is variable between classes. The pupils benefit from a good range of visits out and from visitors to the school, which enliven their learning. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities over the year, including football, gymnastics, dance, recorder and French, all of which are well supported.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides satisfactory care, guidance and support. Pupils feel happy and secure and trust the adults to help them should problems occur. Thorough arrangements to ensure their safety and well-being are in place. Pupils receive good support to boost their self-esteem and confidence. The school is sensitive to the different needs of those pupils with emotional problems or learning difficulties and disabilities, and has a carefully considered range of strategies to help them learn. These include interventions by knowledgeable teaching assistants and a strong working partnership with parents of those children and other professionals.

The good quality of pastoral care provided by the school is not consistently matched by the quality of academic guidance given to the pupils. For example, the school does not have a clear strategy to enable all of the higher achieving pupils to reach their potential. The progress of many groups of pupils, including those who are gifted or talented and those who are not doing as well as they are expected to, is not reviewed with sufficient rigour to raise expectations. Consequently, the pupils are not always set sufficiently challenging work and they lack clarity about what they need to do to improve. Marking praises pupils' efforts, but is not consistently precise enough to guide pupils' learning. Transition arrangements with the neighbouring junior school are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory and there is a good commitment to improving the school. Improvements have been made in tracking pupils' progress more accurately in the Foundation Stage and for other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. Changes in management and the allocation of teachers across different year groups, with key roles and responsibilities now in place, is positive, but has yet to bring about significant improvement. Useful monitoring has been undertaken by the headteacher, but staff have not consistently implemented the points for improvement raised by this. As a result, the pace of learning is uneven across the school. The school has correctly identified which types of lessons are most successful and has provided some necessary professional development for staff to raise awareness of good practice. This has not yet been fully implemented to improve the quality of teaching and learning overall.

The governing body is now more aware of its responsibilities and is more involved in the cycle of school improvement. It has ensured that the school has maintained standards in the national tests and has supported it in working on areas that required improvement; for example, the quality of writing. It has not specifically measured the impact of different actions taken by the school on achievement and standards to reach conclusions about which are the most successful and provide best value for money.

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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?	2
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	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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

17 November 2006

Dear Pupils

Oakwood Infant and Nursery School, Waldene Drive, Alvaston, Derby, DE24 0GZ

Thank you for being so helpful when Mr Edwards, Mr Sharma and I visited your school recently. We enjoyed our conversations with you. Most of you are happy at school and are trying hard to behave well.

These are the things we liked best at Oakwood:

- The positive start you make in Nursery and that your learning is checked carefully by your teachers and helpers.
- The range of activities provided in the outdoor lessons for Nursery and Reception children.
- The way that the school council is starting to make a difference for all pupils at the school by making some good suggestions. For example, the addition of a salad bar at mealtimes and the pagodas for the play areas.
- The way that you play purposefully at break and lunchtimes and have lots of things to do.
- That you know what to do if you feel unsafe.
- Your writing has improved.
- Your attendance has got better.
- Those of you that find things difficult receive some good quality support and make good progress.

These are the things we think would help you do better:

- If the lessons include more activities that interest you and where you investigate things for yourselves.
- If teachers make sure that all of you, including those that find work easy, are given harder problems to solve and achieve the highest possible standards, especially in reading and mathematics. You can help by telling the teachers if the work is too easy or when you finish quickly.
- We have asked the staff and governors to check that you are all doing as well as you can and that the school is improving.

We wish you and your school every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jane Melbourne HMI

Lead Inspector