

Oak Tree Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133276
Local Authority	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LA
Inspection number	316057
Inspection dates	4–5 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Ian Jones

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	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Dave French
Headteacher	Mrs Tamsin Caputa
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2003
School address	Jubilee Way North Mansfield NG18 3PJ
Telephone number	01623 458261
Fax number	01623 458864

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized primary school. The area served by the school faces significant economic and social challenges and the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than in most schools. The percentages of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are well below national average. Children's attainment on entry is much lower than that expected for their age. The number of pupils who start or leave the school at other than the expected times is higher than normal. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is well above average; those that have statements of special educational need are below average. The school has 'Healthy Schools' accreditation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005 Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvements in the school.

The school has a broadly accurate view of its performance and is fully aware that the standards and achievement of its pupils are not high enough. However, the school's self-evaluation is not effective because it has not successfully addressed key weaknesses in teaching or the slow or uneven progress that pupils make over time. Teaching is inadequate overall and consequently pupils do not learn enough in lessons. Pupils are not well informed about their progress, and teachers do not consistently use assessment information well to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. There is some, but not enough, good teaching. In some lessons, pupils are not extended enough and similar activities are given to all the pupils in the class regardless of their abilities. The curriculum is satisfactory.

Pupils' achievement is inadequate throughout the school. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 too many of them have not made enough progress and consequently underachieve. These pupils are not fully prepared for the next stage of their education. Standards of attainment are exceptionally low.

The headteacher and leadership team work satisfactorily to promote pupils' well-being but not in other respects. The school works well with a range of agencies to support the emotional and social needs of its pupils however, this work has been unable to improve pupils' achievement or raise standards. The school recognises the depth and scale of its weaknesses, many of which are long standing, but has not moved quickly or decisively enough to address them. In conjunction with the local authority, the school has recently completed a two-year programme of support to raise standards across the school. However, the impact of this work has not demonstrated sufficient improvement. The school's checks on its performance are not rigorous enough: although they know what is wrong, information is not used systematically to improve things. Insufficient progress has been made in recent years and the school lacks the capacity to make the rapid and significant improvements needed. The school has not made satisfactory progress since its previous inspection and presently does not provide value for money.

The personal development and well-being of pupils are satisfactory overall. There are some good aspects, such as pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The care, guidance and support of pupils are satisfactory overall, particularly in the high level of pastoral care offered to its pupils.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children enter the nursery with attainment well below that expected for their age, and many have delayed personal and social, language and mathematical skills. Teaching is satisfactory as is the curriculum. The staff work hard to support children, particularly in their personal development. As a result, children enter Year 1 with developing skills, although attainment remains well below those expected for their age.

The caring and sensitive support provided by teachers and teaching assistants helps children to make satisfactory progress from their very low starting points.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement across Key Stage 1 and 2 so that more pupils are able to reach nationally expected levels by the time they leave school.
- Ensure teachers make better use of assessment to plan steps in pupils' learning more effectively and thus better support their progress.
- Develop academic guidance so that pupils have a better understanding of how to improve their work.
- Carry out rigorous and thorough checks on the school's performance to bring about school improvement at all levels.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Achievement is inadequate. At the time of the previous inspection, standards throughout the school were exceptionally low. Since then there has been insufficient improvement and standards remain exceptionally low. The school has introduced improvements, for example through tracking the progress of pupils, but the measures taken have not yet influenced standards. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities get targeted help and support, and make satisfactory progress. Most pupils do not get sufficient support in English, mathematics and science and the outcomes for the school remain disappointingly low. The poor progress pupils make through the school following a satisfactory start in the early years arises from inconsistencies in teaching, low expectations and a lack of challenge.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The pupils have clear views about how to keep themselves safe and what they should do to maintain a healthy life style. Pupils enjoy their lessons and school life, although they would like more opportunities to work independently in lessons and to take greater responsibility for their learning. They enjoy opportunities to be involved in the life of the school, for instance as 'play rangers' or as school councillors. Most pupils behave well and although there is some bullying at times, procedures for dealing with this type of behaviour are effective. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is satisfactory. Pupils know that they can approach adults in the school, such as play workers, if they have any concerns or worries and that these will be taken seriously. Although attendance is well below average it has shown an improving trend in recent years because it has been effectively promoted by the school. Pupils' skills towards their future working lives are not sufficiently developed. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and they usually demonstrate positive attitudes towards others.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The quality of teaching is inadequate overall. Throughout the school, teaching varies from good to inadequate but the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and achievement is

unsatisfactory because, over time, many pupils do not make the progress that they should. The school has begun to take action to strengthen teaching. For example, assessment is more regular and so teachers have plenty of information about pupils' performance. However, they are not yet using this information effectively to inform their lesson planning. As a result, work is not always matched closely to pupils' prior attainments. When this happens, there is too little challenge for able pupils, whose progress is restricted. In other lessons, work is matched well to pupils' needs and abilities, but their learning is limited and insecure because they have not mastered lower level skills that they need as foundations for new learning. Teachers generally manage pupils' behaviour and response in lessons satisfactorily. However, expectations are too low, with the result that superficial responses often go unchallenged and opportunities are missed to improve the quality of pupils' written and spoken response. Teachers' marking is inconsistent and varies in quality. It does little to help pupils improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. The time allocated to the development of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology is adequate. The school modifies the curriculum satisfactorily to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, although current planning does not always match the curriculum closely enough to the immediate learning needs of other pupils. Provision for personal, social and health education is good and helps pupils participate in the life of the school and wider community. A good range of educational visits and visitors, special events, such as the annual camping trip to the Peak District and conservation work at local sites of special scientific interest enrich the curriculum, promote enjoyment in learning and make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. The school is currently seeking to develop a thematic approach to teaching the curriculum but this is very new and has not yet begun to impact on pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils feel secure in an environment where there is a strong emphasis on pastoral care. Teachers, teaching assistants and visiting counsellors are attentive to pupils' needs and provide effective guidance in matters of personal and emotional development. Indeed, the high quality of care provided for the most vulnerable pupils is a strength of the school. There are satisfactory arrangements for safeguarding pupils. Checks on the suitability of staff and child protection procedures meet current statutory requirements. Procedures for checking the progress of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are satisfactory. However, the use of targets and advice to other pupils on how to improve their work is inadequate because it has yet to impact on their achievement over time.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management are inadequate. Senior staff work hard to support the personal development of the many vulnerable pupils at the school, but, until recently, insufficient attention has been given to providing academic guidance. As a result, the majority of pupils have made inadequate progress since the previous inspection. Recent changes to the staffing structure and responsibilities is enabling the school to focus more on raising standards, but for

too long inadequacies have not been successfully challenged. As a result, the school's capacity to bring about improvements is inadequate. The school has responded positively to advice received from the Local Authority but this has had little impact on raising standards. For example, the new system for managing and tracking information showing the progress of pupils is helpful but the range in quality of teaching and lack of consistent challenge for pupils undermines its effectiveness. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, however they are not sufficiently rigorous in the way they hold it to account for the progress of its pupils.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
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	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
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?	3

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?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

6 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oak Tree Primary School, Jubilee Way North, Mansfield, NG18 3PJ We visited your school recently to find out how well the school is doing. We enjoyed talking with a number of you and looking at some of your work. Thank you for making us so welcome. Unfortunately, we found that your school is not as good as it should be and there are several important improvements to be made.

The following are some of the main things we found out about your school:

- The school does not help you make enough progress in your lessons so many of you do not reach the standards you are capable of by the time you leave.
- The adults in school make sure you are safe and help those of you who have problems.
- The school's leaders know what needs to be improved but need to be clear about the best way to do this.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work together on four things to make the school better. We are recommending that they get some extra help with the following things:

- Finding ways of helping you to make more progress so that you can reach higher standards by the time you leave school.
- Making sure your teachers carefully check how well you do in lessons and then use the information to help you make more progress.
- Improving marking so that you have a clearer idea of how to improve your work.
- Carrying out regular and careful checks to see how well the school is doing in all things.

I am sure you will do all you can to help the staff make the school better. Other inspectors will visit your school regularly to check on progress.

Yours sincerely

Ian Jones

Lead inspector