

Oak Hill First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132820
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	316027
Inspection date	28 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Andrew McDowall

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	484
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Ray
Headteacher	Cherrill Illingworth
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2003
School address	Wirehill Drive Lodge Park Redditch B98 7JU
Telephone number	01527 528523
Fax number	01527 510153

Age group	3-9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues. • Standards and achievement in Key Stage 2. • The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2. • The impact of the academic guidance pupils receive on their achievement. • How the curriculum is structured to ensure pupils make progress in all subjects. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, the scrutiny of pupils' work, the school's assessment data, school documentation and discussions with staff and pupils. 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, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized first school. The great majority of the pupils attending the school come from White British backgrounds. Consequently, the percentages of pupils who are learning English as additional language or who are from minority ethnic groups are below average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is close to the national average, as is the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school is in the final stages of a substantial building programme that has been taking place since amalgamation in 2001. A Children's Centre has recently opened on the school site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school provides a satisfactory quality of education. In recent years, the school's leaders have successfully managed both the amalgamation and a substantial building programme, which have resulted in a united staff and very good accommodation. Standards are rising in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, but a high staff turnover and some weaknesses in teaching in Key Stage 2 have resulted in slow progress in Years 3 and 4 in recent years. The school is working hard to address this and improvements are being made. The personal development of the pupils and the care and guidance they receive during their time at the school are good. The school is popular with parents. They appreciate the approachability of the staff and the open door policy promoted by the headteacher.

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. This good progress continues in Key Stage 1, where standards are above average. Here good teaching and high expectations have resulted in a steady rise in standards in recent years. This good practice in Key Stage 1 is beginning to spread into Key Stage 2. Despite the good progress in parts of the school, standards are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory overall because there has been some underachievement in English and mathematics in Years 3 and 4. The school has addressed this in reading and writing. Pupils are now making satisfactory progress in English, but there is still more to do in mathematics.

The staffing situation in the school is now improved. Although teaching is generally good in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, it is only satisfactory overall because there are weaknesses in the way the older pupils are assessed. This is not always accurate and results in work being set that is sometimes too difficult for the pupils. As a result, they are sometimes confused about what it is they need to learn. The school also recognises that there are some gaps in the subject knowledge of some teachers. However, steps are being taken to provide the necessary staff training in order to improve the quality of mathematics teaching in the school. The teachers manage the pupils well and relationships between staff and pupils are very good. The pupils enjoy the practical nature of many of the lessons. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the lessons, and work well with the teachers to ensure pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

The pupils behave well in school and have a mature and sensible outlook on life. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. One parent summed it up well by saying, 'There is a very strong moral ethos running throughout the school.' The pupils are happy and get along well together, as shown by the way the older pupils care for the younger ones at playtimes. Their enthusiasm for the good range of sports clubs and their full participation in events such as 'Circus Skills' demonstrate their good understanding of the need to exercise to stay healthy. The sensible way in which they respond to the restrictions imposed on them by the building programme demonstrates their awareness of how to keep themselves safe in school. The pupils respond well to good opportunities to contribute to the community through regular charity events and celebrations. The good links with local schools, along with the satisfactory progress the pupils make in their work, ensure they are adequately prepared for the next stage in their education and later life. The curriculum provided by the school is satisfactory and developing well. It offers a broad range of activities and experiences for the pupils. The school provides a range of clubs and many pupils have the opportunity to play an instrument. These activities, along with residential opportunities, make a good contribution to the pupils' personal development. The curriculum has been adapted well to provide effective nurture provision for

those who need it. The curriculum promotes good achievement in Key Stage 1 but is less effective at Key Stage 2. However, recent changes to the planning and greater collaboration between staff are beginning to raise standards in literacy and numeracy in Key Stage 2.

Pastoral care is very good. The staff know the pupils very well. Arrangements to keep the pupils safe are good. Those pupils who need additional help and guidance are clearly identified and supported well. Parents appreciate the good relationships they have with the staff, and feel the good communication keeps them well informed about their children's progress. This good quality care enables pupils to make good progress in their personal and social development. Academic guidance is good. The teachers conscientiously mark the pupils' work. The pupils know their targets in literacy, and the older pupils are beginning to use them when checking their work.

The headteacher provides the school with a clear educational direction and purpose. She has built a staff team who share her commitment to do the best for the pupils. The headteacher is well supported by the senior leadership team, who have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. They have a wealth of information on the progress the pupils are making. On occasion, intervention is not swift enough where pupils are not doing as well as they should. The leadership team are sometimes not rigorous enough in identifying the effects any changes in school policy or staff training have on pupils' achievement. However, the school is setting itself more challenging targets and this is raising expectations. The school's track record in raising standards in Key Stage 1 and improving behaviour since the last inspection shows that it has a satisfactory capacity to improve. The school has a substantial carry forward budget. Some of this has been used to increase staffing levels in Key Stage 2, but the school and the governors could have ensured this happened sooner. In spite of this, the governors provide good support to the school and have a clear understanding of its performance.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When they start at the school, the children have levels of skills and abilities that are below those expected nationally. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage. By the time they move to Year 1, the good early years teaching and a lively curriculum have enabled the children to catch up and have skills and abilities that are broadly average. Links with parents and the Children's Centre are good and help the children to settle quickly in school. One parent wrote, 'We are very impressed with the way our son has settled into Nursery; he comes home singing songs.' Recent changes to the speed with which the children are introduced to early reading and writing are raising standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in Years 3 and 4, particularly in mathematics, by bringing greater consistency to the teaching in these year groups.
- Improve teachers' subject knowledge, and ensure their assessments are both accurate and used effectively to set work that is appropriate for all pupils.
- Sharpen the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures to ensure that action is taken quickly when weaknesses are identified, and improve the way the school measures the impact of its actions on pupils' achievement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 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?	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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?	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Dear Children

Inspection of Oak Hill First School, Redditch, B98 7JU

Can I start by thanking you all for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed talking to you and I was very pleased to hear how much you enjoy your time in school.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. You all make good progress in learning how to get along with people and you have good attitudes to your learning. You behave well in school. I liked the way you all came into assembly so quietly and the way you move around the school so sensibly. Keep it up. Many of you are making good progress in your work, but I think some of you in Years 3 and 4 could do better.

All the staff at the school take good care of you, and this helps you to feel safe in school. You have had a lot of building work at your school and this has given you a lovely school to work in. I was pleased to see how grown-up you all were in keeping away from the builders and their machines. Your new outside play space looks exciting and will be really good when it is finished.

I have asked the school to do three things to help your school to improve.

- The first is to help those of you in Years 3 and 4 to do better with your work, especially in numeracy. You can help by trying your best and telling your teacher if you are unsure about anything.
- The second thing is to keep providing the training for your teachers to help them to know how to help you all to improve.
- Finally, I have asked Mrs Illingworth and the other senior teachers to keep checking how you are all doing and to act quickly if they see any of you are not making good progress.

Thanks again and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andy McDowall Lead inspector



29 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Oak Hill Fist School, Redditch, B98 7JU

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Thanks again and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andy McDowall
Lead inspector