

# Oakley Cross Primary School and Nursery

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114069
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	311471
<b>Inspection date</b>	29 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Rosemary Rodger

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 category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	183
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Elaine Viser
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Elizabeth Ivil
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 April 2004
<b>School address</b>	Lomond Walk West Auckland Bishop Auckland County Durham DL14 9UD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01388 833186
<b>Fax number</b>	01388 833186

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the features of outstanding teaching and learning; the vision and drive of the headteacher in bringing about improvements since the previous inspection; and the quality of the Foundation Stage. Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, the chair of governors, deputy headteacher, Foundation Stage leader and pupils. In addition, parts of lessons were observed, school documents, samples of pupils' work and the parents' questionnaires were scrutinised. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is a below average sized school situated in a small village. The area it serves has an above average level of social and economic deprivation. Its pupils are drawn from the local community. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible to claim free school meals is above average. There is a below average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school provides before and after school care for its pupils. Recent awards include a Basic Skills Quality Mark and an Activemark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that admirably lives up to its mission statement to enable everyone in school alike to, 'Grow and learn together every moment of our day, at home, at school, through every experience we share'. The school plays a key role in the all-round development of its pupils and in encouraging parents to support their children's learning at home. As a result of the considerable work, vision and high expectations provided by the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, pupils make outstanding progress based on their very low starting points. They achieve well above average standards in the national tests in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave school in Year 6. More able pupils achieve particularly well as a result of their excellent support and superb teaching. Pupils' progress accelerates as they go through school as a result of the well-targeted intervention programmes put in place to support those pupils at risk of underachieving. Staff know their pupils exceptionally well and ensure their needs are met at all stages of their time in school.

Pupils are confident and articulate. In their roles on the school council, they discharge several key responsibilities with eagerness and a strong commitment. Pupils' enthusiasm to have a healthy lifestyle is brilliantly reflected in the film they made to demonstrate healthy eating and in their letters to parents advising on the healthy contents of packed lunches. Such activity is making a tremendous impact on pupils' understanding of the value of a healthy diet. Pupils are very appreciative of the large sports hall for the impact this has on their fitness and sporting skills. Younger pupils enjoy their daily exercises and planned time to learn outside. Pupils enjoy learning. This is well reflected in excellent attendance at the after school clubs and the enthusiasm with which they proudly share their work. They commented with disbelief that there should be any suggestion of bullying at playtimes because the games they play harmoniously ensure everyone gets on well with each other. The system of rewards and the appointment of a parent support adviser are contributing well to improving attendance following a period of it being low. Again, this is an excellent testament to the rapport the parents have with the school, and justifies their trust in it and the value they place on their children's time there.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. This is a consistent feature, particularly in Key Stage 2. Relationships are excellent. High expectations, excellent subject knowledge and superbly informative classroom displays are features of excellence. Teaching assistants play a key role in inspiring confidence and helping pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress. Much exemplary teaching leads to high levels of enthusiasm and engagement in learning for pupils. This was particularly striking when younger Key Stage 2 pupils shared their diary writing extracts. Marking is first-rate because pupils are given clear indications of what to do next and what they have done well. This is well illustrated in the use of 'three stars and a wish' in Key Stage 1. Pupils know how to improve their work because of their personal targets and eagerness to achieve as well as they can. The excellent curriculum effectively combines basic skills with creative activities that contribute to high quality learning in several subjects at the same time. As a result, pupils excel in their wider general knowledge and understanding. The use of visits and visitors enriches learning and provides a valuable opportunity to celebrate the diversity of cultures and traditions of others through literacy and other subjects. Pupils' care, guidance and support are outstanding. Parents are fully involved in the support of their children. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are nurtured very effectively. External support is used wisely and to excellent effect.

The leadership and management of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher are outstanding. The leadership team is committed to sustaining and developing staff and, importantly, putting in place very successful strategies to raise standards for all pupils. This culture of high expectations from the headteacher and staff permeates all the school does. Swift actions are taken to tackle any underperformance. Parents are very supportive and appreciate the dramatic improvements made to the school, particularly the rise in standards and the improvements to the accommodation since the previous inspection. Teamwork is a strong feature. Staff are nurtured excellently and partnership with other local schools is equally effective in developing and improving teaching and learning. The school's use of targets to secure improvement year on year is impressive. Ambitious, but realistic goals are set for raising standards for all pupils. The gap in the attainment of different groups of pupils is reducing each year. Self-evaluation is generally accurate and actions to bring about improvement are having an outstanding impact on improving the school. Governors are well informed and work very effectively in partnership with the headteacher. Improvement since the last inspection has been excellent and the school has an outstanding capacity to improve.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children enter the Nursery with very low skills, especially in communication and literacy. They make good progress by the time they leave the Reception class, but are still achieving below expected standards compared to national expectations, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Children's personal, social and emotional development is well fostered and children enjoy the range of indoor and outdoor activities they are provided with. The involvement of parents is excellent. They are well informed and appreciate the smooth transition their children make from home to the Nursery. Improvements to the outdoor provision are good. Children have daily access to this and learning in several areas is fostered effectively. Assessment records are detailed and provide a clear record of progress. The links between the Nursery and the Reception class are developing well. Currently, there are aspects of early literacy development that are not in place in the Nursery for older children, such as having an environment that is rich in print that the children can see and share.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise the priority given to promoting early literacy skills in the Foundation Stage.

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## 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?	1
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	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

30 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oakley Cross Primary School and Nursery, Durham,  
DH14 9UD

Thank you for the lovely welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I really enjoyed my day with you and only wish I could have stayed longer to see all the interesting things you are doing in lessons. Did you all manage to finish your sarcophagi in Year 3? Please thank your parents for the comments they sent me about your school.

You attend an outstanding school. This is because you all work very hard and make excellent progress in meeting your targets. It is also because your headteacher and all staff make the school so good; teaching is outstanding. Some of you said to me how important your teachers were to you because they help you to understand your work. As a result, your standards by Year 6 are much higher than expected for your age. You have worked really hard to make sure you attend school every day and feel very proud if you get a badge for this achievement. You learn to become very confident and take on many responsibilities. You are very talented to be able to make broth for your parents.

Most of all though you all seem to really enjoy school. You appeared enthralled as you listened attentively to the instructions given in assembly. Playtimes are enjoyable because of all the games you play and you really enjoy the sports facilities you have. The youngest children get a good start in the Nursery and they too love to play outside, even in the rain. One area that the school will be working on is to make sure that all the children in the Nursery and Reception classes spend plenty of time sharing books and reading stories to help them become more confident readers and writers. I know that some of you are already spending time reading with younger children in school. Please keep this up!

I send you my best wishes for the future.

Rosemary Rodger

Lead inspector