

Oaklands Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109809
Local Authority	Wokingham Borough Council
Inspection number	325032
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Clive Lewis

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	250
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Alison Mitchell
Headteacher	Miss Susan Charnley
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2005
School address	Butler Road Crowthorne RG45 6QZ
Telephone number	01344 773 496
Fax number	01344 750 604

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

Oaklands is a two-form entry junior school of average size. The great majority of its pupils are from White British backgrounds and join the school from the infant school on the same site with above average levels of attainment. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is very low compared to most schools. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average although the proportion of pupils with statements of educational needs for specific learning difficulties, including speech, hearing and visual impairment, is greater than average. There is an after school club on site. The school has been awarded Healthy Schools status and the Activemark, and has received Investors In People validation. The headteacher was appointed only one week prior to the inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Oaklands Junior is a satisfactory school with some good aspects to its work. The school knows that it could further improve the education it currently offers. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The very recently appointed headteacher, while she was acting headteacher, made a significant contribution to improving the ethos of the school and sustaining the outstanding personal development of pupils. She has barely had time, however, to begin to make the improvements to the consistency of teaching and the use of assessment information that are needed to improve pupils' rate of progress. Achievement is satisfactory. Levels of attainment on entry are typically above average. Progress is satisfactory throughout Years 3 to 6 so that by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are above the national average. Within English, writing standards, although above average, are comparatively weaker than reading. The school has adopted new initiatives designed to improve standards in writing across the school and while there are early signs of success, more work needs to be done. The school is aware that girls do better than boys and has introduced strategies designed to remedy this. The school's good partnerships with others, including the infant school on the same site and the local secondary school, effectively promote pupils' progress and well-being. The great majority of parents are very supportive of the school, making comments such as, 'The staff work extremely hard and the children have fun learning - what more can you ask!'

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They are very confident, polite and respectful. They relish coming to school, as evidenced by the above-average attendance levels. They learn how to be safe and healthy and take responsibility for themselves and others. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils say, 'we welcome different religions into our school' and 'we treat everyone the same'. Behaviour is excellent and pupils make a good contribution to the local community. The current standards ensure pupils develop good skills that will contribute to their future well-being. The curriculum is good and has been widened and enriched recently in order to appeal more to the boys. Pupils particularly enjoy the extra-curricular activities which they say 'keep you occupied and fit' and which help them to adopt very healthy lifestyles.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and are the main reason why achievement is satisfactory. Monitoring of the quality of teaching by senior managers is at an early stage of development and there remain inconsistencies. Teachers' planning and use of teaching assistants ensure pupils with learning needs are supported appropriately. However, lesson planning does not always cater for the wide range of abilities within each class or set. Care and guidance are good. Staff care for the pupils very well and there is a very strong ethos of inclusion. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Systems for assessing and tracking individual pupils' progress are not yet being used to their full advantage. This means that rapid intervention is not made when a pupil is falling behind or could achieve higher levels with just a few extra focused sessions. Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection and the school is now moving forward. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement, especially for boys and in writing, by monitoring teaching more closely so that inconsistencies in teaching are eliminated.

- Sharpen the use of tracking information so that individual pupils receive the support they need to quicken their learning.

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 their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils enter the school with levels of skills above those typically found. Most make satisfactory progress as they move through the school so that standards by the end of Year 6 are above national averages. This, however, follows a prolonged period during which pupils were making consistently good progress and standards were significantly above national averages in all core subjects. This reduction in progress is largely as a result of considerable disruption in the school over the past four years which has now been successfully resolved. Whilst standards in reading are exceptionally high, writing standards, although above average, are comparatively weaker. The school has introduced strategies such as the 'Big Write' programme to overcome this disparity. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress but are not always challenged to do even better. Girls are making better progress than boys. Recognising this, the school has introduced a range of strategies, including revising the curriculum to make more active links between subject areas, designed to make lessons more interesting for boys. These initiatives are beginning to show very early signs of success.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils respond well to the high expectations which all staff have. Behaviour is excellent even in lessons which are not as active or enjoyable as they could be. Attendance is above the national average. Pupils are extremely well aware of, and committed to, keeping themselves healthy and safe. They know that a balanced diet and exercise are vital. Pupils' very strong commitment to safety includes knowing how to use the internet wisely and how to behave well on school trips. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils learn about a diversity of cultures and beliefs and are committed to the notion that 'we welcome all different people and religions into our school'. Some talked passionately about how everyone's views and opinions matter. They make an outstanding contribution to their community through the school council, helping with a wide range of jobs. For example, some have responsibility for helping others make friends in the playground and one pupil has the job of recording notices from assembly and displaying them on the school noticeboard. Pupils' above-average standards, excellent cooperation and high levels of respect and consideration for others prepare them well for later life and learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Classroom routines are made clear and regularly reinforced and this ensures learning takes place in a well-structured environment and that all pupils can contribute to lessons. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that pupils who need extra help are given

it. In most cases, classroom organisation is good and pupils are managed well. As a result, pupils behave very well in lessons and listen carefully to teachers. However, the pace of lessons is not always brisk enough and time is wasted as a result. Furthermore, teachers' expectations about what pupils, particularly the higher attaining pupils, might achieve are not always high enough. Too much time is spent on overlong introductions to lessons and insufficient thought is given to providing work to pupils of different abilities. In the best lessons, however, skilled teaching successfully extends pupils' language and thinking skills. Pupils respond really well to the high level of challenge and make good progress as a result.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is relevant, broad and balanced. A relatively new focus on topics, to combine different subject areas, has successfully added to pupils' interest and enjoyment. One example of this was the use of information about the Tudors which a class had gathered in order to write reports in an English lesson in the computer room. However, the curriculum is not always sufficiently modified to enable all pupils to achieve as much as they could. Frequently, teachers' plans do not take sufficient account of the range of abilities within each class or set by providing different levels of work that would enable all pupils to do as well as they might. The school's extensive resources for information and computer technology are used well by pupils and staff to support and extend learning. One boy competently and enthusiastically helped operate a camera and interactive whiteboard to present pupils' work for comment and discussion in a Year 6 art lesson. A wide range of well-attended lunchtime and after school clubs add to pupils' enjoyment of school. Visitors, such as the school nurse, contribute to pupils' excellent understanding of health, including aspects such as hygiene, diet and exercise.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All pupils are cared for and supported extremely well. Staff, including very experienced and competent teaching assistants, know all the pupils very well. They are particularly vigilant and caring when pupils are ill or hurt, for example, at playtimes. This very high level of care and support contributes well to pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Small intervention groups for pupils who find learning more challenging successfully contribute to their high self-esteem, behaviour and enjoyment. Vulnerable pupils and some families are successfully supported through regular discussions and support from staff. The school is gathering useful information on individual pupils' standards. However, it is not yet using the data to its full advantage in order to enable early identification of any pupil falling behind or not making the progress he or she is capable of. Pupils are aware of their targets and feel that these are useful and 'help our achievement'. They have found some recent improvements in teachers' marking helpful, including dialogues and comments on how work could be improved, but these are not yet used as fully or consistently as they could be.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, in her role of acting headteacher, did much to improve the morale of the school after a prolonged period of disruption and uncertainty. As a result of her efforts the school is now again a welcoming and caring place to learn and work. With the support of the

local authority, the headteacher has begun to take the necessary steps to improve the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation. Initiatives to improve the progress pupils make are still at a very early stage of development. Most changes have been made so recently that it is, as yet, too early to confirm their success. Subject leaders are beginning to use assessment information to check on the school's performance, but they have yet to observe all teachers teaching their subject or use the information to improve teaching. As a result, they do not have a detailed enough overview of the strengths and weaknesses in their subject across the school. Governors are becoming better informed about pupils' actual achievements and are beginning to develop their role in holding the school to account. Information booklets outlining topics and areas of learning each term are now produced and given to parents. This enables them to be involved and support their child's learning at home. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion with its strong links with the local community but accepts it is in the every early stages of developing wider links in the country or globally. Although the new headteacher has undeniably had a positive impact on the ethos and pastoral aspects of the school's work, recent initiatives designed to improve pupils' progress are still in the very early stages, and current capacity to improve is satisfactory.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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	2
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

16 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oaklands Junior School, Crowthorne, RG45 6QZ

I would like to thank you for your help during the recent inspection of your school. My colleague and I much enjoyed our visit.

Oaklands is a satisfactory school with some good features. Your headteacher and staff are leading the school satisfactorily. They care for you very well and give you good support to enable you to learn and enjoy your lessons. They make sure that you understand how to look after yourselves and keep safe and you do this extremely well. You told us that you really like your school and there are lots of things to do and enjoy. We agree with you. Your behaviour is excellent. You work hard and try to succeed in all that you do.

I have asked your school to do a few things to make it even better.

- Look more carefully at the way your teachers plan and deliver your lessons to make sure that boys do as well as girls and you all improve your writing.
- Make sure that the information the school gathers about how well you are doing in each subject is looked at more carefully and regularly, to check that each one of you is progressing as fast as you can.

Yours faithfully

Clive Lewis

Lead Inspector