

Oakley Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116047
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326316
Inspection date	10 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Wendy Simmons

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	165
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	Mr Anthony Casaletto
Headteacher	Mrs Sally Harvey
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Oakley Lane Oakley Basingstoke RG23 7JZ
Telephone number	01256 780445
Fax number	01256 781687

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the school's overall effectiveness and investigated the following issues.

- How well children do in the Early Years Foundation Stage; giving particular attention to their entry skills and their subsequent progress.
- How well the school is lifting the achievement of lower-ability pupils.
- How well are higher-ability pupils doing, especially in their reading skills?
- How well do pupils contribute to the community and show an awareness of being a citizen in the wider world?

The inspectors gained evidence from lessons and from the school's own evaluations of its work. Discussions were held with staff, pupils and one governor. A range of documentation was evaluated. Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised and the views of parents were gathered from questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is situated in a rural village close to Basingstoke and is smaller than average. Most pupils come from the village, but about a quarter of all pupils come from the wider surrounding area. Almost all pupils are from White British heritages, although a few come from other heritages. Within this, a few are at a very early stage of learning to speak English when they start school. Since the last inspection, the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has increased and is now above average in some year groups. Pupils' difficulties mostly relate to slow development in their speech and communication skills, autistic spectrum disorders and moderate learning difficulties. Few pupils receive free school meals.

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception class, having attended a variety of pre-school groups. When children join the school, their skills are very wide-ranging but broadly typical for their age. Pupils' attainment on entry is not quite as high as noted at the time of the last inspection; this is because more pupils are joining the school with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding education for its pupils. This reflects the very impressive leadership, especially by the highly committed and dedicated headteacher, senior staff and governors. Pupils benefit from outstanding teaching and learning opportunities, an exciting curriculum and pastoral care of the highest quality. These features, when combined with the excellent relationships, ensure that pupils thoroughly enjoy being at this happy school. Parents noted such things as, 'It's a lovely school with an inspirational team of teachers, starting with the head'. The school is a welcoming place to be.

Overall, pupils make outstanding progress. Children get off to a strong start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and they continue to make further very good progress in Years 1 and 2. This leads to very high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Despite the slight dip in 2008, due to variations in pupils' abilities and a few staffing difficulties, standards have been exceptionally high since the last inspection. Standards are again on track to be exceptionally high in 2009. Pupils do well in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics; for example, standards are high in science, design and technology and art. Not only do pupils gain important academic skills but their wider personal development is excellent. They have a very good knowledge of how to be healthy, fit and safe. Most importantly, pupils have fun and work hard. This was very evident in the sample of lessons seen and the 'Shine Talent Contest'.

Pupils from all backgrounds do very well. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included in group activities and sometimes work one-to-one with an adult; this balance is excellent. Pupils who do not have learning difficulties and/or disabilities but need a bit more help are very well supported, as is evident in the provisional results for 2009. These show a significant increase in the proportion of pupils who will be securely working at an average level by the end of Year 2. Almost all parents have great confidence in the support given to their children. As one put it, 'Staff go out of their way to help'.

Higher-ability pupils also thrive at this school. This year there has been a focus on reading and writing. As a result, all pupils, and especially the most able, are on track to reach very high standards. Pupils do well in reading because they read very regularly and have plenty of opportunities to talk about the characters and events in stories. They also read factual books to support their learning in a wide range of subjects. Reading starts off very well by the rigorous teaching of letters and sounds (phonics). Pupils often write at length and are helped to learn and practise grammar in a meaningful way. In mathematics and science they work hard on learning basic skills and knowledge and they do many meaningful investigation activities.

Thinking and talking skills are especially well promoted. For example, pupils were encouraged to work with their parents to come up with the most imaginative thing to do with a strawberry! Many homework projects focus exclusively on encouraging pupils to develop their speaking and thinking skills. Parents contribute greatly to pupils' learning at home and in school. The only weakness in attendance is due to the fact that parents take their children out of school for holidays. As a result, attendance is only average despite leaders' determination to ensure that pupils do not miss school.

Teachers provide an excellent range of activities, which help pupils learn in different ways. Work is suitably challenging for all abilities and there is effective support for pupils learning English as an additional language. Leaders, including governors, attend the very regular 'Pupil

Progress Meetings'. These meetings are chaired by an external professional, who asks challenging questions about the progress of every single child; this is exemplary practice and reflects the very high quality leadership.

The curriculum has been carefully planned to ensure that learning is meaningful and relevant. For example, when pupils worked on a space project, they researched the history of moon landings and enjoyed dressing up and acting as astronauts. The project did not end there. Pupils then learnt about the position of planets in relation to the earth in a very practical and fun way. Following this, they wrote their own creative stories about life in space, and within this they made real ice planet sculptures which enlivened their imagination and use of descriptive vocabulary. Activities such as these ensure that pupils have purposeful and exciting reasons to read and write. Pupils also make effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning; this is recognised in the recently acquired ICT Mark which demonstrates that the school is doing well in ICT.

Pupils keenly talk about their school. They show considerable respect, as evident in their outstanding behaviour and very impressive moral and social awareness. Pupils' spiritual development is also very good, especially their sense of joy and wonder in learning. This was very evident when they listened to a performance by a musical quartet and then explained sensitively about how the music made them feel.

Pupils learn a great deal about how to be a good citizen. For example, they compost fruit waste on a daily basis and have gained the School's Eco-Award. They actively take part in the Village Council's 'Clean-up weekend'; they work on a local woodland conservation project and have recently won a prize in the Basingstoke gardening competition for their wildlife and vegetable garden. They do a great deal for the wider community, such as by working with a school in Ghana to raise funds for a toilet block. Following a visit from the headteacher of the Ghanaian school, pupils can remember exactly what she had said. As one pupil explained, 'We are helping them to climb a tree they cannot get up on their own'. The school's work on the UNICEF 'Respect Rights and Responsibilities' project contributes immensely to pupils' excellent social and moral development. Leaders are still keen to extend pupils' cultural development by raising their awareness about Britain as a multicultural society and by developing their knowledge about life in Europe.

Leaders evaluate the work of the school exceptionally well and have very good plans in place to continue developing; they show an outstanding capacity to improve. At all levels leaders and staff are committed to pupils as individuals. As one parent said, 'The school has provided our children with the very best start on their learning journey', and inspectors agree.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision is good and reflects consistently good leadership. The accommodation is inspiring and very well organised to help children to learn in different ways. In the last year there has been a strong focus on developing more independent learning, so that activities complement the more formal activities that children do with teachers; this balance is good. The school is working to widen outside learning still further by providing an all-weather awning. As a result of effective teaching and learning, children thrive and quickly learn how to behave well, socialise with others and show an excitement for learning. Children achieve well. They settle in very quickly because adults form extremely caring relationships with the children and their parents. This very close working partnership contributes to children's outstanding care, welfare and

personal development. Leaders have been working on finding a way to evaluate children's skills when they join the school. This is improving well, although leaders correctly want to summarise assessment more succinctly so that they are very clear about the attainment on entry for all year groups.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the opportunities for pupils to learn about our multicultural world, especially in Britain and Europe.

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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?	1
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?	1
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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

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	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	3
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

21 July 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Oakley Infant School, Basingstoke, RG23 7JZ

You may remember that two school inspectors visited your school recently. Thank you for being so friendly and polite. It was a real pleasure to see you all having such fun when working and then during your 'Shine Talent Contest'. I am writing to let you know what we found out.

You go to an outstanding school, which is fantastic! You like your teachers and they are kind and helpful to you. Your teachers work very hard to help you to learn new things in an exciting way. This means that when you go into the Juniors, you know all of the things that will help you to do well. We loved your work on 'Space' and were delighted to find out about how well you are getting on in learning to read, write and do mathematical work. We were also impressed by your work in other subjects such as science, art and design and technology. You clearly enjoy school and do lots of things for the community. Well done for helping the school in Ghana. Congratulations for behaving so well and for being kind to others. Knowing about your rights, responsibilities and having respect for others, together with you understand about how to be fit, healthy and safe, are among the most important skills for your future lives. Your excellent headteacher and all of the other adults are working very hard to make the school even better for you. I have asked them to do the following important thing:

- help you to find out even more about the different lives of others, especially in Britain and Europe.

Well done for doing so well in the Basingstoke gardening competition. Your wildlife and vegetable garden is great and we loved the scarecrows! Have a lovely summer holiday and keep on reading and finding out about new things. Please say thank you to your teachers and mums and dads for all of the help that they give you. Please remind your mums and dads not to take you out of school for holidays unless there are very special reasons for this.

We hope that you have an enjoyable school holiday.

Yours faithfully

Wendy Simmons

Lead Inspector