

The Oaks Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134733
Local Authority	SUFFOLK
Inspection number	294161
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Sandra Tweddell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	334
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Rooney
Headteacher	Miss Tina Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Aster Road Ipswich Suffolk IP2 0NR
Telephone number	01473 684994
Fax number	01473 692253

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large school opened in September 2005 as an amalgamation of an existing infant and junior school. It serves an area of high economic disadvantage, has twice as many pupils entitled to free schools meals as the national average and a large proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, although small numbers come from ethnic minority groups. A very small number of pupils are at early stages of learning English. At the start of its second year, the school moved into a new building.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that gives good value for money. Inspirational leadership from the headteacher has ensured a good start and led to rapid improvement over the past two years. The strong leadership team's clear expectations and direction have enabled it to develop a close team of teachers who share the vision for the school. Its rigorous use of self-evaluation techniques is helping it to raise standards. Inspectors agree with the school's judgments of its own effectiveness.

Children enter the nursery with a great deal of ground to make up. Provision in the early years is good due to the rich curriculum and effective teaching. The progress of most children is good but many do not reach the goals expected for their age. Achievement between Years 1 to 6 has improved over the past year and is now good, especially in reading and writing. Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory but is good in many classes. Following a history of underachievement, standards at the end of Year 6 have been low and remain so, despite the improvements seen this year. However, standards in other years are improving and have risen, particularly in reading and writing this year, because of the school's careful analysis both of its results and pupils' work in class. Standards are now close to the national average. The personal difficulties of a large number of pupils clearly restrict their learning, despite the good support they receive, but the school's involvement in a national research programme is helping it tackle the low aspirations of these pupils and governors are actively following up the findings as to why a small number of girls have underachieved.

In all years, pupils' personal development is good. They learn to live a healthy and safe lifestyle and the lively and interesting curriculum fosters enjoyment of learning. Behaviour is good and the school works hard to promote attendance, which is currently average. Care for pupils is good with good attention to both their academic and emotional needs. Teaching and learning have improved rapidly due to effective monitoring by the senior team and are now good. A significant proportion of teaching and learning are outstanding.

Leadership and management are good. Governors bring a range of expertise that they use well. They work closely with the school, frankly express their opinions and ask challenging questions. The school's reputation has grown in the community and the majority of parents are pleased with its work. Given the rapid improvement over two years and the strong commitment of all who work here, the school offers good value for money and has very good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, especially in mathematics.
- Ensure that achievement is good across all groups and classes.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry to the Nursery is low in comparison to other schools in the Local Authority. The opening of a new school resulted in high mobility amongst pupils, many of whom had much ground to make up, and there is a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. Staff have worked hard to support them; achievement is now good across the school and standards have risen and continue to rise. Challenging targets have been set. Children in the Nursery

make good progress because they enjoy learning. Even so, when they enter Year 1, many are still not attaining the standards expected of their age group. In Years 1 to 6, achievement is satisfactory in mathematics and good in reading and writing because teaching improved following a rigorous evaluation of practice.

Results in national tests of reading at the end of Year 2 have been below average but standards have risen this year. Standards in English and mathematics are still low at the end of Year 6 as pupils' recent good progress has not been able to make up the ground lost before they entered the new school. Standards in singing across the school are high and art is also of a high quality. Pupils in Year 5 sang a difficult piece with great feeling and understanding of technique. There is little difference in the achievement of different groups of pupils, but a small group of girls in Year 4 has underachieved. This has been recognised as being due to low aspirations and a tendency to be passive. Governors are involved in tackling this.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This aspect of the school's work is good. Pupils make considerable strides in their personal development as good support systems encourage them to behave well and because staff successfully engage them in learning. Their overall well-being benefits hugely from the nurturing approach this school does so well. As a result, pupils are happy, keen and attentive. The way they are helped to appreciate art and take an interest in their environment are but two aspects of the school's strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Children are well aware of the importance of healthy eating and of the need to care for themselves and for the environment; in the course of the inspection they were excited about growing and eating their own tomatoes and thoughtful about the impact of rubbish on the countryside. They like playing with the new playground equipment and understand about safety, for example when walking to the swimming pool. They are satisfactorily prepared for secondary school life by being helped to develop the right attitudes to succeed, and they especially love books. The school works successfully to ensure attendance is in line with the national average and provides families with good support to this end.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching has improved in recent months because of the school's good structures for monitoring teaching and overcoming weaknesses. Teaching is typically good and often outstanding. Girls are being encouraged to be more active in lessons, following the findings of research done by the school. Lessons are typified by warm, supportive relationships with pupils and secure, consistent behaviour management. Learning is made interesting and hands-on, which keeps pupils involved and willing to learn. Teaching assistants make a visible difference to pupils' learning and use their initiative well. Lessons proceed at good pace and are carefully tailored to meet pupils' differing levels of ability. Appropriate emphasis is given to encouraging pupils to develop their language, more especially in the case of younger pupils. A strength across the school is teachers' readiness to give pupils time to think so they can work out problems for themselves. Teachers have an accurate grasp of how well pupils are doing and use this information well to move their learning on. Teaching of reading and writing is more successful

than mathematics teaching, where marking does not always help pupils to know what to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and is still being developed through constant review. It is well matched to the school's aims and to pupils' needs and abilities. It makes learning exciting and interesting by linking subjects together and engaging pupils through being actively involved. Pupils' writing skills are developed well in their study of other subjects. The breadth of their achievements is celebrated in excellent displays around the school. The curriculum for the youngest children is vibrant and excites their curiosity. It is appropriately taken into Year 1 to meet the needs of children who have much ground to make up. There is a good range of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum and a sound range of lunchtime and after-school clubs. The provision for pupils who have learning difficulties is good. The most able pupils are challenged well in lessons, but there is no additional provision to extend their gifts and talents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils are well supervised; staff are caring and meet pupils' personal needs well. Procedures for child protection and ensuring safety in school are rigorous. There are good links with families and with other agencies to provide additional support where needed. Pupils know that there is someone who will listen and help them resolve any problems. This has had a positive impact on attendance, behaviour and pupils' ability to get on with others.

Pupils receive satisfactory guidance on how well they are achieving and what they need to improve. Guidance for reading and writing is good. This is a key feature of the school's drive to help pupils take responsibility for their learning and set their sights high. Pupils are clear about their targets for literacy. They learn through reviewing their own and other pupils' achievements. The feedback they get from teachers is particularly good in literacy but less well developed in mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and the leadership of the headteacher is inspirational. Her clear direction and high expectations have raised the profile of the school in the community, and also within the profession, so teachers now want to teach in the school. The assistant headteacher has successfully led the developmental work on pupils' personal development. The senior leadership team is effective in supporting the aims of the school. Teachers work closely together and the team spirit is very strong. Governance is good; governors know the school well and are influential in moving it forward. Monitoring of the school's work involves all members of the senior team and is effective in promoting improvement. Pupils' test results are looked at closely to identify trends and the analysis used to improve teaching and standards, particularly in reading and writing over the year. The information is used for school self-evaluation which is rigorous and accurate and is fully shared with staff and governors. The school works effectively with partners outside school to promote pupils' well-being, especially

the Local Authority. Based on the rapid improvement over the past two years, the capacity for further improvement is very good.

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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?	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

Achievement and standards

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

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	3
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?	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

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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

29 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of The Oaks Primary School, Ipswich, IP2 0NR

Thank you for your help when we visited The Oaks a few weeks ago. We were very pleased with your willingness to tell us about your school, and enjoyed answering your interesting questions. A special thank you to the School Council for giving up time to talk to us about your work.

Many of you are proud of your new school and told us that you thoroughly enjoy your work and we agree that you are right to be proud. Miss Jackson, your teachers, governors and the adults in the school have worked hard to give you a good school in which you are doing well and standards are going up. Your teachers teach you well and you learn many sorts of exciting things because of the way topics link together. Miss Jackson and her team are always looking for ways to improve things for you.

You learn how to live safe and healthy lives. We were extremely impressed when children in a reception class, listening to the story of the lighthouse keeper, suggested that he should have an apple with his lunch to keep him healthy. We found your behaviour good, mainly because you enjoy your work.

There are two main things that we have asked your school to do so that you can continue to do well. The first is to keep on raising the standards of your work especially in mathematics. The second thing is to make sure that every one of you succeeds as well as you can.

Thank you once again for all your help. We wish all of you happy and successful lives.

Yours sincerely

Sandra Tweddell

Lead inspector