

Oak Cottage Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	104056
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	323950
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Hazel Callaghan

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)	238
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	Melanie Wade
Headteacher	Karen O'Keefe
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Greswolde Road Solihull B91 1DY
Telephone number	01217 049123
Fax number	01217 049123

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2009
Inspection number	323950

Amended Report Addendum

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most of the pupils at Oak Cottage Primary School are from families of White British heritage. There is a smaller than usual proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and most of these families speak English at home. The school is situated in a relatively advantaged area and very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. There is a smaller than average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but this number is increasing. Children in the Nursery attend school during the morning sessions only, but the school offers full day care for these children in partnership with a private company. This company also provides breakfast club facilities and after-school care for pupils at the school. The school has successfully achieved an Investors in People Award, an Artsmark Gold Award, a National Healthy Schools Award, an Eco Silver award and the Active Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Oak Cottage Primary is a good school. Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher the school has made very good progress since the previous inspection and now has many outstanding features. Standards have risen and pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attain standards well above the national average. This is due to good teaching and pupils' excellent attitudes to their work. Pupils say they enjoy school and attendance is above the national average. The school is exceptionally effective in promoting pupils' personal development and well-being so that by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6 pupils are confident, articulate and have developed very good skills, such as in the use of information and communication technology (ICT). They also display independence and initiative and are consequently exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of education. The school also provides outstanding personal and pastoral care for its pupils, and, when there is the need, for their families as well. Several parents wrote to say how grateful they were to the staff for their sensitive support when their family was experiencing difficulties at home.

There has been a rising trend in pupils' progress and they now achieve well. This good achievement is made by pupils of all abilities and ethnic groups. Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with skills and knowledge that are generally better developed than nationally. They make good progress in their learning throughout the Nursery and Reception classes to reach above average standards by the time they transfer into Year 1. This good progress continues through the school. The school has introduced a very effective system for assessing pupils' work and progress. This information is then used to identify their next important steps in learning. The process is developing well, but the school has correctly identified the need to develop this work further as more can be done to help pupils recognise how they can improve their work.

The school curriculum is broad and effectively balanced. It is enriched by many additional activities and a wide range of extra-curricular clubs. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' personal and social skills. Pupils' awareness of global citizenship is extended by opportunities to raise funds for world-wide charities and the school's links with a school in China, but less attention is given to promoting pupils' awareness of the diversity of cultures in British society.

Leadership and management across the school are good. The headteacher is clear sighted and the senior leadership team highly effective. All staff evaluate their work and the school has a very accurate understanding of its strengths and weakness. As a result, very good improvement continues to be made in all areas of the school's performance.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good teaching and the sensitive support of all adults help children to settle well and to make good progress across a well planned range of activities. Teachers work closely with children's families and the daily communication between the staff and parents ensures children feel confident and secure. Children's welfare is well promoted and children with various forms of learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and their independence nurtured. Teachers and learning support assistants know how young children learn and provide exciting tasks that promote their curiosity and interest. Learning areas are well resourced and there are

plenty of opportunities for children to plan their own activities, to experiment and to explore ideas in the classroom and in the safe area outside. Standards when children move into Year 1 are above those expected in all areas of the EYFS curriculum except in emotional and social development which is a focus for improvement this year. Leadership of the EYFS is good. Weaknesses in learning have been correctly identified and changes to the curriculum have been successful in better promoting boys' interest in writing. Assessment of children's attainment on entry to Reception is not as accurate as it should be, but as the staff get to know the children they are effective in identifying what they need to do to make good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that information from assessment is used to show pupils how they can improve through the consistent use of personal targets and strategies to help them recognise how to be successful.
- Ensure pupils develop a good understanding of the national community by providing opportunities for them to meet and work with those from other backgrounds, communities and cultures.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards in Year 2 are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Although boys attain higher standards in writing than their peers nationally, girls in the school generally reach higher standards than the boys. Both, however, make good progress from their various starting points. In the 2008 national tests, all pupils in Year 6 reached the expected standards of Level 4 and significantly more pupils than usual reached the higher standard of Level 5. Pupils of all abilities achieve well and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, not only towards their personal targets, but also in reaching age-related standards. The very few pupils who have English as a second language also achieve well. Pupils' progress has been improving over the last four years. The staff recognised that standards in writing were slower to improve than in other subjects, especially for the boys, so introduced a range of strategies that have had a very successful impact, especially in Years 3 to 6. Progress in writing in 2008 was significantly better than is usually seen nationally.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Relationships throughout the school are very positive and the vast majority of pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils have a secure understanding of right and wrong. They show respect for each other and are sensitive to each other's feelings; incidents of bullying are very rare. They make an outstanding contribution to the school community and are very proud of the responsibilities they take on, such as peer mediators and playtime buddies. Through the school council, pupils are active in improving the life of the school and all respond very well to opportunities to help raise money for those less well off than themselves. Pupils' understanding of how to develop healthy lifestyles is extremely good and they make positive choices about food and exercise. They are very mature about dangers in our modern world and understand how to keep themselves safe, such as when using the internet.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall and in some classes teaching that moves pupils' learning forward is outstanding. The style of teaching is lively and most lessons move along at a brisk pace. The objectives for the lessons are shared with the pupils, who are increasingly helped to understand what they need to do to be successful in their work, and activities are well matched to pupils' various abilities. Teaching assistants are experienced and many show good levels of expertise when supporting pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, enabling them to succeed. Computerised whiteboards are an effective tool in engaging pupils' interest and involvement. Resources are used well to extend pupils' understanding, and marking is constructive with helpful reminders of how they can improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and well balanced and staff are increasingly using pupils' ICT skills to support their learning in other subjects. This is a very positive strategy for encouraging boys to write. Links across subjects are developing well, especially with literacy, and this makes learning more meaningful and interesting to the pupils. This process of enhancing curricular planning has yet to be completed and is a focus for school development. The curriculum provides a strong focus on pupils' personal development, and the school has recently introduced a new learning scheme designed to show pupils how to be good learners. Teachers ensure that pupils gain an effective awareness of other cultures and religions through their work in geography, art, music and religious education, but as yet this is not informed by links with other schools or communities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The levels of personal and pastoral care given to all pupils are outstanding. Relationships at all levels are good and pupils feel able to talk to any member of staff if they have a problem. Policies and procedures for monitoring, recording and ensuring pupils' good behaviour are clearly in place and any difficulties are quickly dealt with. Pupils say they feel safe and know that all the staff will respond quickly and effectively if there are any concerns. Safeguarding procedures are all in place and rigorously monitored. Links with outside agencies provide good support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Academic support and guidance are good. Rigorous systems for monitoring pupils' progress are in place and the resulting information is increasingly used to set effective targets for pupils' next stages of learning. Strategies to help pupils recognise how to be successful, such as examples of what work should look like, are developing well in some classes and pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own progress in lessons. The new assessment procedures are supporting this process well, especially in English and mathematics, but they are not yet consistently applied across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Outstanding leadership from the headteacher and senior leaders supports pupils' good academic progress and excellent personal development. The monitoring of the school's work is comprehensive, well organised and thorough, with the result that there is a good understanding of what the school needs to do to improve. An accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is shared by all staff and governors, and leads to a well focused and manageable school development plan. Responsibilities are effectively shared amongst the staff, and subject co-ordinators are effective in their roles and responsibilities. Governors hold the school to account and provide good levels of support. The school is successful in promoting aspects of community cohesion through the inclusiveness of its approach to pupils and its positive links with outside agencies and local schools. Further developing this work is a current focus for school improvement; the school recognises that more could be done to enable pupils to come in contact with groups of people in the local community and to develop contacts with schools with more ethnically diverse populations. The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school. One parent's comments were typical of many: 'I believe that the school is an ideal educational environment in which children are encouraged and supported in every way possible.'

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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	1

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 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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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	1
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?	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**

15 January 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Oak Cottage School, Solihull, B91 1DY

Thank you for making us so welcome and answering our questions when we visited you recently. You are rightly proud of your school and what it does for you. You and your parents are correct in thinking that you go to a good school that has lots of outstanding features. Here are some of the things we found out.

- Oak Cottage Primary has made lots of progress in the last three years. This is due to the outstanding leadership of your headteacher and senior teachers and because of all the hard work of the staff.
- You make good progress in your work and you reach standards that are well above those expected for your age.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you get on with each other very well. You are polite, friendly and helpful to everyone. You understand how to keep yourselves safe, and make extremely positive choices about staying healthy and fit.
- The school is an exciting place to be. You clearly enjoy your lessons and often have lots of fun. You work hard and want to do well.
- The provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is good.
- You are taught well and your teachers work hard to make sure that your lessons are interesting. You have lots of additional things to do, including visits and clubs that extend your experiences and fun.
- All the staff look after you extremely well so you feel safe and are happy.

Even though Oak Cottage is a good school, there are some ways in which it can do better. We have particularly asked the headteacher and governors to do two things.

- Give you even more information on how to improve your work and what to do to make even better progress in your learning.
- Give you more opportunities to meet and work with people from the local area and from other communities.

Thank you again for helping us with our questions and making our visit to your school so pleasurable.

Yours sincerely

Hazel Callaghan

Lead inspector