

Oakgrove School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 131887 |
| Local Authority | Stockport |
| Inspection number | 293878 |
| Inspection date | 13 March 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Jim Alexander |

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

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| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Community special |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 29 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Barbara Dunne |
| Headteacher | Mrs Gill Nash |
| Date of previous school inspection | 3 July 2001 |
| School address | Matlock Road Heald Green Cheadle Cheshire SK8 3BU |
| Telephone number | 0161 4374956 |
| Fax number | 0161 2836665 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Oak Grove is a day community special school for 30 pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Need for emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are currently 29 pupils on roll; the vast majority are of White British heritage. All pupils attend the school on a fixed-term basis. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is high. The headteacher, who was appointed in September 2006, also manages the Primary Behaviour Support Service that is on the same site. The school had a significant number of staff changes in September, including the appointment of an acting deputy headteacher. The school has recently established a class in a local primary school to assist pupils' reintegration into mainstream education.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school has many strengths and cares for its pupils well. Parents overwhelmingly support the work of staff as they endeavour to get the best from each pupil. It is a happy school, which understands the need for pupils to feel not only safe and secure but also valued and appreciated; consequently, their personal development thrives. Pupils join the school at various stages in their school life and many have had unsettled experiences in previous schools. Pupils are helped to settle quickly and they respond well to the individual attention that they receive. Pupils say that they 'enjoy school' because 'we do well and we can go to anyone if we need help'. They say, 'our teachers get things sorted quickly' and this helps them feel secure. Parents are also well supported as their children enter the school. A recently appointed Behaviour Support Coordinator provides a valuable link between home and school. This has enhanced the support and encouragement the whole family receive and as a result, pupils' attendance is good. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their school and are given jobs and tasks to perform. Pupils appreciate this and feel positive about the contribution they make. Reflection meetings are held when incidents of unacceptable behaviour occur. Pupils are encouraged to examine their rights and responsibilities as well as the consequences of their actions on others. Older pupils express a desire to play a more active role in shaping the life of the school and would value greater opportunities to share their views and make a difference. Prior to arriving at Oak Grove, pupils' attainment has been affected detrimentally by disrupted learning at their previous schools. As a result, their starting points are well below national expectations for their age. School data demonstrate that once settled pupils achieve well, with some pupils making very good progress. Standards by the end of Year 6 are still below average in English and mathematics but more broadly average in science. Pupils do not necessarily stay at Oak Grove until the end of Year 6 because the school actively prepares pupils to return to mainstream school. The recently established class at the nearby primary school, although at an early stage of development, is already providing a good opportunity for the reintegration of a number of pupils into mainstream education. No matter how long pupils remain at Oak Grove they are all helped to make good progress. The school has a wealth of data to enable teachers to pitch work at the right level for the pupils in lessons. However, systems to track pupils' progress over time are insufficiently rigorous to ensure all reach the highest standards they are capable of. The good teaching offered by all staff is effectively supported by a well-designed curriculum. A notable feature of the provision is the willingness of teachers to allow pupils opportunities to work independently. This is largely successful but when incidents of inappropriate behaviour occur individually tailored procedures are followed and this quickly helps pupils to refocus on the task in hand. The good curriculum is enhanced by effective links that are made between subjects. As a result, pupils not only gain knowledge and understanding in certain subjects, but also apply these skills across a range of activities. The curriculum is enriched by trips and visits. Swimming lessons and sports coaching are strong elements that support healthy lifestyles. The strong leadership is underpinned by the appreciation of how personal development and the pupils' sense of well-being impacts so significantly on the progress they make and the standards they reach. The newly appointed headteacher, who has been in post for seven months, has achieved much in this time. The school knows where it could do better and what needs to be done to achieve this. The schools' capacity to improve is good because it examines its performance carefully and takes appropriate action to make things better. Governors, too, play an integral part in the success of the school. They have taken effective steps to ensure the

school has improved since the last inspection. The school provides good value for money because of its success in improving the pupils' chances in life.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the wealth of data available to rigorously track the progress pupils make to ensure all reach the highest possible standards.
- Give pupils greater opportunities to express their views on how their school should develop.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter Oak Grove at different stages in their schooling. Due to the nature of their difficulties and the negative impact this has had on their education to date, pupils' attainment is very low. They are helped to settle quickly and this, together with the carefully designed individual education and behaviour plans, helps them make good progress during their time at school. Standards by the end of Year 6 are still below average in English and mathematics but are more broadly average in science. The school has recently trained staff in a specific intervention programme to support the development of reading, which is beginning to have a measurable impact in raising standards further.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils show a good capacity to get on together given their previous major social and behavioural difficulties. Whilst break times and lunchtimes are well supervised, pupils generally manage their own behaviour very well. The number of serious incidents in which pupils have had to be restrained for their own or others' safety grew earlier this year, but now has returned to a minimal level. Good behaviour and attendance mean that they have every opportunity to benefit from everything the school offers. As a result, their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. The school provides a number of ways for pupils to express their feelings in class. Older pupils also express a desire to play a more active role in shaping the life of the school; they would value greater opportunities to share their views and make a difference. Regular swimming lessons and the many sporting opportunities support healthy lifestyles well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Typically, the management of behaviour in lessons is very good. Well-deployed and highly effective teaching assistants offer invaluable support to ensure good progress is made by pupils in their lessons. The headteacher and deputy headteachers have a non-teaching role and are always on hand to offer further support if required. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and plan lessons well to match pupils' needs. They develop very strong relationships with pupils and have high expectations both academically and in terms of behaviour. Pupils respond well and consequently achieve much in lessons. The school has a wealth of data to enable teachers to pitch work at the right level for the pupils in lessons. However, systems to track pupils' progress over time are insufficiently rigorous.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum extends across the school day both in lessons and well-structured playtimes, and is linked closely with the school's reward and sanction system. The curriculum is designed to specifically match the pupils' ages and needs and reflects closely the style of a mainstream primary school. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively across the curriculum to help raise standards in English and mathematics, for example. The school is currently developing a structured programme for social and emotional development, which will further enhance this good curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff have very high expectations for pupils based upon detailed knowledge of their social and behavioural needs and where they are up to with their learning. Detailed individual education and behaviour plans ensure interventions are specifically tailored to each individual pupil. When new pupils arrive at school they are helped to settle quickly. Their re-integration into mainstream school, or when they move to high school, is also carefully managed. The school meets the current regulations on safeguarding children. Child protection procedures are in place and the school records accurately incidents where pupils have had to be restrained. Good partnerships with a range of local agencies ensure effective and timely support for all pupils. In lessons, teachers guide the pupils well so they know how to improve the quality of their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school went through a difficult period earlier this year due to staffing changes. Pupils became unsettled when both a new headteacher and acting deputy headteacher were appointed. This manifested in more inappropriate behaviour displayed by a number of pupils; consequently, the number of short-term exclusions increased. Pupils' attendance was also adversely affected. The newly formed leadership team, in partnership with governors and all staff, worked quickly to ensure pupils' sense of security and well-being was restored. The newly appointed Behaviour Support Coordinator played an important role during this period by providing a valuable link between home and school. Attendance and behaviour are monitored rigorously and swift, proportionate action taken is when required. The school is once again running very smoothly which is testament to the strength of the good leadership team.

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Annex A**Inspection judgements**

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| <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

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 |
| 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

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| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 2 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |

The quality of provision

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|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 |
| 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**

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 2 |
| 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 |

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

Thank you very much for working so hard and being very friendly when Mr Simm and I visited your school recently. It was useful to know what you think about your school and also how much you enjoy what the school provides for you. We think Oak Grove is a good school.

We were impressed by so many things that we saw. In particular, all of the staff in your school want you to do really well. We think that many of you recognise how much staff care and look after you, and in return, you try really hard in your work and behaviour. Well done for all of you that attend school every day. It makes such a difference to what you achieve.

These are the things we have asked teachers to do to help you to do even better:

- use all the information about how well you are doing in your work to help you do even better
- provide more opportunities for you to have a say in how your school should develop.

We are sure that you will play your part in helping to make your school even better. Thank you again for being so polite and friendly.