

Oakhill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103069
Local Authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	323743
Inspection dates	20–21 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Heather Yaxley HMI

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	241
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Debbie Strowbridge
Headteacher	Ms Linda Laidler
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Alders Avenue Woodford Green IG8 9PY
Telephone number	020 8527 3309
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Oakhill Primary is a one-form entry school in a suburban area of north-east London. Pupils represent the full range of social and cultural backgrounds. About a third of pupils come from minority ethnic groups, which is higher than the national average and increasing. No single group predominates. An above-average, and increasing, proportion of pupils speak English in addition to other languages, although few are at the early stages of acquisition. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is slightly above average. An above-average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, with the largest group presenting speech, language and communication difficulties. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) includes a Nursery class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Oakhill Primary is a good school, with satisfactory provision for the EYFS, where leaders and managers take the view that all pupils, regardless of social and cultural backgrounds, can attain standards that are at least as good as all other pupils nationally. Such high aspirations are a key feature, not only of the good leadership by senior staff and the governors, but also by the whole school community. As a result, although pupils join the school with a wide range of abilities and skills, most attain above-average standards by the time they leave and an above-average proportion attains the higher levels. This represents good progress during their time at the school and is made possible by highly effective systems to track, identify and tackle any underachievement of individuals and groups of pupils.

Pupils' personal skills are equally well developed. This stems from good pastoral support and role models, not only from staff but from the pupils themselves as they mature. Plain, straightforward good manners and respect for others ensure that pupils develop personal responsibility and a social conscience. They are very clear about what is right and wrong, what to do to stay safe and healthy and the importance of considering what life is like for others. It is no surprise that, regardless of age, pupils demonstrate good behaviour, take pride in their work and enjoy warm, secure relationships with one another.

Good improvements have taken place since the last inspection and this rightly gives the school confidence that they have the capacity to improve the provision even further. Although satisfactory, provision for the EYFS has many strengths and improvements are already evident, including the quality of teaching and the curriculum. But there is still much to do; for example, the arrangements for outdoor learning in the Reception class are not yet good enough. Across the school the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, as a result of greater consistency in lesson planning and higher expectations of pupils. Less attention has been given to curriculum development. Schemes of work are not sufficiently tailored to provide exciting and varied activities for different groups. This limits pupils' enjoyment of their learning and makes it more difficult for teachers to plan suitable activities. Nevertheless, since the last inspection the rate of pupils' progress has increased and their good personal skills have been enhanced. The significant strength in the way that the school takes care of and supports its pupils also continues, but the inspector drew the school's attention to its failure to meet all the current Government requirements relating to safeguarding. Action to tackle this weakness is an urgent priority.

Most parents and carers are completely happy with the standard of care and education that the school gives their children. They appreciate the friendly atmosphere and the way that any problems are quickly sorted out. Although the inspectors found that there are regular forums to inform them and discuss any concerns, a few parents and carers would like their views taken more into account.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Good leadership and management of the EYFS has strengthened the provision and improved it to a satisfactory level. This ensured that children achieved satisfactorily in the Nursery and Reception classes last year. Children join the Nursery with skills that are a little below expectations, especially in the earliest stages of reading, writing, number and social skills. By

the time they leave Reception most children are working broadly in line with the expectations for five-year-olds. Several steps have been taken this year to quicken the pace of children's learning. All areas of learning are now covered well and there is a good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities. Assessment is much improved and is an area of strength, enabling staff to have a clear picture of how well individual children are progressing. The information is used well to continually tailor the curriculum so that it challenges individual children and allows teachers to identify the next steps in their learning. The curriculum places high emphasis on developing personal and social skills and, because of this, good gains are made. 'Special Books' have recently been introduced to show significant steps in progress to the children, their parents, carers and teachers.

Good teaching is evident in the Nursery and that in Reception has been boosted by the appointment of a new member of staff. In the Nursery children enjoy the activities in the well-developed outdoor area, which effectively complement those they do inside. However, the school playground is used for outdoor learning in Reception and this falls well short of that in the Nursery. Improvements have been made to ensure children feel happy, safe and develop good self-esteem. Home visits are now made when children start in the Nursery or Reception class. Families value these and say that their children settle in quickly. Every child is allocated a key worker who really gets to know them well and helps nurture their personal and academic development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the outdoor learning area for the Reception class.
- Tailor schemes of work so that the curriculum supports teaching effectively.
- Ensure that the school complies fully with the Government requirements for safeguarding.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

At the time of the last inspection, attainment for the most able and in mathematics was too low. This is not now the case. Relentless attention to raising standards, high expectations of all its pupils and rigorous tracking of their progress has led to steadily improved results at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils now make consistently good progress from their starting points at both key stages. The rate of progress increases as pupils move through the school. This is because additional work to boost language and literacy skills increasingly supports pupils' achievements in other subjects. As a result, social or other differences are not barriers to attaining high standards. For example, pupils with additional needs and those who speak little English when they come to the school make good gains. From broadly average skills at the end of the EYFS, pupils reach standards that are generally in line with those nationally by the end of Key Stage 1. In 2007 attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 2 was above the national average and for science the standards were exceptionally high. Unvalidated results for 2008 suggest further improvement in English and mathematics, with science maintaining its high position. The proportions of those reaching Level 5 in each subject have increased and are above average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

As they move up the school pupils' personal qualities are developed well. This, together with good standards in literacy and numeracy, helps prepare them well for secondary school and in

becoming lifelong learners. By Year 6 many demonstrate a maturity beyond that normally found for their age. This is seen in their good social skills, hard-working attitudes and keenness to produce high-quality work. Although pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are good, there is scope to further develop spiritual aspects and pupils' understanding of our multicultural society. Pupils are clear as to what constitutes a healthy diet and keenly take part in sport and other physical activities. They know how to keep safe, as seen in their responsible conduct around the school and knowledge of potential dangers of using the Internet. Behaviour is good and often better when pupils are given the skills to act independently and use their own initiative to best effect.

Attendance is in line with national averages, as it was at the last inspection, but it is now starting to improve as stronger action is taken to discourage families from taking holidays during term time. The school council is developing a strong pupil voice. School councillors are keen to help make their school better and are currently raising funds to help develop the playground. Older pupils are given opportunities to take on greater responsibility such as becoming playground leaders, which helps make playtimes an enjoyable occasion. Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community through their many fund-raising activities, such as 'Red Nose' day and raising money for water pumps for communities in the Gambia.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

A tightening-up of teachers' planning and a greater focus on assessing how well pupils achieve in lessons has led to improvements in the quality of teaching. This has made a significant contribution to improved standards. Teachers consistently use learning objectives and key questions, ensuring high expectations and challenge in lessons. The same level of support is not evident through marking and this is a current area of development. However, there is a very positive ethos in class that encourages pupils of all abilities to acknowledge any difficulties with their work. This is very much appreciated by pupils. They say that they feel confident to say when they do not understand, in the knowledge that their teachers will do their best to help them. Pupils also speak positively about the new interactive white boards, which they say are making the work more interesting. Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Teachers and support staff work very well in tandem to ensure that those requiring extra help are identified and appropriately supported to achieve well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory because, while improvements have ensured better breadth and balance, there is an over-reliance on commercially published schemes of work. The way the EYSF curriculum is well tailored to the children is not as well developed in the rest of the school. This restricts teachers' planning and means that lessons sometimes lack excitement and are not always focused sharply enough on helping different groups to work at a fast enough pace. Subject leaders are starting to incorporate more creative aspects into each subject and to make relevant links between different units of work. In the pre-inspection questionnaire parents and carers query the quality and range of clubs and educational trips across the school. These comments are well founded and acknowledged by the school. Plans are in place for additional

trips for each class and for younger pupils to have as much opportunity to attend clubs as the older ones.

A particular strength in the curriculum lies in its flexibility to provide additional sessions to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. For example, at the end of each unit in mathematics between Years 1 and 6, staff identify pupils of any ability who are struggling with what was taught. Extra sessions are then put in place for the next few weeks. This has contributed to the recent success in raising standards in mathematics. A further strength of the curriculum is that it effectively helps pupils to move successfully from the EYFS to the more formal arrangements in Year 1.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral support for pupils is very strong and there are clear links between the quality of care, guidance and support with pupils' good personal skills. There is an infectious 'can do' approach throughout the school with a collective responsibility by staff to ensure that pupils do well. This is complemented by rigorous systems to track and identify underachievement, which ensure a close-watching eye is kept on pupils' progress. The use of personal targets and support to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work are not well developed.

The inspector drew the school's attention to its failure to meet all the current Government requirements relating to safeguarding. Action to tackle this weakness is an urgent priority.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

As leaders and managers of an improving school, the senior team and governors have demonstrated that they know what it takes to bring about change and improvement for the pupils. They not only meticulously monitor their work, but they are particularly good at using their analysis to evaluate accurately the quality of what they do. Governors have a particularly effective working relationship with the school that allows them to challenge senior staff constructively. They actively seek out the information that they need to play their part effectively. Leaders and managers at all levels share a common purpose and appropriate focus on raising attainment, and this has enabled the school to successfully address issues raised at the last inspection. This includes improvements to the quality of teaching, provision in the EYFS, the rate at which pupils make progress, the standards in mathematics and the attainment of the most able pupils in all subjects. With these improvements firmly in place, the school acknowledges the job still to be done on the curriculum and this includes developing a broader perspective on community cohesion.

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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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
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 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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 learners' needs?	2
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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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?	No
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**

04 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oakhill Primary School, Woodford Green, IG8 9PY

I am writing to say that it was a pleasure for us to inspect your school recently and also to let you know about the judgements that we made. You were a great help to us in finding out about what happens in school and what you think about it. A special thank you goes to all of those who spoke to us throughout the two days, either formally in groups or informally around the school and in the playground. We have also considered the questionnaires sent to us by your families. Many of them wrote comments and these were very helpful. Please pass on our thanks to them.

You attend a good school and are rightly proud to be there. We agree with you that it is a very friendly place where the staff help you to do well. We were particularly impressed with your mature behaviour and attitudes and the way that any of you feel able to ask for help when you find something difficult in class.

Some of you will remember the last Ofsted inspection, which was in 2006. Since then, the school has made lots of good improvements including better teaching, which has helped you to make more progress in your learning. With such good results at the end of Year 6, you leave Oakhill Primary with skills that will help you do well in your secondary schools.

The senior staff and governors lead the school well. They are very focused on making sure that you reach high standards in your work. As with all schools, there are always things that can improve and we have asked the staff and governors to do the following three things:

- improve the outdoor learning area for the Reception class
- make sure that the schemes of work for each subject help to make activities in lessons more interesting and better suited to different ability groups
- ensure that the school complies fully with all the Government requirements for keeping you safe.

Thank you once again for your help. We wish you well for whatever you wish for yourselves in the future.

Yours faithfully

Heather Yaxley

Her Majesty's Inspector