

# Oakhill Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 124000  
**Local Authority** Stoke-On-Trent  
**Inspection number** 292857  
**Inspection dates** 1–2 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** John Carnaghan

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>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Rookery Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Oakhill
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Stoke-on-Trent ST4 5NS
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 235238
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	289	<b>Fax number</b>	01782 236564
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Susan Newman
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Lyn Paxton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 October 2002		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
3–11	1–2 March 2007	292857

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Oakhill Primary School serves a deprived urban area. It has above average numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is small and a few pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The school has a number of initiatives to support pupils whose learning is a cause for concern.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Oakhill Primary School provides a satisfactory education. Pupils really like their school and relationships are friendly and constructive. Pupils' personal development is good, they behave well and there is little bullying or racism. The ways the school supports young individuals and cares for them as they grow are good.

The school experienced a sudden fall in standards and achievement in Year 6 in 2006. The speed and quality of its reaction have led to swift improvements. Current standards in Year 6 are broadly average and pupils' achievement throughout the school is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory. While there are strengths in teaching, not all lessons provide enough pace and challenge to ensure the best learning. The assessment of pupils' work has improved from inadequate to satisfactory. Information gained is now used to help those who most require it and to ensure that the achievement of all groups of pupils is equal. There are some inconsistencies in the way that work is marked and variations in the quality of pupils' targets. As a result, pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve. The curriculum is satisfactory and pupils appreciate the way the school provides interesting activities outside the classroom.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and senior staff analysed and reacted to falling standards, making changes to assessment and providing targeted support for pupils who were underachieving. These have proved effective in ensuring better achievement across the school. Senior staff check regularly on the quality of the school, but the results are not always fully followed up. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good and this enables children to make a flying start to their education.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Develop marking and target setting so they are used more effectively to raise pupils' standards and progress.
- Ensure that all lessons are conducted at a good pace to maximise pupils' learning.
- Improve the rigour with which the leadership and management team follow up the outcomes of their monitoring.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Children start in the Nursery with skills that are below average. They are well nurtured in the Foundation Stage, make good progress and as a result are working at average standards by the end of Reception. Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 have improved since the previous inspection and pupils' achievement is satisfactory in most areas. However, boys do not make such good progress in reading and lag behind girls. The school is making changes to teaching and the curriculum to address this.

The way teaching and assessment are used to promote learning in Years 3 to 6 has improved in the last year. In consequence, achievement for all groups of pupils,

including pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and disabilities, is now satisfactory. In the 2006 national tests, standards were well below average and achievement was poor and in the lowest 10% nationally. The weakest progress was in science, but in both English and mathematics pupils achieved too little. The school fell short of its English targets for 2006 by a small margin and of its mathematics targets by a large margin. Standards of the current Year 6 pupils indicate that the school's newly introduced strategies have had a significant impact and have ironed out inconsistencies in pupils' performance between subjects. Pupils are on track to achieve the realistic targets set for the end of the year.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Behaviour is good and most pupils enjoy their learning. One indication of this is their willingness to answer questions and join in discussions. In these discussions, pupils show understanding of the needs of others and respect for their views. They happily share in the successes of their peers, as was evident in assembly where prizes were awarded for the most imaginative costume on World Book Day. The commitment of pupils to the school is indicated by the fact that almost all had dressed up for the occasion. Children's personal development in the Foundation Stage is good. They are happily settled and share equipment and play very well together.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school community and regularly fund-raise for good causes. They happily take roles as monitors, playground leaders and running the 'eco café' in support of healthy eating. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives and stay safe. Many take part in sports. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and they have a very good grasp of right and wrong.

Attendance improved last year and is now broadly average, due to considerable efforts from the school. Improving standards in literacy and numeracy help ensure pupils' satisfactory development of skills and qualities to equip them for the next stage of their education and later life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

All staff have good relationships with their pupils. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards as an aid to pupils' learning.

Most lessons are well planned with clear, shared objectives and this promotes learning well. As a result, pupils are well focused and keen. Perceptive questions extend and reinforce learning. There is a strong emphasis on language development, particularly for younger pupils, where they are encouraged to respond in full sentences. However, not all teachers provide tasks that effectively match the needs of all or focus enough

on pupils' learning. Consequently, there is sometimes a lack of challenge and pace is too slow. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, ensuring they can do the tasks set and make similar progress to other pupils.

The school's new systems to track pupils' progress are good. Data are well used to identify pupils who need additional support, so appropriate intervention strategies can be employed. However this information is not consistently used to inform teachers' planning or build on pupils' prior knowledge. Marking is satisfactory, but constructive comments are not always provided to help pupils improve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is good in the Foundation Stage with a wide range of interesting activities for children to explore. Good use is made of the two secure outdoor areas, weather permitting.

Since the last inspection provision for information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the school has improved, but there are few opportunities for pupils to use these skills in other subjects. The school has made helpful changes to what is studied to improve pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. The curriculum is very well enriched through variety of visits and visitors. The most notable is a residential visit for Year 6 pupils to France, particularly relevant because French is taught from Year 3 onwards. There are many clubs both in sport and the arts. There are good links with the nearby primary schools and very good ones with the local secondary schools. The use of science facilities and the sharing of expertise in dance and drama are experiences that enhance the pupils' learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are well cared for, are known to all adults and their personal development is carefully monitored. With very good relationships, pupils have good opportunities to discuss any issues with an appropriate adult. Child protection procedures are effective and pupils' health and safety needs are well cared for. There are imaginative and effective systems to deal with pupils' emotional and development needs through, for example, the 'nurture group'. Learning mentors play a major role in promoting pupils' welfare and progress. The home/school liaison team, which specialises in ensuring that parents are well informed and contribute to their children's education, works very well with pupils and parents. The school gives strong support to pupils at an early stage of learning English.

There is too much variation in the quality of the guidance that pupils get about what they need to work on. Marking has strengths, most is supportive and some is analytical, telling pupils how to improve their work. However, practice is inconsistent and some marking is uninformative. Targets to help pupils improve are starting to be set but these can be wordy, making them hard to understand and remember.

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## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

A lack of rigour in tracking systems meant that the school was not in a position to predict the fall in standards in 2006. However, its analysis of the underlying reasons was quick and accurate. Its rigorous subsequent reaction has meant that standards have begun to rise. The school has made satisfactory strides since its last inspection and has sound capacity for further improvement.

The school has sharpened up its methods of assessment and now closely follows each pupil's progress. It can now direct resources to where they are most needed, so that all groups of pupils are now challenged or supported, as required. Monitoring is satisfactory. This is an increasing role of managers but, as yet, there is not enough focus on following up any weaknesses identified to eradicate inconsistencies in what the school provides. While the school has a clear vision for the future, there is a lack of detailed practical planning to meet these aims, which may slow its progress in the future.

The school's use of its resources is satisfactory. Universal interactive whiteboards in Years 1 to 6 promote more creative teaching, engaging pupils in their learning. The school deploys teaching assistants effectively and they make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

Governors support the school strongly. They visit regularly and are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses but tend to be more reactive than proactive in their actions.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<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 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

<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	3

### Personal development and well-being

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

<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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 very much for the warm welcome you gave us when the inspectors visited Oakhill School a little while ago. Your school provides you with a sound education and we are pleased that you are happy there. We know that you are well looked after and your personal development is good.

We think children get off to a good start in the Reception class and we like the way the school looks after you. But, like most schools, there are some things that need to be improved. The main ones are:

- you need clearer advice to help you improve your work
- in some lessons you could learn more quickly and be given some harder work
- the headteacher and senior teachers need to check carefully on everything that the school does, so they can put right anything that is not working properly.

Once again, thanks for the nice welc      you gave us.