

# Oakwood Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116138
<b>Local Authority</b>	Southampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	290430
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sean O'Toole

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	282
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Richard Wilson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Ian Taylor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 November 2002
<b>School address</b>	Sandpiper Road Lordswood Southampton SO16 8FD
<b>Telephone number</b>	02380 320360
<b>Fax number</b>	02380 742341

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is located in an area of mixed housing and diverse socio-economic circumstances. Most pupils transfer from the infant school which is on the same site. The vast majority of pupils have White British heritage. Their attainment on admission is broadly average. Three pupils are at an early stage of learning English and their home languages include Arabic and Polish. An average proportion has learning difficulties and disabilities. There has been a high turnover of staff and the headteacher was appointed from April 2006. The school has Investor in People status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Parents are almost unanimous in their positive comments about recent improvements. One wrote, 'It is a happy, secure school where the children are given every opportunity to learn'. Standards have fallen in recent years but, under the good leadership of the headteacher, supported by a strong governing body, there has been rapid and sustainable improvement. The school now provides a satisfactory quality of education, with some good features, and has good capacity to build on its recent successes.

Test results in 2006 were too low and standards in mathematics were among the lowest in the country. Robust monitoring and support for teachers, intensive help for different groups of pupils and sharply focused target setting have turned around this situation. Due to a legacy of underachievement, standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 are below average. However, pupils' work shows significant improvement and the school's data confirms that pupils now make satisfactory progress. Pupils have a grasp of basic skills in literacy and numeracy but struggle to apply them in subjects such as science, history, geography and religious education. Through the good use of assessment to identify any pupils who are falling behind, underachievement has been eradicated. All pupils now achieve at least satisfactorily. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because of well focused support.

Pupils say that they enjoy school and this is reflected in their positive responses and increasing confidence. These qualities are seen in pupils' awareness of the needs of others and their good involvement in supporting charities. Pupils say there are few incidents of bullying. Behaviour is satisfactory. Teachers control classes well. They make good use of resources to support learning and plan and prepare lessons thoroughly. Some lessons lack pace and challenge and pupils are sometimes too easily satisfied with small quantities of work.

The headteacher's good understanding of what needs to be done next and of how to do it have provided a spur to school improvement. As a result, staff work as a team to tackle any shortcomings. The successful sharing of assessment data has enabled staff to review and improve their teaching. By regularly tracking pupils' progress the headteacher calls the staff to account and they use the information to develop programmes for individuals and groups to get them back on track. The good involvement of parents through family learning is helping to improve progress. One parent said, 'The headteacher is very enthusiastic about learning and this is reflected in improved attitudes throughout the school'.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and mathematics, focusing on providing opportunities for pupils to apply their basic skills in other subjects.
- Improve some aspects of teaching and learning, by increasing the pace of lessons, setting more challenging work and expecting more of the pupils.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Over a period of time standards have fluctuated and in 2006 they were much too low, especially in mathematics. In the past, progress has been patchy and pupils have underachieved. The headteacher has made a significant impact in recent months and raised expectations among staff and pupils. As a result, standards have risen although they remain below average in English

and mathematics. However, pupils are capable of more and have too few opportunities to extend and refine their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because they have clear and achievable targets, receive good support and work which is matched to their needs. The school has also raised the performance of girls to match that of boys. Some older pupils lack confidence in working without support. Those at an early stage of learning English achieve well and quickly grow in competence in communicating clearly. Because staff are ambitious for the pupils' success, targets are reviewed and regularly raised. A mark of the school's success is that these challenging targets are likely to be met this year.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. They are friendly and polite. Their behaviour is satisfactory. They have enjoyed the opportunity to devise their own rules and this is helping to improve their attitudes to work and play. Although there are incidents of bullying pupils say they feel safe and that staff deal with any problems. Attendance has improved and is satisfactory. Pupils are aware of the need to arrive on time and lateness has been substantially reduced. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and enjoy the opportunities for physical exercise in lessons and clubs. They make good choices at lunchtime and talk knowledgeably about what they have learned from visitors about looking after themselves and keeping safe. Pupils have satisfactory basic skills which prepare them adequately for the future.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy opportunities to share their ideas and feelings in lessons in personal, social and health education (PSHE). Many speak well of the friendship club where they feel free to discuss their problems and find ways of controlling their emotions. Most appreciate the opportunity to learn about other cultures and traditions through geography and religious education. They are proud of the school council's contribution to recent improvements.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and there are some good features. There is good individual or small group support for those with learning difficulties and disabilities because targets are well focused and explained thoroughly. At the start of lessons, objectives are made clear and teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to capture pupils' interest. They encourage pupils to present their work well and praise them for their success. Teachers plan and prepare conscientiously and provide resources which help the pupils to grasp new ideas. Pupils clearly enjoy learning and are attentive as seen in an outstanding Year 4 art lesson when pupils animatedly discussed the different techniques used by Paul Klee. In some lessons the pace is too slow and teachers do not expect enough of the pupils. Sometimes teachers talk too much and this limits the time available for pupils to complete their work. Support staff are clear about their role and skilfully encourage the less attentive through well focused questioning. Teachers regularly correct pupils' work. A particular success has been the use of regular assessments to show pupils how they are improving. As one Year 4 girl said, 'I get really excited when my teacher marks my work because it shows how much I have improved'.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory and is enhanced through a good range of additional activities and special events. Pupils' learning and personal qualities benefit from the comprehensive provision in PSHE. The friendship club is much appreciated by pupils. Several commented how it had helped them to grow in confidence and to learn how to be caring. One said, 'I now know how wrong it is to bully anyone and this has helped me to be more friendly'. The school's focus on the development of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is working. In Year 4 there are good opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in other subjects but this is not consistent throughout the school. Pupils enjoy music especially learning to play an instrument. They also learn much about their own and other communities through the interesting range of trips and residential visits. Those with good art skills have the opportunity to extend their prowess by visiting galleries such as Tate Modern. Pupils' learning also benefits from the good links with other schools and agencies.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Parents speak highly of this aspect of the school's work. One wrote, 'We have nothing but praise for the staff...they have supported our daughters' needs and ensured that they are included in everything'. The school has ensured that all checks on the suitability of staff have been completed. Procedures to ensure the safety and protection of children are robust and staff take special care of those who are vulnerable or ill. Staff guide the pupils on how to improve. Marking is accurate and in the best examples includes specific comments about how the pupils might improve. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well and the school has done much to make the building accessible to all. The school quickly identifies the needs of those new to learning English and provides good support which helps these pupils to adapt to new surroundings and to feel valued in school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

In the past, too many pupils underachieved because of weak assessment, inconsistent teaching and weak tracking of the curriculum. As a result, standards slipped significantly. Because of good leadership and management the school is back on track. The headteacher has flair and determination and has won the confidence of staff, pupils, governors and parents by clearly communicating the next steps for the school. There is a shared commitment to improvement which is bearing fruit. Already standards and the rate of progress have improved, the quality of teaching is more consistent and all groups achieve at least satisfactorily. This shows the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation.

Governors keep a check on the school's work through regular monitoring and by setting targets and challenges. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and use this information to support the headteacher in pinpointing where extra help is needed. The headteacher calls the staff to account and gives them responsibility for raising standards. They are rising to the challenge. More remains to be done to extend the skills of middle managers in using their subjects to improve standards in English and mathematics.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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	2
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	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

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you about your work and how you feel about lessons. Like you, we feel that the school has improved and now gives you a satisfactory education. There are several good things happening. It was great to hear how you are learning to care for each other and to tackle any problems like bullying. You obviously appreciate the friendship club and other extra activities that the school provides.

There have been quite a lot of changes at your school and your parents told us that things are getting better all the time. Everyone we spoke to said they were happy and most of you said you enjoy lessons. A few said that the work is not hard enough and we agree that some lessons should be more challenging. You also need to have more time to finish your work and some of you need to work more quickly. We have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities to use your writing and number skills in other lessons. By doing this the lessons should be more interesting and should help you to do better in the tests at the end of Year 6. Last year the school's test results were not as good as they should have been. This year, due to the hard work of your headteacher, teachers and you, things have improved. There is still more to do to make sure that you all are as successful as possible especially in English and mathematics.

Many of you told us that you feel safe in school and that the adults listen to you when you have a problem or guide you when you need help with your work. We spoke to most of the adults working with you and it is clear that they work hard to look after and care for you. This is one of the things that your parents were most pleased with. You said that one of the best things about the school was the chance to go on lots of visits and they certainly sound like great fun.

We hope that you will continue to be happy at school and wish you every success in the future.

Yours truly,

Sean O'Toole

Lead inspector