



Oakridge Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115974
Local Authority Hampshire
Inspection number 290383
Inspection dates 13–14 September 2006
Reporting inspector Alan Jarvis

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Oakridge Road
School category	Community		Basingstoke
Age range of pupils	8–11		RG21 5RR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01256473545
Number on roll (school)	201	Fax number	01256329719
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Tim Hendle
		Headteacher	Mrs Yvonne Davie
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Oakridge Junior School is a little smaller than average. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with a few from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils at an early stage of learning English is very small, but slowly rising. An above average proportion has learning difficulties, but the proportion having a statement of special educational need is below average. Each class has pupils from two different year groups and is of wide-ranging ability. Pupils generally enter the school with broadly average standards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

One parent astutely remarked 'Oakridge Junior School has come on leaps and bounds' since the headteacher was appointed five years ago. She took over a school where standards were too low. Pupils' behaviour was often bad and many improvements were needed in the curriculum and management. Since then, she has, step-by-step, rebuilt the school and addressed past weaknesses. Statutory requirements are met. The school's overall effectiveness is now satisfactory and steadily improving. It offers satisfactory value for money. The school has the full confidence of parents, who are pleased their children attend.

The headteacher's initial focus was to improve the ethos and establish a positive climate for learning. This has been successfully achieved. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education has been strengthened and is now good. Important steps have been taken to safeguard pupil's well being and enrich the curriculum. Consequently, they feel included in all aspects of school life and their smiles show how much they like school. They say, 'Someone is always around if we need help'. They also like the fact that 'lessons are fun and teachers are helpful'. Stronger links with the Infant school have ensured younger pupils rapidly settle into their new school. Pupils have a good sense of how to keep healthy and improve their fitness. Older pupils develop into confident learners. Working more closely with parents has ensured that attendance is now satisfactory. Punctuality is better but this remains an issue with a small number of families. Behaviour is good at all times. In tandem with this, exclusions and unkind behaviour are rare.

Most staff are relatively new to the school. A stable and united team has been established who share a common approach. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory and having a sound impact on standards achieved. Pupils achieve satisfactorily regardless of their starting point, gender, ethnicity, or learning need. Standards in the national tests have steadily improved and are average. They could be higher. Targets are not challenging enough. Writing remains a focus for improvement, but underachievement is now less marked.

Not enough emphasis is given to raising achievement and thus helping Oakridge Junior becomes a good school. There is scope to further improve the quality of teaching and aspects of the curriculum. Specifically teachers do not yet work closely enough with their teaching assistants. The expectations of what all groups of pupils can achieve, whilst satisfactory are not high enough. Assessments of how well pupils are progressing are not tailored closely to individual needs. The rigour senior managers and subjects leaders bring to their work is not as sharp as it might be. They should ask 'How well does our monitoring work impact on standards achieved?' and 'How can we use the information we have to improve teaching and challenge pupils to achieve well?'

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing by giving pupils more opportunities to write at length across subjects.

- Make pupils targets clearer, individualised and more challenging by using existing assessment information more effectively.
- Sharpen the impact of staff who lead and manage subjects and provision for pupils with learning difficulties.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards in 2005 in the national tests taken at the end of Year 6 were average in English, mathematics and science. They had risen for the previous three years. In the 2006 tests standards were sustained in mathematics and science. However, standards in English dipped and pupils did not reach the standards expected of them, particularly in writing. Standards in the current Year 6 have mostly recovered in English and remain average in the other two subjects.

Achievement is satisfactory but teachers could expect more of many pupils. Pupils in the mixed Year 3 and 4 classes are achieving well because most of the stronger teachers have been deployed with the younger classes. Achievement remains satisfactory for the older pupils.

Although reducing, there is still some underachievement in writing and standards could be higher in most year groups. Most of the more able pupils reach the higher levels expected of them, but one or two do not. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties achieve satisfactorily.

The school targets which are set in English and mathematics are usually reached but are comfortable rather than challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils respond well to the school's strong ethos of care and are friendly, confident and caring. They have good attitudes to learning which is evident from their eagerness to work hard and cooperate in lessons. Older pupils foster good work habits to the younger pupils in the classes.

Pupils work and play harmoniously together. A few pupils occasionally exhibit challenging behaviour. However, the friendliness of other pupils helps them feel included and keep their temper. For their age, pupils have a good understanding of how to eat healthily. The younger pupils confidently say, 'Eat lots of fruit and vegetables and avoid junk food'. However, some lunchboxes could contain healthier food. They participate eagerly in the physical activities offered. The school council point with pride to improvements they have helped bring about, such the new climbing equipment in the playground. Pupils develop important team-working skills in lessons and through participating in events such as the 'Children's Fair'. This provides them with a sound preparation for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Most work is pitched at a level which enables pupils to work productively and make sound progress. Consistent routines and varied activities ensure pupils are included and enjoy their learning. Lessons are well ordered. Pupils are clear about what they are learning. However, assessment information is not used well enough to set work which is well matched to the needs of individual pupils. Work in the mixed aged classes is too easy for some and too difficult for others.

Teaching assistants are carefully deployed to pupils who need to benefit from regular support. This ensures pupils play a full part in lessons and tackle their work with confidence. However, teachers and their assistants have too little time to discuss progress, share information and so provide well tailored work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum has a sound impact on standards achieved. Pupils' work and displays around the school show a broad and varied curriculum is delivered. National guidelines are followed in mathematics and science but there is scope to enhance practical investigations. A good reading programme is in place. More opportunities are being introduced to improve writing across subjects. This has the potential to encourage writing in a variety of contexts and develop good sentence structures, presentation and improved vocabulary. The information and communication technology (ICT) suite is used well to support the curriculum. Closer work with the Infant school has ensured a smoother transition to Year 3. Teachers continue to work to reduce gaps in previous learning, which have impaired achievement in the past.

The curriculum effectively promotes pupils' personal development. One pupil said the 'MADD' week which enriched the curriculum with music, art, dance and drama activities was 'cool' and she 'couldn't wait until the next one'. More visits and visitors are planned to strengthen pupils' social and cultural development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support that pupils receive are good. There is a good ethos of care within the school which contributes greatly to pupils' good personal development and well-being. This aspect of the school's work is much appreciated by parents. One said 'I would like to thank everyone for creating such an excellent environment for my child to learn in and be happy.'

Robust procedures ensure pupils are safe from harm. High numbers of staff supervise the playgrounds and are around at the start and end of the school day. As a result,

any health and safety incidents are dealt with swiftly and parents have easy contact with staff.

Pupils respond well to the pointers for improvement in their marked work. However, their literacy and numeracy targets are not always specific enough for them to know what exactly they have to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. The headteacher and her deputy successfully created a shared purpose among staff, focused clearly on raising standards and promoted good standards of care. Subject leaders keep their areas under constant review. However, their role in monitoring how well teaching and the curriculum impacts on pupils' good progress is underdeveloped.

School self-evaluation is satisfactory. Although the school has overestimated its performance in some areas, the school leaders correctly have identify areas of weakness and take effective action to bring about improvement. This has resulted in improved standards, especially in mathematics, and issues from the last inspection being addressed successfully. The school appropriately acts on the views of parents. The track record of improvement shows a sound capacity to improve further. The headteacher is soundly guiding the many new governors to formulate the development plan and monitor its impact.

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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 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?	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	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?	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.

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 for being so helpful when we visited your school. We would particularly like to thank the school council for talking about their work. As promised I am writing to you to let your know what we thought about your school and how you can help it get better.

We found that Oakridge Junior is a satisfactory school and getting better. This is why.

- You and your parents were right when they said the school is steadily getting better.
- By the time you leave school many of you have reached the standards expected of eleven year olds and through the school you progress as well as you should.
- Many of you said you lessons were 'fun, fun, fun!' This is because teachers give you lots of interesting things to do and help you if you are stuck.
- Staff care for you well. Many of you told us how happy and safe you feel in school. We could see that there was always someone around if you needed help.
- We like the way you have helped the school get better, such as how you had made the playground better and how the older pupils helped the younger ones.
- You all care for each other well and do not like any unkind behaviour.
- We noticed how well Year 3 pupils had quickly settled in. Well done!

Every school has some things that could be better. These are the things that should be worked on next, and you can play your part.

- You can all try to make your writing better in every subject by making it as neat as it can be. Try also to choose your words well, organise your sentences correctly and write a little bit more than you do now.
- We have asked your teachers to provide each of you with clearer targets, especially in English and mathematics. Can you help put these together and frequently use them to make quicker progress in your learning?
- Finally, we have asked your teachers to make sure what they do is all linked to quickening the progress you make in lessons and the standards you reach.

Thank you once again for all your help. We wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Alan Jarvis

Lead inspector