

# Oakthorpe Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119945
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327156
<b>Inspection date</b>	7 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ruth Westbrook

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	88
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	13
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Niki Whitehouse
<b>Headteacher</b>	Donna Moulds
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 November 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>	School Street Oakthorpe Swadlincote DE12 7RE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01530 270383
<b>Fax number</b>	01530 274925

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

## Description of the school

This small primary school serves the local village and surrounding rural communities. Pupils are arranged in five classes. A very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The children enter the school's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) having attended a variety of pre-school settings, including the Little Acorns Pre-school which is located on the same site. Children start with skills that are lower than those expected for their age, but there is a wide range within each class. More pupils leave and join the school after Reception than is typical. The school has experienced a prolonged period where the substantive headteacher has been absent. The acting headteacher joined the school in September 2008.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. The school has experienced a period of turbulence and although it has come through well, there was a decline in standards in 2007. Supported strongly by the local authority, the governing body planned action to address this decline. The school embarked on a programme to address areas of underachievement. As a result, standards in English, mathematics and science improved substantially in the 2008 tests for Year 6, though they remained below average. Evidence from the inspection indicates that the programme continues to be effective and pupils' achievement is improving. Throughout this unsettled period, relationships with parents have remained strong. Parents are very positive about the school's new direction, and welcome the impact of recent changes. One parent sums up the feelings of many: 'The school has a friendly open environment and under new guidance is changing and improving areas.'

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's achievement is satisfactory. There are limitations to the indoor classroom that restrict the range of opportunities in which children can take part. In Years 1 to 6, pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points. The programme put in place last year continues to address effectively some general weaknesses in literacy and numeracy. The more able pupils do not always make as much progress as they should. There are enough opportunities planned consistently to extend their learning and challenge them.

The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory, and improving. All teaching is at least satisfactory, and recent additions to the workforce have strengthened the teaching with good practice. However, some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching remain, particularly in the pace and challenge of lessons and in the planning to meet the needs of different groups in the class. Leadership and management are satisfactory but strengthening. In the past, there have been limited checks on the quality of teaching and learning and there has been a limited programme of feedback and professional development for teachers. There has been little sharing of good practice. Systems for checking the school's work and planning to improve its quality are now in place and subject coordinators are beginning to play a part in this process.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Systems for academic guidance and tracking are securely in place, and beginning to embed in the school's work. Care for pupils by all staff is good. Together with stronger aspects of the satisfactory curriculum, this promotes good personal development and well-being. The curriculum provision to promote healthy lifestyles is good. Pupils demonstrate their understanding of healthy eating well in their choices at break times. All pupils engage enthusiastically in exercise at break times and in clubs. Over one third of pupils of all ages are taking part in the forthcoming Saturday morning cross-country event.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children's levels of skills and understanding when they start school vary from year to year. They are generally lower than the level expected for their age and include a wide range of abilities. Children make satisfactory progress in the EYFS. Standards on entry to Year 1 vary from year to year depending on the starting point. In 2008, most children at the end of the Reception Year reached average standards. Standards have improved since the last inspection. The care, welfare and safety of children are a high priority. As a result, children make good progress in personal, social and emotional development. This was observed during the inspection,

when children who have been in school for a very short time are confidently joining in assembly with older pupils and enjoying games at break times with all members of the school.

Satisfactory teaching and well-established routines help children to make a sound start. Accurate assessment has established clear starting points for children, and planning takes account of children's individual needs. The outdoor area promotes children's engagement in a range of activities. However, the limitations of the indoor space currently restrict the number of planned activities and choices in which children can take part. Governors and senior leaders are effectively including the EYFS in their self-evaluation, review and planning. Good induction procedures, including links with the pre-school settings, help children to settle quickly into school. Parents value these and feel welcomed into the school to help the process.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Provide more challenging work for more able pupils so that their standards rise.
- Share good practice and make regular checks so that the consistency of teaching improves, particularly in planning to meet the needs of all groups of pupils in the class and in the pace of lessons.
- Improve the indoor learning environment in the EYFS so that children's development and learning benefits from a wider variety of opportunities.

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**

Although standards are below average by the end of Year 6, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In 2007, pupils' inadequate progress overall from Year 1 resulted in exceptionally low standards in the national tests. Since then, the school has engaged in a programme to tackle this underachievement with considerable support from the local authority. As a result, the unvalidated test data for 2008 show a significant improvement and that pupils made satisfactory progress overall. The evidence from the inspection indicates that this impetus has been sustained through recent changes to the school's leadership and workforce. Teachers set challenging targets in reading, writing and numeracy and they closely monitor progress at an individual level. This is having an impact, with most pupils making expected progress and some exceeding their targets. However, there are occasions when the work of the more able pupils does not challenge them sufficiently to reach the higher levels. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve satisfactorily. Teachers and assistants support learning effectively, with strategies and activities usually matched suitably to pupils' abilities.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They are polite and friendly. They are helpful to visitors and to each other. These good interpersonal qualities, coupled with improving standards in basic skills, contribute satisfactorily towards preparation for pupils' future lives. Pupils welcome enthusiastically opportunities to serve their community. Recently, the whole school contributed to a church service for the local community in support of local and global charities. The school council has been active in helping to improve facilities in the playground.

Opportunities for social and moral development are strong. Older pupils are busy preparing to act as coaches for younger pupils in the school. They are very excited by this opportunity and talk responsibly about the benefits for those being coached in terms of increased happiness and healthiness. Opportunities for spiritual and cultural development are less well developed, although pupils' understanding of other faiths is enhanced through religious education. Pupils feel safe in school and much enjoy all that it has to offer. Their understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy is good. As one pupil put it, 'a healthy playground is a happy playground'. Attendance is average and has improved since the last inspection.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teachers have good relationships with pupils that support their learning. They clearly share objectives for lessons with pupils to help them make progress. The focus on pupils' personal targets in setting objectives in lessons and feedback in marking is increasing. Some good practice was seen in a literacy lesson, where the teacher used a variety of strategies to encourage pupils to meet their personal writing targets and gave immediate feedback when they succeeded. Teachers plan a wide range of activities to engage pupils actively in their learning. In some cases, the planning does not always take full account of the range of abilities in the class. Lessons are often challenging, lively and fun. In some, however, learning lacks focus and challenge for the more able pupils and the pace for them is slow. Teachers and learning support assistants work well together and are effective in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that they make satisfactory progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Emphasis for development recently has been on pupils' skills in English and mathematics and this has contributed to improved standards. Other subjects are covered in a balanced way through topics. Handwriting skills are underdeveloped for a number of pupils in every year. The school has recently reviewed its policy and plans are in place to address this aspect of work. Speaking and listening skills are improving as pupils have increased opportunities to discuss their learning. There is satisfactory provision for information and communication technology (ICT). Opportunities for pupils to practise the skills learnt in literacy, numeracy and ICT lessons are limited, so they do not understand fully the application of these skills. After school and at lunchtime, clubs provide a range of opportunities for pupils to extend their skills.

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

#### **Grade: 3**

All staff care well for pupils within a warm and friendly environment. Procedures to ensure that pupils are safe and protected are securely in place. The guidance given to pupils on the progress they are making has improved recently. Satisfactory procedures help teachers to track pupils' progress and regular checks enable them to identify any underachievement. An effective range of strategies support those who need additional help, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. External support is arranged when necessary. Parents have close links with the school and good opportunities to meet staff to check on progress.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The acting headteacher and governors are providing sound leadership with a strong emphasis on improving standards. This, and the continued support from the local authority, is enabling the school to move forward positively. More effective monitoring is helping leaders at all levels evaluate the school's work more accurately. Clear plans are well understood by all staff and are leading to improved standards. Challenging whole-school targets are in place, and senior leaders are working closely with class teachers to ensure that there are consistent links with individual pupils' targets. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Although there has been significant overall improvement in the standards at Key Stage 2, the pace of change for some groups and in Key Stage 1 has been slower. Senior leaders and governors have addressed the causes of this and demonstrated their sound capacity to make further improvements. Governors are involved effectively in monitoring and evaluating the school's work. They have played an active and effective role in leading the school through its recent difficulties. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. Whilst strong links are made with parents, other partnerships that have been of benefit in the past have not been so active in recent years.

**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](http://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
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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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### 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?	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

<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>	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	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oakthorpe Primary School, Swadlincote, DE12 7RE

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us on our recent visit to your school. We think it is a satisfactory school and that it is improving. We would like to share with you what we have learned.

You make satisfactory progress in your work, and even though standards are below average, they are improving. You are taught satisfactorily. All staff and your headteacher care for you well. As a result, you feel safe in school and feel that there is always someone to help if you need it.

You are happy at school and enjoy many of the activities and lessons that are available to you. You are polite and friendly to each other and to visitors. You behave well and your attendance is improving. Older pupils are particularly caring to younger ones and find many ways to help them feel happy in school, like the coaching scheme which is planned. You are particularly good at understanding how to keep healthy and you show this with your enthusiasm for sport and exercise. It was impressive to see how many of you of all ages were taking part in a cross-country competition on a Saturday.

We have asked your headteacher and governors to make sure that some of you are set work that will give you more of a challenge and help some of you reach higher levels. We are also asking teachers to plan work that is carefully matched to your ability and to make demands on some of you who could work more quickly. We are asking them to improve the Reception classroom so that there is more space and so more variety of activities for the children in Reception. I hope you will help your headteacher and her staff to put these plans in place so that the school can continue to improve.

Ruth Westbrook Lead inspector