

Oakham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103950
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	308468
Inspection dates	6–7 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Sarah Conway

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	472
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Danny Millsom
Headteacher	Philip Jones
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2003
School address	Darbys Hill Road Tividale Oldbury B69 1SG
Telephone number	01384 254368
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Oakham Primary School is a larger than average primary school. It is situated in an area where some families experience considerable economic and social disadvantage. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, though a few are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. There are fewer pupils than average with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. When children start in Nursery, their level of skills and understanding is very low, particularly in language, social and mathematical development.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Oakham Primary School provides a good standard of education and care, as reflected in the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness. It is a harmonious school where pupils work well together and with their teachers. Children enjoy school and are ready to learn. Parents are highly supportive of the school, it is popular and enjoys a good reputation locally. One parent said, 'When I see my child skipping into school with anticipation, I know she will be fine.'

Pupils make good progress and reach above average standards by the time they leave Year 6. Overall, teaching is good, although there is some variation across the school. It is better in Key Stage 2 and for the youngest pupils and this is leading to good improvements in standards. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and standards are rising satisfactorily here. A significant improvement in teaching in Key Stage 2 and in the Foundation Stage in the last year is due to the robust leadership of the headteacher and governors. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are well behaved and courteous towards each other and adults. They are proud of their school, take on whole-school responsibilities and help each other enthusiastically. They feel teachers know them well and make learning fun. The school works hard to encourage good attendance, which is broadly average. Some parents take children on extended holidays in term time, which affects their learning.

The good curriculum is well planned and covers all the subjects that it should. A programme of visits and making links with everyday experiences enhances learning well and contributes to pupils' good progress. The school makes outstanding use of its partnerships with outside agencies. These are very broad and promote children's well-being effectively. The quality of academic guidance is good. Pupils know their targets and say that teachers work hard to help them to learn. Child protection procedures are thorough, regular health and safety checks are made, and careful risk assessments are undertaken when needed.

Standards are rising and pupils' progress is improving because the school is very well led and managed. The very effective headteacher knows what the school needs to do to improve. The stable and committed staff share his vision and work hard together to raise standards for all pupils. Governors actively contribute to that improvement by effectively holding the school to account and providing appropriate challenge. Systems to track pupils' progress have recently been introduced but are not yet used consistently enough to ensure pupils are reaching their end of key stage targets. There is good capacity to secure further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Recent improvements to accommodation and changes in leadership have contributed to making the Foundation Stage a key strength in the school. Children make good progress and by the time they join Year 1 many have attained the skills and knowledge just below the level expected at this age. Children are taught well and their good curriculum is well matched to their needs. The outdoor area is a real asset and the builders' yard is a particular favourite with all children, thus helping them to improve their vocabulary. Children are happy and settle well because of the care taken by adults to address their individual needs and the focus given to their social development. Very secure assessment procedures ensure adults know the children well and can plan effectively for their needs. The Foundation Stage is well led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable coordinator whose innovations are leading to steady improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate progress by making sure the quality of teaching is at least consistently good and work is well matched to all pupils' needs in Key Stage 1.
- Improve systems for monitoring pupils' progress so school leaders can check regularly that pupils are making appropriate progress towards their end of key stage targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with very low levels of skills and knowledge for their age. By the end of the Foundation Stage, well-targeted and skilful teaching has ensured children make good progress so that they enter Key Stage 1 with standards just below the expected level. Very few children exceed the goals expected for children of this age, especially in literacy.

In Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress and enter Key Stage 2 with below average standards. Because they have so much ground to make up in writing, too few pupils reach the higher Level 3. However, the school is successfully addressing these weaknesses through the introduction of 'Big Write' materials and strategies to improve children's accuracy in their writing. In 2007, a number of children joined Year 2 mid-way through the year. Their attainment was below that of the rest of the class and this affected the standards reached at the end of the year.

In Key Stage 2, pupils make better progress particularly in science, where recent changes to the curriculum have led to improved progress. By the time pupils reach Year 6, standards are above average and an increasing proportion of pupils are achieving the higher Level 5. This represents an improvement on previous years when standards were broadly average. Because their work is well matched to their needs, the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good throughout the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Behaviour is good in lessons and around school. Pupils enjoy lessons, especially the practical ones, and concentrate well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and makes a significant contribution to the caring and friendly atmosphere that is present in school. Celebrations of the festivals of different cultures are helping to develop pupils' understanding satisfactorily. Pupils have a secure understanding of what a healthy lifestyle entails and know how to keep safe. They know who to go to if anything is worrying them.

Pupils have many opportunities to play a part in school life, acting as library monitors, eco-council members and playground mediators. The school council has contributed to making the school a better place, for example, by developing the healthy tuck shop. Pupils have a strong sense of social and community responsibility. They are innovative in how they might contribute to proposals to save energy, such as through the installation of a wind turbine in the school grounds. They also make a positive contribution to the wider community through activities that include collecting harvest gifts, singing at the local old people's home and working with a neighbouring special school.

Pupils are well prepared for the future through the development of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). They are provided with 'real life' activities in some lessons and know how to open an account at the school bank. Pupils

learn about the world of work through a valuable 'Business Enterprise' programme, and develop team-working and financial management skills by, for example, planning a wedding at a local hotel.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good and enables pupils to make good overall progress in their learning. Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a promising start because teachers have a thorough understanding of how young children learn, and know exactly when to provide the help they need.

Across the school, teachers capture pupils' interest well, manage behaviour effectively and develop constructive relationships with pupils. Effective use is made of ICT to support learning. Teachers plan carefully and their explanations are clear. Therefore, pupils are confident about tackling their work. The use of paired talk is effective in supporting pupils with developing their ideas and working constructively with each other.

In some lessons, there is too much teachers' talk and too little pupils' activity. Questions are not always used effectively to probe pupils' understanding, and work is not consistently well matched to pupils' learning needs. This is particularly noticeable in Key Stage 1. As pupils move through the school, their achievement accelerates because the pace of teaching quickens and there is greater challenge, which effectively meets the needs of more able pupils. Assessment is accurate and teachers' marking is conscientious.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good. English and mathematics provision has improved so that more pupils are working towards the higher Level 5. Recent improvements to accommodation and equipment have contributed to improvements in achievements in ICT. Provision in the Foundation Stage is particularly effective because there is a good balance between adult-led and child-led activities.

The development of pupils' investigation skills in science is strongly emphasised and enables pupils to achieve highly in this aspect of the subject. Provision for pupils' personal development is a key strength across the school, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are catered for well. When Key Stage 1 pupils work together in mixed age groups, the tasks are not always matched well enough to their needs.

A wide range of educational visits, visitors and clubs enriches the curriculum. These are greatly enjoyed by pupils, particularly the opportunities to play a musical instrument and to take part in arts activities. Year 4 pupils talked enthusiastically about their recent visit to the Tutankhamun exhibition. One commented: 'When we were learning about Egypt, we saw pictures in books, but it was really exciting seeing the real thing.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a safe and attractive environment in which pupils work well together and respect each other, regardless of each other's background. Support staff are well trained and

have opportunities to further their own knowledge. This contributes to the good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Most pupils know their targets, although some struggle to explain what they need to do to achieve them. Pupils appreciate the use of success criteria in lessons, which helps them know whether they are making enough progress.

A significant strength of the school is the outstanding use it makes of work with outside agencies and other schools to support both the academic and social development of pupils. The learning mentor plays a key and very effective role in supporting children and their families who may experience a wide range of difficulties inside and beyond the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, supported by senior leaders, has a clear focus on continuous improvement in progress and standards. Staff share this commitment and ensure their pupils work well together in order to learn effectively. Effective use is made of partnerships with neighbouring primary schools to share good practice in order to improve teaching. All leaders have clearly defined roles and they know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are keen to involve parents in their children's learning and listen carefully to their ideas. The structure of parents' evenings has been revised recently, following requests from parents for clearer information about how well their children are doing.

The school has introduced a tracking system to monitor pupils' progress, which, although used regularly in conjunction with other information, does not check the progress pupils make across a key stage. This limits the effective use of tracking information to identify where improvements are needed in teaching and the curriculum.

Governors are supportive and knowledgeable about the work of the school. They ask critical questions to ensure the school is performing well enough. Recent actions introduced by governors have contributed successfully to improving the school.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

11 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oakham Primary School, Oldbury B69 1SG

I would like to thank you for being so welcoming and helpful during our recent visit to your school. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing how much you appreciated everything the school does for you. Here are some of the things we found.

- Oakham is a good school.
- You are taught well and most of you are making good progress.
- Your headteacher leads the school very well and all staff are keen to help him make the school an even better place for your learning.
- The youngest children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- By the time you leave Year 6, you reach above average standards.
- Your school has excellent partnerships with other schools and people outside the school who contribute well to your care.
- Teachers and other adults look after you very well.
- Your behaviour is good and you work well with each other.
- You enjoy helping to make improvements in the school.

To help the school get even better, we have suggested two things for it to do.

- Ensure you have even more good lessons and your work is hard enough, especially in Key Stage 1.
- Check regularly to ensure you are achieving your targets.

We know you will work hard to help your teachers make these improvements.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Sarah Conway Lead inspector



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