

Oakdene Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131409
Local Authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	315803
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Bannon

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	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Bambro
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Hopper
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2004
School address	Low Grange Avenue Billingham Stockton on Tees TS23 3NR
Telephone number	01642 560768
Fax number	01642 560942

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Oakdene Primary is an average size school. It serves a mixed catchment area that includes a disadvantaged area. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is marginally above average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is above average. Almost all pupils have a White British heritage. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark 3, the Activemark, The Healthy Schools Gold Award, Artsmark Gold award and has achieved financial management standard in schools (FMSIS). The school is also a creative partnership enquiry school and a teacher learning academy lead school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Oakdene Primary is a good school with outstanding features. It offers excellent provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also the most able. The outstanding curriculum is enriched by valuable partnerships with local schools and external agents. The school provides a warm, welcoming and secure environment where effective teaching alongside high levels of care promotes learning that is enjoyable, meaningful and consistently good.

Standards are above average by the time pupils leave school. Children start in the Nursery with skills that are lower than usually seen for this age. Progress is good and is outstanding for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the more able in mathematics and science. Achievement is good overall, but better in mathematics and science than in English where fewer pupils reach the higher levels. Pupils' personal development is good. The good foundation they receive in the Nursery sets a trend for good levels of learning and enjoying within a very caring environment that is carried on and promoted effectively throughout school. Pupils develop a good knowledge of other cultures, are actively encouraged to work and play together, reflect and develop a good sense of right and wrong. As a consequence, learners act sensibly and safely and are keen to learn. They take on responsibilities, such as becoming playground friends and school councillors. They mature into confident young people who show a good awareness of what is needed to be a good citizen, how to live healthily and how to prepare themselves for a bright future.

Teaching is good. It is sometimes outstanding. Its effectiveness is rooted in an outstanding curriculum that is so varied, resourceful and interesting that it helps teachers engage pupils consistently well. Homework projects have motivated pupils and improved attitudes to learning. Relationships between staff and pupils are good. As a consequence, pupils behave well, are keen to learn and enjoy their lessons. In particular, pupils say 'mathematics is fun'. Pupils generally show good levels of concentration and are keen to succeed though occasionally in English, group activities do not engage all pupils fully. The flexible use of well trained support staff means that pupils are often taught in smaller groups and get very high levels of individual support when needed. Pupils are well cared for and know who to turn to if problems arise. Extensive use of agencies allied to expertise within the school ensures that all pupils feel safe. Academic guidance is good and ensures that the challenge for pupils to do well is high in mathematics and science but less so in English.

A good capacity to improve is clearly in evidence. The new headteacher inherited a good school just over a year ago. She has been relentless in her efforts to improve the school further and has shown outstanding leadership in enabling good senior leaders to become a formidable force for the future improvement of the school. The school is improving constantly. Governance is good. Governors are not only highly supportive but knowledgeable and challenging. The school offers good value for money. Parents show high levels of satisfaction with the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is good. Induction arrangements, including home visits help children to settle well. Attainment on entry to Nursery is below that typical for this age, in particular in early literacy and mathematical skills. Teaching is good, so children progress well with many reaching the early learning goals set for this age and are well prepared for Year 1. Strong

leadership is well focused on improvement and development and the school has made significant investments in resources and outdoor facilities. Activities, both indoors and outside motivate children well and help them increase in confidence and independence. Children enjoy the balance between supported tasks, directed tasks and those from which they can choose. Relationships are good, and children behave well as they play and learn in this safe and caring environment. Adults observe children closely on a day-to-day basis. However, they do not always use the information they gather effectively enough to provide activities that fully challenge children, especially in their writing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Add rigour to assessment in the Foundation Stage to facilitate more challenge, particularly in writing.
- Raise standards in English to match those in mathematics and science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. It is outstanding for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities because they are extremely well supported. Pupils enter the Nursery with skills that are lower than usual for this age. Overall standards at the end of Year 6 are above average. Pupils make good progress. The more able make excellent progress in mathematics and science. The results of national test in 2007 were above average in mathematics and science and the number of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age was significantly above average. Test results in English in recent years have been broadly average and fewer pupils reach higher standards. In 2007, boys performed particularly well in Key Stage 2 and their attainment was higher than that of girls. All targets were met or clearly exceeded but in English were not particularly challenging. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to achieve extremely well in mathematics and science and meet targets that are very challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils behave well and show good attitudes to learning. They particularly enjoy practical and creative elements of the curriculum. As a result, pupils are extremely well motivated to learn. Pupils collaborate effectively and apply their skills across the curriculum well. Consequently, they develop good social skills as well as an understanding of the real world that promotes economic well-being. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show a good sense of right and wrong because teachers consistently reinforce the behaviour code. Spiritual development is good, with assemblies that completely engage the pupils and encourage meaningful reflection. The use of visiting speakers and visits ensures good cultural development. Attendance is average. This has improved recently and shows pupils' increasing enjoyment of school. Pupils are aware of how to stay fit and healthy. After school sports are well attended. Pupils make a positive contribution to the community. Within school they eagerly take responsibility as school councillors, peer mentors and playground friends.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It meets the need of all learners extremely well. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is most effective in enabling these pupils to be fully involved in all that is on offer. The more able pupils are also challenged by the stimulating curriculum. Provision for pupils' personal development is a priority and results in good personal development. Basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are promoted well in other subjects. Provision for ICT has improved considerably in recent years. The school fulfils its clear vision to educate the entire child through a wide and diverse curriculum, enriched by the use of cross-curricular themes. This approach makes learning more purposeful for pupils. This is very clear in the project about the Second World War, which linked art and history and included visits to museums. The school makes use of excellent links with outside agencies and individuals such as visiting artists and the local secondary school for physical education. Pupils particularly enjoy the practical aspects of the curriculum and the many opportunities for extra-curricular activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Highly committed staff work successfully to promote the personal and academic development of pupils. The school makes exceptional use of external agencies to support all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable and has met with good success in meeting the needs of a significant number of pupils who have not thrived in other schools. Good systems have been created for improving attendance and punctuality. Systems to support and guide pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are outstanding. Academic guidance is good but occasionally pupils are not sure what they need to do to improve their work. This situation is improving as teachers become more aware of its importance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has demonstrated outstanding leadership in invigorating the school. Her clear vision for the future ensures that equality of opportunity is given a high priority. She has raised the profile of the school locally through involvement with many initiatives including links with the local teacher learning academy and providing for the gifted and talented. Impact of these initiatives is clear in the high number of pupils reaching above average standards in science and mathematics and the outstanding curriculum that provides so well for a range of skills. The headteacher is well supported by a strong team of senior leaders who provide clear direction to the school. Subject leaders are improving their skills and are effective in their roles. The school is accurate in its self-evaluation and uses the information it gathers through monitoring to implement change and speed

improvement. Governance is good. Governors know the school well and have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified by the previous inspection.

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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	1

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	3
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?	1
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	1
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 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oakdene Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees, TS23 3NR

I am writing to let you know why Mrs Ulyatt and I think that Oakdene is a good school with outstanding features. I also want to thank you for making us so welcome when we visited you recently. It was good to see how you all got on so well together and looked out for each other. From the Nursery up to Year 6 you work hard because you want to learn. That is one of the reasons you enjoy school and make such good progress. Everyone at the school thinks highly of you. They feel that you always do the school proud. Your behaviour is good. You have fun in lessons, particularly in mathematics. We are impressed with the way you take responsibility, such as being peer mentors, playground friends and school councillors. We know that you are well prepared for your future, know about other cultures and are well on the way to becoming good citizens.

We agree that lessons are good. All of the staff work hard for you and care for you and guide you well. One of the reasons that you learn so well is because the work you do is wonderfully interesting and varied. You go on visits, have visitors to the school for special projects and the work you do is often linked across many of your subjects.

Even though your school is so good, the staff want it to become better still. They are going to try to make sure that the youngest children are given work more carefully matched to their needs, especially in writing. They are also going to try to make sure you do as well in English as you do in mathematics and science. You can help with this by continuing to work hard and being determined to do even better in English.

Thank you again for your courtesy and friendliness. We wish you every success.

Yours sincerely

Peter Bannon

Lead inspector