

# Oaklands School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	130353
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicester City
<b>Inspection number</b>	315620
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joyce Cox

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>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	72
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Malcolm Robbins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Eleanor Shaw
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 April 2004
<b>School address</b>	Whitehall Road Evington Leicester LE5 6GJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01162 415921
<b>Fax number</b>	01162 433259

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Oaklands originally provided education for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Over the last year, the school population has increased by over 30% and it now caters for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, autism and those with complex needs. Over half of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and 21 of the pupils are at an early stage of speaking English.

The school has secured many awards for its work, including an Active Mark, an Arts Mark and the Healthy Schools award.

## 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. All parents speak in glowing terms about its considerable achievements. One parent, summing up the views of many, wrote, 'Day by day my child is getting smarter and brighter and definitely learning new things.' Inspectors agree with parents that pupils achieve well. Senior leaders' effective leadership has enabled staff to rise effectively to the challenge of meeting the needs of the school's increasing and changing population. Teaching is good and staff have discovered new ways of designing the curriculum and assessing pupils' learning. The excellent teamwork and the determination to learn from others' best practice mean that staff have rapidly extended their expertise and skills in meeting the needs of all the different groups of pupils.

In the Foundation Stage, children make good progress towards all their learning targets. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, whatever their starting points or language difficulties, respond to the good teaching and achieve well. Standards are well below average, due to pupils' learning difficulties. Learning activities are enhanced by the use of a wide variety of resources and support staff are deployed effectively. The school is very bright and cheerful with excellent displays, and classrooms are often filled with smiles and laughter as pupils and staff take pride in their achievements and strive successfully to do their best. Pupils enjoy their lessons very much and show this by being attentive and eager to participate. Their personal development is good and is a significant strength of the school as they make an excellent contribution to school life and have an outstanding awareness of how to keep fit and healthy. However, although attendance is satisfactory, a small number of pupils do not attend school as regularly as they might and so miss out on all the exciting learning experiences. The curriculum is good and meets the needs and interests of pupils well. It is enriched considerably by excellent opportunities for learning beyond the classroom.

Good pastoral care lies at the heart of the school's work, and it succeeds in ensuring that pupils and their families receive all the help they need. This includes making effective use of the very close links with key agencies.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is a good leader who has guided staff successfully and sensitively during the school's recent changes. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and the governing body. The performance of the school is closely monitored and the leadership is exceptionally accurate in its assessment of the school's successes and areas to improve. Considerable work has taken place to assess and record pupils' academic and personal progress and achievement. However, despite the fact that a large amount of assessment data is gathered, it is not used consistently well by all staff to identify the next steps in pupils' learning. Issues raised by the last inspection have been tackled effectively. For example, staff and pupils now use information and communication technology (ICT) successfully in all lessons. The leadership of the school is ambitious and well placed to bring about further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children's achievement is good in relation to their very low starting points, although the standards reached remain very low. When they start school, the children have little or no communication and many are not toilet trained. Good teaching enables all children, including those with autism, to make good progress, particularly in learning to join in with others and to

become increasingly independent. Good arrangements for introducing children to the school, together with clear routines and good teamwork, ensure that children become increasingly confident and settle quickly and happily. There are effective relationships with parents, who say they feel their children are very well cared for and happy. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed and the school has identified accurately that the main area for improvement is to revise the way it records children's progress in light of the new guidelines for Foundation Stage children.

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

- Make sure all staff use assessment information effectively to identify the next steps in pupils' learning.
- Implement rigorous procedures to encourage all parents to send their children to school regularly.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Although pupils' attainment remains significantly below average because of their learning needs, their achievement is good. Pupils of all ages, backgrounds and learning needs make at least good progress. This is because of the good teaching and learning and the skilful way in which staff motivate pupils to learn. Pupils make good progress in communication, speaking and listening, in early literacy and numeracy skills, and in their personal development. Staff use signs and symbols to very good effect to enable this. More able pupils are supported well to reach suitably challenging targets. Pupils at an early stage of learning English also achieve well because of effective support and signing.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils behave well and consequently the school is a harmonious and very friendly place. They show good awareness of each other's needs. They readily celebrate the achievements of others and enjoy receiving stickers and praise. It is clear from the pupils' happy faces and their positive comments that they all really enjoy school and they say they feel safe and secure there. They particularly enjoy using computers, going on trips and having fun in the attractive outdoor areas. Pupils understand completely the importance of a healthy lifestyle. A considerable number enjoy attending sports clubs and the majority of pupils make healthy food choices at lunchtimes. Pupils and parents are proud of their school and relationships throughout are very good. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school through charity fundraising and enterprise activities and there is a very active school council. Attendance is average. The school has a significant number of authorised absences and procedures are not rigorous enough to discourage some parents from making unnecessary requests. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Learning and social skills relevant to pupils' future lives develop well, making them well prepared for the next stage in their education and later lives.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The staff manage pupils' behaviour well and a calm and purposeful atmosphere pervades the school. Pictures, signs, symbols, bright attractive resources and computer technology are used effectively to ensure pupils are fully engaged and want to try to express their ideas. On rare occasions, teachers miss valuable opportunities to promote language and engage pupils when they are too focused on their own activities, and pupils have to sit and watch passively. A team of talented teaching assistants effectively support pupils' learning and this works particularly well when they are working with individual pupils or with small groups. Pupils usually have just the right amount of help to enable them to succeed, but those who are able are appropriately expected to think for themselves. Staff are highly skilled and successful at encouraging the autistic pupils to participate in interesting activities such as the daily aerobics sessions.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The significant improvements made to the ICT provision have greatly improved the quality of pupils' learning opportunities, enabling them to develop skills effectively. The school has recently made many successful changes to its curriculum and to the way pupils learn. Some of these are very new and have yet to impact fully on pupils' learning. A good programme for pupils' personal and health education is in place, and is one of the key factors in ensuring pupils' good behaviour and excellent understanding of how to live a healthy life. There is an excellent and impressive enrichment programme, which includes many planned visits out of school, sleepovers for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, and rich and varied arts and sports activities as well as many clubs. The school's effective links with other local schools and agencies ensure that the curriculum is vibrant and constantly developing.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The school succeeds in making sure that all pupils are well cared for, kept safe and supported effectively. Health, safety and child protection procedures are rigorous and effectively applied in supporting all pupils. Arrangements for managing pupils' intimate care needs are performed sensitively. There are good arrangements for assessing how well pupils are doing in their personal development and in their academic learning. Staff regularly discuss pupils' progress with senior leaders, and decide what needs to be done next. A wealth of valuable assessment information is gathered. However, some staff are more successful than others at using this information to identify the next steps in pupils' learning.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 2

Senior leaders' determination and unstinting pursuit of the pupils' best interests have ensured that the dedicated staff work as a cohesive team with a very clear sense of direction. Good leadership and management at all levels throughout the school considerably enhance provision because the staff are always striving to do better. As a result, the school has successfully secured

improvement in a number of areas since the last inspection, notably in its ICT provision and in the way staff track pupils' achievement. Some elements of the school's work, such as the use of assessment data and the changes to the curriculum, are relatively new. They have not yet had a full impact on all teaching or are still being implemented. The school succeeds in ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunity to achieve well. Senior leaders' self-evaluation is excellent and is effectively supported by regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievement and personal development. The governing body is effective, supportive and a strong advocate for the school.

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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?	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?	2
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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	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

<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>	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	1
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

20 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oaklands School, Leicester LE5 6GJ

It was a real treat for us to visit your school and I am writing to thank you for a very happy day. It was great to see your smiling faces and to talk to some of you, and we really enjoyed your early morning aerobics. We agree with all your parents that you go to a good school.

- These are the things we liked best.
- Your behaviour is good and you are keen and eager to learn new things.
- You are all doing well in lessons.
- You enjoy the delicious school meals and eating healthily and keeping fit, and you are brilliant at helping the adults to run the school.
- Teachers and teaching assistants make learning interesting and fun for you.
- You have lots of exciting clubs and trips and many visitors.
- Anyone who needs help with work is always given it.
- The teachers and staff take good care of you while you are in school.
- Your headteacher and deputy headteacher are good leaders.

The headteacher, staff and governors have lots of good ideas to make the school even better. We agree with their ideas. We also think it would be good if all staff made it clear what you are to learn next, and if your mums and dads make sure you all come to school regularly so you don't miss the exciting lessons.

We are really glad you enjoy your school. Keep working hard and behaving well and thank you for all the happy memories.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Joyce Cox Lead inspector



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Lead inspector