

The Oaktree School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125032
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	328269
Inspection date	23 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Thrussell

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)	257
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	88
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mike Woods
Headteacher	Mrs Glen Alder
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	13 October 2005
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Gorsewood Road St John's Woking GU21 8WT
Telephone number	01483 474981
Fax number	01483 797953

Age group	4–7
Inspection date	23 September 2008
Inspection number	328269

© Crown copyright 2008

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.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, teaching and learning, leadership and management and the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), gathering evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and documents. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with children, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. 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, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The Oaktree is a popular community Infant School. The majority of pupils are from a British White background. A very small proportion is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The majority have moderate additional needs, with a few having specific needs such as speech, language and communication. The school has gained Basic Skills, Healthy Schools, Activemark, Eco Schools, Fair Trade and Investors in People awards. Some pupils, including children in the EYFS and others from a neighbouring junior school attend a before and after school club.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The Oaktree is an outstanding school. The headteacher provides committed and visionary leadership and is extremely well supported by the senior management team, governing body and staff. Together they ensure pupils' outstanding progress in both their academic and personal development. These are promoted further by an excellent curriculum, which provides pupils with exciting and innovative learning opportunities. The Acorn Centre, which is linked to classrooms, provides an extremely attractive open-plan area where pupils are able to use computers and the recently enhanced library and research facilities. This has been beneficial in developing even higher levels in reading and maintaining a high level of computer skills. Lilly the bus, which stands on the playground, is being equipped for pupils to carry out science investigations. Outstanding links with parents, the community, other schools and outside agencies contribute to pupils' learning and the extremely high level of care provided by the school, which ensures pupils' health and safety. Parents commented that 'Oaktree is a very active school. There is always something going on, which adds to the basics in creative and interesting ways', and that 'The headteacher is always approachable and responsive, constantly and visibly striving to improve standards in all areas.'

Pupils greatly enjoy all aspects of school life, shown in their eagerness to attend school, the popularity of school clubs and the excellent progress they make. A number of parents take their children on holiday in term time so that the overall rate of attendance is reduced to just above average. Pupils particularly enjoy daily carousel times where they get opportunities to work at different activities. This helps them to develop their self-confidence, responsibility and initiative. Pupils value the friendships they make; commenting that 'We are really kind to each other'. They know that if they have any concerns an adult is always on hand to listen to them. Pupils are proud of the contribution they make to the school community, taking on responsibilities as school councillors, recycling monitors or members of the Eco Committee. The school encourages pupils to come up with solutions to problems, such as how to keep class gardens watered during the holidays. One pupil commented, 'We have to look after the world'. Pupils' awareness and understanding of the wider world, and their responsibilities towards it, are further enhanced by educational visits, including ones to different places of worship, and many fund raising activities. Pupils and staff take part in 'wake up and work out' sessions, which help to encourage physical fitness. This, along with a growing awareness of diet, makes pupils extremely aware of the importance of healthy lifestyles. 'We don't want any achy bits', said one pupil. Excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes contribute considerably to the progress pupils make in their learning.

Children start school with a level of attainment in line with that expected for their age. They make excellent progress throughout the school. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average. The school has very good systems in place for tracking pupils' progress. Therefore, they knew that standards in the national assessments in Year 2 in 2008 would be lower, despite these pupils making excellent progress. It uses these systems to identify any underachievement so that further support can be given, to ensure that pupils reach the challenging end-of-year targets set for them. The school has successfully addressed the relative weakness in the reading and writing of more able pupils in comparison to mathematics, identified at the last inspection. These pupils are now doing equally well in all three subjects. Drama and role-play help to develop pupils' ideas and vocabulary for writing. Carefully chosen themes, such as garages and building sites, and opportunities for non-fiction

writing through topic work, are particularly motivating for boys in their writing. Home reading is now well organised and guided reading sessions help pupils to look more closely at what they are reading. Given their outstanding level of basic skills, eagerness to take on responsibility and growing self-confidence, pupils are extremely well prepared for their future life and learning.

This high level of achievement results from excellent teaching and positive encouragement for parents to be involved in their children's learning. Lessons are very well planned, with clear indications of what pupils are expected to achieve. Teachers meet regularly within year groups to assess pupils' progress and to evaluate the success of lessons. This assessment is used extremely well to plan and match work to ability and to set individual targets for pupils. Pupils know that these targets show them how to improve their work and are very keen to achieve them. Teaching assistants provide very effective support, particularly when working with lower attaining pupils, including those with learning difficulties. This enables these pupils to make similar progress to others. The school closely monitors the quality of teaching and learning, holding teachers accountable for the progress pupils make. This helps to ensure that pupils make the progress expected of them. It also identifies where teachers may need additional support in order to maintain the school's very high quality of teaching and learning.

The school is extremely accurate in its self-evaluation, which is undertaken by all staff and governors. This helps the school to identify areas for development and to plan appropriate action to bring about further improvement. One current focus is on the speaking and listening opportunities provided for pupils in lessons. This is designed to encourage pupils' thinking and reasoning skills further and to enable them to develop and share their own ideas. The school has also identified that pupils could be more involved in the discussion and evaluation of what they are learning. This action is recent and yet to show a greater impact on pupils' learning. Given the quality of its self-evaluation, improvement since the last inspection, and strong determination to strive for even greater excellence, the school has an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The provision in the EYFS is outstanding. The well-established systems in place for pre-school visits enable all children to get off to an excellent start. They settle quickly and make excellent progress as a result of high quality teaching and carefully planned activities. They respond extremely positively to the very stimulating environment. Independent learning skills are thoughtfully developed through a careful balance of teacher led and children's self-selected activities, both inside and outside the classroom. Teaching assistants are well-trained and work closely and successfully with small groups and individuals. Some children have speech, language and communication difficulties, but an effective programme of work ensures that these needs are well addressed. By the end of Reception, the majority of children are working well within the goals expected of them, with a significant proportion fully meeting or exceeding them. The EYFS is extremely well organised and managed. Assessment procedures are robust and used very well to plan the next steps in learning. Welfare procedures are securely in place and contribute to the calm, happy settled atmosphere throughout the unit.

Some Reception children, along with older pupils, benefit from very high quality before and after school care provision. Strong links between staff ensure that there is a seamless transition between the beginning and end of day activities, which complements the extremely high quality of care provided throughout the school day. Personal and social development is thoughtfully

managed. Activities are well organised so that different age groups successfully socialise and support each other. Parents place a high value on these opportunities.

What the school should do to improve further

- To enable an even higher level of learning, fully monitor and evaluate the action taken to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills.

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?	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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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?	1
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**

03 October 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of The Oaktree School, Woking, GU21 8WT

I am writing to let you know what we found when we visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke with some of you during our visit and you were interesting to talk to, extremely polite and helpful. You spoke very enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things you take part in. The Oaktree is an outstanding school.

We liked these things the most.

- You enjoy school, behave extremely well and want to do your best.
- Children in Reception get an excellent start to their time in school.
- The school supports you extremely well when you have problems or find learning difficult.
- The school makes sure that you are safe and extremely well looked after.
- You have lots of exciting things to do. We were very impressed with the way you were using the Acorn Centre and Lilly, the bus.
- You know the importance of eating the right things and staying fit and healthy.
- You are very keen to take on responsibilities for looking after your school and the world.
- The staff are extremely welcoming to your parents and encourage them to support you in all that you do in school.
- Your headteacher, governors and staff are doing an excellent job.

We have asked the school to work particularly on the following thing.

- The school wants to give you even more time to talk about what you are learning in lessons, but remember also to listen to what others have to say. This will help you to think more and to give your own ideas. The school must check that you are having these times and that they are helping you to learn independently.

You can help by making sure you all listen carefully to teachers and other grownups in your lessons and by thinking and being ready to answer questions when asked. We did enjoy visiting your school and watching you learn.

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector