

Oakridge Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115859
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	290350
Inspection date	16 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Charalambos Loizou

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	153
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Jackie Farrow (deputy)
Headteacher	Mrs Angela Genn
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2001
School address	Oakridge Road Basingstoke RG21 5RR
Telephone number	01256 321579
Fax number	0

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school serving a mixed area of private and social housing. The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. Others are from a wide variety of backgrounds and a small proportion are in the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is similar to that of most schools. A larger than expected number of pupils joined the school since the beginning of September last year so the school appointed an additional temporary teacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Standards are high and the pupils achieve extremely well at this outstanding school. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and enjoy school very much. They mature into courteous and confident young people who show caring attitudes to each other and excellent behaviour. There is, understandably, a high level of satisfaction from parents, many paying tribute to the staff who they say, 'do a marvellous job at Oakridge Infant School', and, 'are fantastic and make school fun and exciting'.

Standards in reading and writing are high and have improved significantly since the school's last inspection. Standards in mathematics are well above average and improving, though pupils do not do quite as well as they do in reading and writing. Assessment is used very well to track and check pupils' work and performance.

The teaching, pace of learning and curriculum are outstanding. Children in the Foundation Stage make excellent progress. Stimulating indoor and outdoor activities enables Reception children to work towards and beyond the learning goals expected for their age. Throughout the school, teachers and highly skilled support staff ensure that the pupils are extremely well cared for. Teachers provide accurate pointers for improvement like 'next time targets', so pupils receive clear guidance about what to do next. These targets are particularly effective in developing pupils' reading and writing but are not sufficiently challenging for pupils of higher ability in mathematics. This is an area recognised by the school as a priority for improvement.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They reflect on and learn about the world around them through very well-planned topics in science, art, music, and when celebrating festivals or special occasions. Healthy living is promoted in physical education and science lessons and during very popular daily fruit eating sessions and a good range of clubs, including a writing club, art, dance and football. The school council does excellent work representing the views of others. It is actively involved in the development of the school, enabling pupils to help their immediate and wider community. As one said, 'We can tell our teachers if we see something we don't like and this helps to make things better'. Charitable fund-raising, like the recent 'red nose day', provide opportunities for pupils to think about others less fortunate than themselves.

The staff are vigilant so that break-times and lunch-times are safe, happy occasions, and offer pupils many choices, 'We can do lots of things at lunch-time and like playing with our teachers (supervisors) and friends'. An extensive range of visits and visitors provides opportunities for the pupils to learn about other cultures and customs. Picnics, train journeys, nature walks and many more experiences stimulate curiosity and a zest for learning that prepares the pupils very well for the future.

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher has guided improvements to the school very well. The school knows its strengths and relative weaknesses very well so that its capacity to keep on improving is excellent. The school's modest assessments reflect the high expectations of the leadership team and governors and their belief that there is still more to be done. Staff and governors regularly consult parents and pupils and actively involve them in the development of the school. Governors are highly effective and a real asset to the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen the way assessment is used in mathematics to ensure that all higher ability pupils reach their targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards are high and achievement is outstanding. The large majority of children enter the Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are in line with those expected for their age. Reception children are provided with very stimulating teaching and outstanding all round care. By the time they start Year 1, standards are well above those expected in all areas of learning. In the rest of the school, consistently strong and effective teaching continues, enabling the pupils to reach high standards in reading and writing and well above average standards in mathematics by the end of Year 2. These high standards have been maintained over the last few years. Standards have improved very well since the school's last inspection because the staff set challenging targets. However, assessments show that the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in mathematics is relatively lower than in reading and writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities do extremely well as the large majority reach or exceed the standards expected for their age.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development of the pupils is outstanding. They are extremely well prepared for the future by receiving a very good grounding in basic skills. Good attendance rates reflect the pupils' enjoyment of school. They develop strong friendships and understand how to stay safe and to help others. Pupils know why they should wear their sun hats at break-times and who to go to if someone is upset. The school council is very active and produce reports from their own surveys of pupils' views to improve the school. Pupils reflect on spiritual and moral issues in assemblies and lessons and their efforts to help others are rewarded by an invitation to have tea with the headteacher. Pupils are very aware of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, enthusiastically take part in sporting, musical and creative arts that successfully develop their self-confidence and talents. There is a strong emphasis on tolerance and awareness of others. This is reflected in their appreciation of the different cultures and backgrounds represented across the school and in the wider community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers have high expectations and give pupils interesting work. They are very good at recognising how well individual pupils are doing because assessment is used consistently to check pupils' progress and performance. However, there is scope for improvement in the way assessment is used by teachers to set challenging targets for more able pupils in mathematics. The use of interactive white boards enliven the teaching and make learning stimulating and engaging. Lessons are very well planned and include targets and stages of learning that are shared with the pupils. During a stimulating writing lesson and role-play in the Foundation Stage, the children were clear about what was expected when

designing special 'wanted' posters to help hunt for the 'big bad wolf'. In an outstanding English lesson, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils were provided with helpful stepping stones for writing stories. These helped them to construct accurate and complex sentences, resulting in very high standards of independent and extended writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum, including that in the Foundation Stage, is excellent. This is having a positive effect on pupils' academic and personal development. In addition to highly effective literacy and mathematics lessons, activities incorporate the creative arts, music and sport, so learning is fun and exciting. Outdoor areas are used extensively and are very stimulating. There are strong links between subjects that help the pupils to develop their skills and talents. For example, pupils in Year 1 enjoyed being 'Victorian' school children during role-play which stimulated their interest in reading about the way children lived in past times. Reception children were excited when they received a special letter from a local police officer, prompting them to write and design posters. Special walks and visits combine science and geography skills to help pupils investigate the natural environment. Topics and themed 'history days' involving parents successfully develop the pupils' awareness of the local and wider community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care and welfare for every pupil. There are consistent systems to encourage excellent behaviour and pupils say they feel safe and secure and that they like to help others. The school is clean and safe and some pupils explained how they were encouraged to help, 'We spotted some problems with the toilets and told our teachers'. Pupils are very safe and secure because staff are vigilant and there are good systems in place, including health and safety checks and effective child protection procedures. Assessment is very good and is well used by the staff to check how well the pupils are doing and to set challenging targets for improvement. The school recognises that these targets could be more challenging for higher ability pupils in mathematics to enable them to do even better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding at all levels. Parents recognise these qualities and think highly of the school, one typical comment summing up the views of many, 'I have been consistently impressed with many aspects of the school'. There has been excellent progress since the last inspection. The combined leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher has accelerated the progress the school has made, especially in raising standards. Systematic monitoring of lessons and the pupils' performance provide the leadership team and governors with a clear view of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. High standards and consistently effective teaching are now well established, demonstrating excellent capacity to continue improving. Governors are highly effective and exercise their statutory responsibilities efficiently to hold the school to account for its performance and standards.

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Annex A

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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. You were all very friendly and helpful and I enjoyed my day very much. Your 'red nose day' celebrations were great and I know that you and your parents worked very hard to prepare you for the day.

Yours is an excellent school and the school councillors who showed me around were rightly very proud of their school.

There are many good things about your school that it is hard for me to pick out the very best. However, these are what I was pleased with most.

- Your teachers are excellent and are helping you to do very well.
- You are very well behaved and try very hard in lessons.
- You enjoy school and reach high standards. I really liked reading your stories in your writing books. They are brilliant, well done!
- Your parents are very pleased with the school and how it helps you to do well and have fun.
- The staff take excellent care of you and make sure you are all safe and happy.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors manage the school very well and work hard to give you extra things to do during and after school, like art, dance, football and the writing club.

I have asked your teachers to:

- keep a closer check on how you are doing in mathematics so you can do even better.

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

Yours faithfully

Charalambos Loizou

Lead Inspector