

Oakdale Junior School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 133931 |
| Local Authority | Redbridge |
| Inspection number | 328772 |
| Inspection dates | 25–26 March 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Glynis Bradley-Peat |

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

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| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 356 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Derek Mullett |
| Headteacher | Mrs Linda Snow |
| Date of previous school inspection | 12 December 2005 |
| School address | Oakdale Road Redbridge South Woodford E18 1JX |
| Telephone number | 020 8989 7471 |
| Fax number | 020 8530 2377 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average. The pupils come from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. Over a third of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than usually found but has increased in recent years. The proportion of pupils identified with specific, moderate, behavioural and emotional, speech and language difficulties is lower than average but the proportion with a statement of educational need is above average. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual times is higher than that found nationally and is increasing each year. The school has gained a number of awards, for example, Activemark and the Healthy School Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Oakdale Junior school provides its pupils with a good standard of education and the vast majority of parents and pupils agree. One parent wrote, 'My daughter is very happy and is making excellent progress. She is inspired and motivated by her teacher'. Overall, pupils make good progress and reach above-average standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards in art and in information and communication technology (ICT) are high. This is because teachers are enthusiastic and keen to provide pupils with exciting and stimulating lessons. When lessons capture pupils' interest they show impressive powers of concentration and perseverance. They know that progress in their learning depends on their own efforts as well as those of the school. This was evident in an outstanding mathematics lesson that used innovative technology to promote mental calculation. Pupils particularly relished the challenge to 'beat the teacher'.

The caring and committed headteacher and her diligent deputy headteacher are clearly focused on moving the school forward. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. The school has improved the systems for checking how well pupils are learning. This is now ensuring that all pupils, including those who are more able, are effectively challenged. Pupils are now much more involved in understanding and evaluating how well they are doing. They are set targets which they understand and use well to make better progress. The capacity for further improvement is therefore good.

The curriculum makes good provision for vulnerable pupils, for those learning English as an additional language and for those with particular gifts and talents. The school's arrangements for promoting pupils' personal and social development are very good and make a strong contribution to their all-round well-being. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Attendance is just below average and fluctuates. The unsatisfactory attendance levels of a small group of pupils adversely affects overall attendance figures. The steps being taken by the school to improve the attendance of this group have been insufficiently rigorous to bring about the necessary improvement.

The outstanding care, guidance and support provided by the school ensure that pupils with specific, moderate, behavioural and emotional, speech and language difficulties achieve well. Pupils also feel safe in school and know there is always an adult they can turn to in case of need. Academic guidance is of high quality. The tracking of pupils' progress is consistently reliable as a result of accurate teacher assessment. Older pupils know clearly the levels at which they are working and how to get to the next level of attainment. Pupils know their own personal targets and understand the next steps they need to take in order to make better progress. This is reflected in increasing progress, as demonstrated by the school's performance data over time. Tracking data also permits the pinpointing of those groups who are in danger of underachieving. The school is aware of some issues currently affecting the learning of some boys. It is beginning to work on ways to address this through improving the curriculum and by modifying teaching so that boys' learning styles are taken more into account.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that curriculum and teaching take into account the learning styles of boys so that they achieve as well as they can.
- Ensure that prompt and effective action is taken to address the unsatisfactory attendance of identified groups of pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and this has been the case for a number of years. The school's own tracking data show this is likely to continue in 2009. In English, this is the result of the school's focus on improving writing. Results in the 2008 national tests in writing were high. Progress is good. In mathematics, progress is increasing as a result of actions taken by the school to bring about improvement, for example through innovative use of hand-held consoles. Currently, the picture of progress across English, mathematics and science in lesson observations and pupils' exercise books is good. Although the vast majority of pupils make good progress, there is an issue with boys' achievement across the school. Because senior leaders have identified the situation, some initial steps taken have been put in place to tackle it. The curriculum is being reviewed so that it appeals more to the learning styles of boys. However, there is still work to be done in order to engage boys more fully in their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school gives a high priority to promoting pupils' personal development and well-being. The kindly and inclusive ethos of the school results in mature, self-confident and very well-behaved pupils. They get on very well together, and are polite and thoughtful in their dealings with adults. Most enjoy coming to school and appreciate all it provides for them. One said, 'There's something for everyone here'. However, the attendance of a small minority of pupils is unsatisfactory, and impedes their progress. Pupils are reliable and trustworthy when given responsibilities in their class or school community. Pupils are fully aware of how to maintain good health and fitness, and of how to stay safe in school and in the world outside; hence the school's award of the Activemark and Healthy School Status. Because of the school's excellent provision in the arts, pupils have an excellent level of cultural awareness. They appreciate the varied cultures and values of others, and they have a very strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils make good progress in literacy and mathematics. They have highly developed skills in information and communication technology. Together with pupils' reliability and independence, these lay a good foundation for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Recent instability in staffing means there is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching but the good progress pupils make stems from the good teaching they enjoy overall across the school. Imaginative teaching captures their interest, so they concentrate well and learn quickly. The most engaging activities call for practical investigation, teamwork and the careful use of equipment. Year 4 pupils practised estimating the metric lengths of objects in their classroom before checking their accuracy with metre sticks. They then went outside to work in pairs on a larger scale in the play area. Those who found the measurement task difficult had very effective help from a learning support assistant, while the more able pupils worked hard to calculate the margins of error between their estimates and the true measures. Pupils were deeply absorbed in the activity and made rapid progress.

Classroom relationships are very good. Teachers expect a lot from their pupils, make clear what the purpose of each activity is, and encourage the pupils to check, and take responsibility for, their own learning. Some classroom activities give particular importance to developing pupils' spoken English - challenging them to explain or justify their answers. This extends their thinking, and is especially beneficial for those learning English as an additional language. However, some teaching does not take account of how boys learn best. As a result of this, boys do not concentrate on their learning well enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good and improving curriculum. Staff are currently reviewing it to accommodate changing national recommendations, and to make stronger provision for boys, who do not always achieve as well as they should. The curriculum rightly emphasises the importance of developing high levels of achievement in English, mathematics and science, and promotes excellent standards in ICT. Sometimes pupils' studies cross subject boundaries, with each subject adding a fresh dimension to the work. Learning about ancient Egypt, for example, combined history, art, writing and technology to give a sharp insight into burial practices of the time. However, this is not always the case.

Creative activities prosper at Oakdale, and are areas of real strength. Provision is rich in the visual arts, in music, literature and dance. Spanish is taught throughout the school, and there is an opportunity for pupils to visit Spain as part of their studies. Pupils can learn to play a good range of instruments, join the orchestra or sing in the choir, and there is an inviting well-used and centrally located library. The curriculum is enriched well by a wide range of additional activities and by very effective breakfast and after school clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The health, welfare and nurturing of children's development is paramount to what the school does. Adults care deeply for pupils and this underpins the school's very good procedures for identifying and supporting vulnerable pupils. A highly effective range of extra help and support, and excellent liaison with parents, carers and external providers, ensure pupils make good progress. All safeguarding requirements are met. Adults ensure all pupils are fully engaged in their learning by observing pupils' individual needs and interests and adjusting lessons accordingly. As a result, pupils really enjoy their education and are eager to work towards challenging targets. Clear targets are set, and pupils know and understand their next steps for learning. All pupils and their parents are well informed about their progress. Academic guidance and tracking in the key skills is excellent and helps the school identify groups of pupils with particular needs. Marking in exercise books provides high-quality feedback about how pupils can improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management at all levels ensure that the school's own self- evaluation is both accurate and effective. This results in a school that incisively pinpoints areas for development and puts in effective strategies to bring about improvement. The school's

development plan is clear and progress against actions is monitored well. Senior and middle leaders and governors work well together as a cohesive team and are fully committed to moving the school forward. The school places a high value on training staff, which improves teaching and effectively prepares newly appointed managers for their responsibilities. Subject leaders monitor their areas well; this has resulted in rising standards and increased rates of progress in English and mathematics. However, they, and senior leaders are aware that boys' achievement is not as consistently good as that of girls.

Team leaders are effective and have a strategic overview both academically and pastorally of their year groups. Even those relatively new into post have ensured that they are on top of the job and are already monitoring and evaluating the work that they do. The governors are very supportive of the school and ask critical questions to hold the school to account. The school analyses the needs of its community well. For example, it has two parent support advisors whose work includes providing information and advice to parents and carers and delivering the 'Nurturing Parenting Course'. The school is also developing links with an orphanage in Kenya and beginning to develop links with Spain.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

| | |
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| 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 | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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| 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

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|---|---|
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| 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 | 2 |

The quality of provision

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|--|---|
| 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? | 1 |

Leadership and management

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| 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 | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 3 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 2 |
| 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**

20 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oakdale Junior School, South Woodford, E18 1JX

What a lovely two days we spent in your school recently; we really enjoyed our visit. Your headteacher is really proud of you all and we could see why when we walked around your school and saw all your beautiful artwork. Wow! It was fantastic, well done! Not only are you excellent at art, you also do well in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Your writing has really improved and the progress you are making in mathematics is also getting better.

We talked to you about all the activities you participate in at your school. You told us about your clubs and visits. You really enjoy these. We were impressed by your knowledge of how to stay fit and healthy. This is highly commendable. The school council does a good job and you all have lots of chances to take on responsibilities around the school. You are all very polite and well behaved. These are excellent qualities.

We think your school gives you a good education. Your teachers teach you well and your headteacher and her team of leaders run the school well. However, even in a good school like yours, there are things to be done. You can also help to improve these things. We have asked the school to change the way subjects are taught so that the boys, particularly, do as well as they possibly can. Boys, you can help by always making sure you work as hard as you can and concentrate well. We have also asked your school to improve attendance. Although most of you come to school regularly, there are a few of you who do not come to school when you could. When you are not in school, you do not learn as well. It is important that you try to come to school every day.

Once again, thank you for making us so welcome in your school.

Yours faithfully

Glynis Bradley-Peat

Lead Inspector