

# Oakdale Infants' School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	133932
<b>Local Authority</b>	Redbridge
<b>Inspection number</b>	316221
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nick Butt

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	311
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	131
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Alan Stevens
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Hillary Hunwicks
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 June 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Woodville Road South Woodford Redbridge London E18 1JU
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8989 7895
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8532 9920

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This school is larger than average and has an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) consisting of a Nursery and three Reception classes. Almost six out of ten pupils are from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. Just over a quarter speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also below average. Many of these have moderate learning difficulties. A large number of pupils join and leave the school outside normal times. The headteacher took up her post in September 2007 and the deputy headteacher in September 2008; both are experienced members of staff who were appointed from within the school. The school is an Investor in People.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Oakdale Infants' is a good school that provides an effective level of education for all its pupils. Parents comment on its happy friendly atmosphere. One said, 'The school provides an inspiring and supportive environment for the children.' The senior management team has brought a good mix of strengths to the school that support the clear vision for improvement of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Children begin school with a wide range of skills and abilities that are broadly similar to those expected. All pupils achieve well and standards by the end of Year 2 are consistently above average. Fewer pupils attain the higher levels in writing than in reading and mathematics. The school has identified this as an area to develop, so that more able pupils have more opportunities to extend the breadth and depth of their writing.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding, with excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and take a full part in all the activities. A lively and stimulating curriculum helps them to grow in confidence and develop a love of learning. This good provision is enriched very well by educational visits and visitors. Pupils make healthy choices and take plenty of exercise. They enjoy participating in the different sports clubs such as Salsa and gymnastics. Pupils feel safe and valued at school and say they have an adult to turn to if they are worried. Attendance is good, with recent improvements term by term in response to rigorous measures the school has introduced. For example, parents receive a text message on the first morning their child is absent to alert them to contact the school with an explanation. The newly formed school council is very enthusiastic about its role in helping to improve aspects of school life, and pupils enjoy sharing their ideas. Pupils are active in the local community and raise money for a wide range of good causes.

Teaching and learning are good and enable pupils to make good progress. This is especially the case in Year 2 classes. Lessons are usually conducted at a brisk pace and involve pupils in practical activities. Each classroom has its own role play area so that pupils can develop their language skills, something that benefits the increasing numbers of pupils who are learning English as an additional language. In some classes, tasks do not always challenge more able pupils sufficiently in writing. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and work closely with class teachers to support groups and individuals. Care, guidance and support are good. There is outstanding pastoral care as staff know pupils as individuals and look after them particularly well. Pupils generally know their group targets in literacy and there are some good examples of guidance showing them how to improve. However, this clear guidance on the next steps in learning is not yet a consistent feature in marking across the school.

The impact of leadership and management is good, with above average standards being maintained over several years. Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and the areas to develop and these are reflected in concise and effective strategic plans. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have expanded the senior leadership team to give additional responsibilities to a committed group of middle managers who are having a positive influence on standards and achievement in their areas. Governors bring a wealth of expertise from all walks of life and support and challenge the school well. The school is popular in the community for the quality of its education and has a good capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children settle happily into the Nursery and Reception classes and routines are quickly established. They make good progress in the EYFS, especially in linking sounds and letters as a result of a new phonics programme. By the end of the EYFS most pupils are reaching the majority of the expected early learning goals, although writing is not quite so strong. Resources are good and used effectively to offer a wide range of stimulating activities for children to enjoy. They particularly like making patterns on the interactive whiteboards that are set at a height they can reach easily. Provision is stronger in the Reception classes as detailed planning focuses on what children will learn from tasks. There is also plenty of guidance for all staff to help children get the most out of adult-led activities, with suggested questions to ask. Assessment is thorough and recorded in children's personal folders, which they enjoy discussing. The EYFS is led and managed well with a strong team of committed staff working together effectively. The outdoor areas for the Reception classes offer limited space, although they are put to good use, and Reception children benefit from sessions in the much larger Nursery outdoor area.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure more pupils attain the higher levels in writing by setting tasks that are always sufficiently challenging.
- Build on existing good practice to ensure consistency of marking across the school so that all pupils know what they need to do next to improve.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Standards have been consistently above average for several years, as pupils make good progress from their starting points. The school has adapted its provision well to meet the needs of the large number of pupils who are learning English as an additional language, ensuring that they achieve well. There is a good level of challenge in mathematics resulting in many pupils attaining the higher levels. One pupil said, 'I like the high-numbered sums!' and proceeded to compute  $24 + 68$  in his head. The numbers of pupils attaining Level 3 in writing is average, and tasks do not always extend pupils' learning sufficiently. The school has recognised this area needs further development. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties make good progress because their needs are identified early and they receive effective support from experienced and well-trained classroom assistants.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have plenty of opportunities for reflection, as observed when they commemorated Remembrance Day. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about notable figures they had studied for Black History Month, marvelling at the number of times Harriet Tubman had gone back and forth rescuing over 300 slaves. They could also quote from Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech. Pupils embrace the school's strong moral values and are caring and considerate towards one another. They have a real enthusiasm for learning, and get excited recalling some of the lessons they enjoy. A pupil said, 'All the children enjoy school...the grown-ups do too!' The newly formed school

council takes its responsibilities seriously and consults widely. Pupils are hoping for a wooden castle in the playground and have written persuasive letters to governors. They keep fit. As one pupil remarked, 'When we go out we run around a lot and play games.' Pupils know about bullying and believe the school is free of it. They help around the school and are keen to assist others. For example, they made strawberry recipes to raise money for a breast cancer charity culminating in a successful 'strawberry tea'. Pupils leave the school as confident learners with a good set of basic skills and well-equipped for junior school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Much of the teaching is good and enthusiastic, engaging pupils well. A parent commented, 'My child feels positive and excited about his learning at Oakdale.' Tasks are usually set at the right level for pupils' attainment so that they enjoy learning and want to be involved in lessons. At times, however, the more able pupils could be challenged more. A focus on speaking and listening through role play and drama gives lessons pace and excitement. For instance, a group of Year 1 pupils acted out the reactions of a snail's friends on hearing that he was hitching a lift on a whale into the unknown deep! Others wrote postcards from the snail home. Occasionally too much time is spent introducing the lesson; consequently some pupils become restless and there is not enough time left over to complete the tasks.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

Provision in numeracy and literacy is generally good. The school is finding more ways of enabling pupils to use writing in a range of different subjects. There is effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum, and pupils use computers well to practise their skills. The curriculum is adapted well to meet the needs of pupils who are learning English as an additional language, with plenty of suitable resources and an emphasis on spoken language. Enrichment of the curriculum is particularly strong. Pupils enjoy a wide range of workshops including drumming and dancing, silk-screen printing and drama. Visitors include musicians, professors, actors, parents with a story to tell, and people who lived through the Second World War. There are visits to a great many places of interest including the Tower of London and Paradise Wildlife Park. These activities make a very positive contribution to pupils' outstanding personal development and their tremendous enjoyment of school.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Staff are highly committed to ensuring the care and welfare of all pupils, resulting in outstanding pastoral care. Child protection and other safeguarding procedures are robust and secure. The school works very closely with parents and involves them in supporting their children's education. A recent initiative of sending mathematics packs home to consolidate numeracy skills proved popular. There is good provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, so that they make rapid progress towards meeting the targets on their individual education plans. Support for pupils who are learning English as an additional language is also effective, with close monitoring of their progress. While there is some helpful marking that shows pupils how to improve, this is inconsistent across the school, with the emphasis on praise in some classes.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work. One parent said, 'The school is really everything you would ever want in an infant school.' A new tracking system is easily accessible to staff and has led to productive discussions about pupils' progress. Teachers are held accountable for how well their pupils do. Regular monitoring takes place, with key strengths and points for development identified in the provision. However, judgements about the quality of lessons tend to be rather generous. Middle managers have a good understanding of the strengths and areas to develop in their subjects, and are increasingly taking a leading role in bringing about improvement. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are successful at identifying and developing leadership potential within the staff, creating a dynamic and highly committed senior management team. Governors work closely with staff in evaluating progress towards goals. The appointment of an assessment governor has proved beneficial in monitoring the effectiveness of the new arrangements. The school is successful at unifying its local community and looking outward, having links with a school in the Gambia.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## 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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

26 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oakdale Infants' School, London, E18 1JU

Thank you for making us welcome at your school. We agree that yours is a good school and here are some of the things we particularly like about it.

- You all achieve well and generally reach standards that are above average.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you look after one another very well.
- You know all about keeping fit and healthy and take plenty of exercise.
- The teaching is good and makes your lessons interesting and exciting.
- There are plenty of visits and visitors to make learning enjoyable.
- The school cares for you particularly well, especially when you need help.
- There is good leadership and management from the headteacher and deputy headteacher.

You all do very well in mathematics and reading, and we would like more of you to reach the higher levels in writing. We have asked your teachers to make sure that the work is challenging enough for all of you. We also think it is important that marking tells you what you need to do next to improve, and have asked everybody to make sure you are clear about this. We are sure your teachers would value your views about how well you are doing.

Thank you once again for your help. Our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr N Butt

Lead Inspector