

Oakhill Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123771
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	292784
Inspection date	24 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Deborah Zachary

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	126
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Deanne Smith
Headteacher	D Barlow
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2002
School address	Oakhill Radstock BA3 5AQ
Telephone number	01749 840426
Fax number	01749 840426

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The large majority of the Oakhill pupils come from the immediate village, with others travelling from nearby communities. Few are entitled to free school meals. Very few are from minority ethnic groups and all speak English as their first language. As the school is small, attainment on entry varies from year to year, but it is broadly average. However there are fewer pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities than is typical nationally.

The school has recently undergone major building works to increase space and improve accommodation. The headteacher is retiring at the end of the 2007 summer term and a new headteacher has already been appointed.

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 is a calm, secure and happy place of learning, qualities established through an effective lead from the headteacher and maintained by the commitment of all the staff, governors and pupils. Care, guidance and support are good; this leads to good personal development and high attendance. Managers are committed to raising standards, but the systems for self-evaluation and monitoring are not finely tuned enough. This means that any patterns of underachievement are not always identified sufficiently early to have a quick impact. As a result, standards are average, achievement and teaching are satisfactory rather than better, and the overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory despite the strengths in personal development, ethos and care.

Links with the village and outside agencies are good, and there is a powerful sense of community: one parent wrote, 'My child has a real sense of "belonging" in the school.' Pupils are confident, and have learnt to respect and listen to each other. There is a strong focus on the arts, with music performed by pupils, for example, helping to foster good spiritual development during collective worship. The good curriculum is extended by an impressively wide range of extra-curricular activities. Changes to the curriculum in response to two years of comparatively low science scores in Year 6 tests had an effective impact in 2006. This illustrates the school's sound capacity to improve further.

The provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage is good and pupils make good progress when they start at the school in Reception. The quality of teaching is also strong for pupils in Year 6, but it is not consistently as good through the rest of the school. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers have an accurate informal understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, but the monitoring of teaching is not frequent or systematic enough to ensure that comparatively weaker areas are quickly improved. As a result pupils' progress slows through the middle of the school. Monitoring systems are effective in identifying individuals' underachievement over a single year and support is then put in, but the support is not fully evaluated and any slippage over several years can accumulate.

The school's commitment to improvement has raised standards, particularly in 2006 when Year 6 achieved well, especially in mathematics. However, the school's current data show that progress in mathematics in previous years has been very much slower for pupils now in Years 5 and 6. It is now significantly weaker than in English and science.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' progress in mathematics, particularly in Years 3 to 5.
- Monitor and support teaching more rigorously to improve areas where it is comparatively weak.
- Extend the monitoring of pupils' progress to cover the longer term, and also whole-school subject patterns.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are broadly average overall. They vary from year to year, partly because of the differences in ability of different cohorts (year groups) on entry, but also because of significant differences in the progress cohorts make. National test results show that the gains made by pupils have fallen and risen in different subjects over the last three years. Achievement is satisfactory in the school overall. Cohorts are small because the school is comparatively small, and there are no statistically significant differences in the progress of pupils from different backgrounds and genders, or of different abilities.

Progress is generally rapid when pupils enter the school and slows down through Years 1 to 2. The 2006 Year 2 pupils reached broadly average standards, and school data show current Year 2 standards to be above average in English and average in mathematics. The 2006 Year 6 pupils reached above average standards. The current Year 6 cohort were lower attaining on entry, but they have not made as much progress through Years 3 to 6 as a whole as the previous year group. Their standards are below average. School data show that progress has fallen in mathematics in particular. They also show that the current Year 5 have not made the progress expected in mathematics, whilst making good progress in reading but slower progress in writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Though their understanding of Britain as a multicultural society is satisfactory, they have a good awareness of the arts and other countries' cultures through, for example, a link with a school in Sri Lanka. Pupils are well aware of how to keep safe and healthy; older pupils are prepared to criticise if chips are offered as a school meal and if food is spilled and not quickly cleaned from the hall floor! They behave well, and exceptionally so in many ways, but a small number in Years 3 and 4 find concentration and listening more difficult. They raise money for a wide range of charities, and represent the parish through preparing 'altar windows' for the Bath and West Show. Pupils cooperate effectively in class and beyond, and the school council meets regularly and represents pupils' views well. With average literacy and numeracy skills and appropriate opportunities to use computers, pupils are adequately prepared for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils' learning is satisfactory overall, but it is rapid in the Reception class and accelerates again in Year 6. Throughout the school, pupils are involved in their own learning, understanding what it is they are going to do in a lesson, sometimes because teachers tell them and sometimes through formally recorded learning objectives. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding and positive relationships with their classes. They assess learning well during lessons, for example through good use of 'thumbs up' as a visual check. Work is appropriately corrected and yearly assessments made of pupils' reading, writing and mathematics levels. In the best lessons, teachers use well prepared resources very effectively, are well organised and clear, and pupils really enjoy their learning. Weaker aspects of teaching are largely to do with

pace and work that is not so finely tuned to pupils' different needs. Both these things lead to significantly slower progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

One parent accurately described the curriculum as 'varied and imaginative', and it has a strong positive impact on pupils' personal development. Morning exercise gets the day off to a healthy start and 'enrichment weeks' raise enjoyment as well as broadening and deepening learning. All subjects are appropriately covered and physical education and the arts receive a strong focus. A good range of visitors enhances the children's experiences. The school is aware that links with other British schools could be better used to enhance pupils' experience of multicultural Britain. As part of the response to lower Year 6 science results in 2004 and 2005, the science curriculum was reviewed, extended in terms of lesson time and enriched resulting in a significant improvement in the 2006 tests.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care and support for pupils are very good, and staff display a high level of concern for the well-being of each individual. As a result, pupils are happy to approach staff for help and this has a positive impact on their learning and development. Statutory requirements for safeguarding and health and safety are met. Parents are extremely satisfied with the way their children are looked after; all those who returned inspection questionnaires agreed that their children are safe and happy. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are effectively supported by appropriate individual plans, and there is a record of particular success with the few most vulnerable.

Academic guidance to pupils is satisfactory. The school has tried a range of systems to make pupils aware of their targets, but these have not been fully effective and target setting is not consistent through the school. However, there are examples of good marking of work with helpful comments to older pupils, and pupils are given effective help in lessons.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and senior managers have given a clear lead in taking action to raise standards where weaknesses have been identified since the last inspection. More recently, improvements have been made to reading in Years 1 and 2 following the 2006 national test results, and science the year before. The headteacher has been particularly effective over many years in establishing a school that is a calm and happy place of learning and where each individual is valued. However, monitoring activities do not produce a sufficiently strategic whole-school view and so there is a delay in recognising areas that need action. As a result, the school's self-evaluation is over-generous in its judgement of teaching, achievement and management. Improvements in response to results rather than systematic whole-school monitoring have resulted in subject results rising and falling in different years as foci change. Governors are supportive but also challenge and criticise when necessary. They have been particularly effective in the planning of the building alterations, and in locating grants of money to enable them to take place. The school's resources have been deployed well, not only in this building programme, which has

alleviated a wide range of restrictions noted in the last inspection, but also in the carefully planned provision of a small class of Year 6 pupils. The resulting well targeted curriculum has contributed to their good progress.

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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>	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	2
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	1
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?	2
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.

Annex A

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	2
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	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

25 April 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Oakhill C of E Primary School, Radstock, BA3 5AQ

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing about your work. You told us how much you like your school, and we agree that it is a really happy and calm place to be. We think it is giving you a satisfactory education.

We were pleased to see that you attend school as frequently as you can. We were impressed with the way you value each other and each other's views. We think that most of you behave extremely well, but there are a few of you in the middle part of the school who need to try harder to concentrate. We were very impressed with the wide range of activities you can do. We also think the school takes care of you well. You also understand for yourselves how to stay safe and healthy, as those who talked to Mr Williams made clear.

We have given the school three things to work on to improve. We saw some good teaching, but we also think that teachers in some lessons could push you to learn faster. We think you need to move on more quickly in mathematics, especially in Years 3, 4 and 5. We have asked those in charge of the school to keep a closer watch on how quickly you move on.

With best wishes

Deborah Zachary Lead Inspector