

Oak View Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135223
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	331582
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2009
Reporting inspector	David Speakman

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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	276
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 Jon Reed
Headteacher	Mrs Yvonne Davis
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2008
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Woods Avenue Hatfield AL10 8NW
Telephone number	01707 344400

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2009
Inspection number	331582

Fax number

01707 344403

Age group	3-11
Inspection dates	17-18 June 2009
Inspection number	331582

© Crown copyright 2009

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 three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Oak View Primary School is larger than most primary schools. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children start part time in the Nursery and attend full time in Reception. Attainment on entry is well below that typical for children of this age. The number identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is similar to the national average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties or behavioural issues. An average number comes from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. Thirteen languages other than English are represented in school and most of the pupils whose first language is not English are at the early stages of acquiring the language.

The school was last inspected in March 2008. It received a notice to improve because significant improvement was required to pupils' progress and the standards they achieved, the quality of teaching and learning, provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the school's accommodation and grounds.

An after-school club, 'The Fun Factory After School Club' operates in school. The governing body does not manage this provision and it is inspected separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

This is for a number of reasons, especially because of the scope and pace of improvement since the school's last inspection. The school now provides a good quality of education. Children start at the school with attainment levels well below the expected level. Standards by the time pupils leave the school are broadly average. This represents good progress and achievement overall for pupils, including those with learning difficulties. Although improving, progress for children in the Early Years Foundation is satisfactory because opportunities to develop children's communication skills or to set challenging tasks are not always provided. Within good overall school leadership and management, the headteacher provides outstanding and inspirational leadership. Her exceptional clarity of vision, attention to detail and determination to improve the school's provision has enabled rapid improvement to take place. Parents recognise this. 'I feel the school is the best it has ever been' is just one comment that sums up parents' confidence in the headteacher's leadership.

There has been a clear focus on improving both pupils' academic progress and promoting their good personal development. Pastoral care is a strength and is matched by the quality of academic guidance. Working closely with the governing body and staff, the headteacher made sure that the school quickly developed its own identity and an ethos of valuing achievement. Pupils, staff and parents are all clearly proud to be associated with this school. Significant improvements to the accommodation send out a clear message that this is a school with 'pupils at its heart.' Displays of pupils' work celebrate their achievements, and they show a great deal of pride in their successes. This has been instrumental in improving pupils' attitudes and they take on challenges enthusiastically and persevere to do their very best, because they know their efforts are valued. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding and they have a good understanding of what is needed to follow safe and healthy lives. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their educational lives.

The headteacher has quickly introduced rigorous systems to monitor pupil's academic progress. This has had a significant impact on the quality of teaching, learning and progress. The school keeps detailed information on individual pupil's progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This enables teachers to set challenging targets and tasks for all pupils. Furthermore, class teachers meet with the members of the senior leadership team every six weeks to discuss and account for the progress each pupil is making. This has been a further factor in leading to a significant improvement in the quality of teaching, which is now good overall. However, there is still some variation in the quality of teaching and while some is outstanding, some remains satisfactory. In such instances, progress slows. School assessment data clearly shows that the vast majority of pupils are progressing at a rate quicker than is nationally expected and that standards are rising. The pupils benefit from a good and creative curriculum. Curriculum development is innovative and structured to give pupils the skills they need to succeed and build on previous learning. Not only does the curriculum support their academic achievement well, but also it provides effectively for their personal development.

The headteacher has been highly effective in creating a strong team of adults, working with a common purpose. She has very high expectations of all working in the school. Staff have opportunities to develop their own professional skills so that they are able to meet their

commitments effectively. She places a very high level of trust in their abilities and all feel they are making a significant contribution to school improvement. The school makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion. The headteacher has fully audited where the school stands in relation to the local, national and global communities. With the high level of leadership and management expertise evident and the rapid improvement already seen in key areas, the school has an excellent capacity for continued improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Most children enter the nursery with skills, knowledge and understanding well below those typical for their age. Many have limited early learning experiences and some have never encountered the English language. Children make satisfactory progress, and attainment, although improved, is well below expectations in some key areas of learning when they move into Year 1. At times, the emphasis given to developing children's communication skills is not high enough. However, much development has taken place and provision is far better than at the time of the previous inspection. A strong emphasis on developing personal and social skills enables children to make good progress in this aspect of learning. They work and play together confidently and happily. The school's recent focus on building good home-school links has worked well. Strong relationships with parents and carers encourage them to value the importance of regular attendance and to become involved in their children's learning right from the start. The new outdoor learning area is a real asset, providing children with a rich variety of activities. Children thoroughly enjoy all that is on offer, both in the classroom and outside. However, activities sometimes do not match individual needs or provide sufficient challenge, particularly when teachers' expectations are not high enough. Children's progress is carefully assessed and recorded in 'Learning Journey' books which give valuable insight into how well children are progressing. Support for those who find learning difficult or who are in the early stages of learning English is good, enabling these children to participate fully. Children's safety is a very important part of daily routines and staff promote healthy lifestyles satisfactorily. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The recently appointed leader has provided much needed stability and greater consistency of approach.

What the school should do to improve further

Increase the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in terms of developing children's language skills by:

- promoting a greater emphasis on speaking and listening in activities children choose for themselves
- carefully monitoring children's progress during these activities so that adults are able to provide a more consistent level of challenge in learning situations.
- make sure that the quality of teaching and learning is at least good in all classes so that consistently good progress promotes even higher standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards and achievement have risen significantly since the previous inspection, when they were inadequate. Pupils now make good progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 and reach standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 6. There has been a particular improvement in the quality of pupils' writing. They are now able to write lengthy, well-structured pieces of

writing, using appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures. This has had an impact on the quality of work in other subjects linked with literacy through the themes studied. Standards in some other subjects are above the nationally expected levels for their age. Pupils play instruments well and singing is of a good quality. Attainment in physical education is impressive, particularly in athletics, where pupils recently won a district championship competing against a number of other local primary schools. They show great patience when completing pieces of artwork and finished work is detailed and of a good quality.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They enjoy school thoroughly as shown by their excellent behaviour. The attendance of most pupils is satisfactory, but a few miss school because parents take them on holiday in term time. They feel safe and well supported by adults, and they learn about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and their personal safety, for example, in using the internet. Pupils value and respect one another's cultures, and they have good links with the local community and those communities further afield. They enjoy a wide range of opportunities including clubs, visits and visitors, which make lessons more exciting and interesting. Pupils are confident and prepared well to cope with the challenges as they move on to their secondary schools. They feel that adults listen to their views and that they have a role in making school decisions, for example in choosing their new uniform.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. When teaching is satisfactory it is because the level of challenge, pace and independent learning is not as strong as that evident in the best lessons. Very occasionally, pupils' learning is too prescribed and tasks become repetitive, limiting creativity. Lesson planning is thorough and takes account of assessment data so that tasks planned match levels of ability well in order to move pupils' learning on at a brisk pace. Teachers make good links between subjects, for example, writing and historical enquiry or history and art. Because of opportunities to put their skills into practice and use them purposefully, pupils see a real point to learning. Support from teaching assistants is effective in helping a wide range of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or those pupils with limited understanding of English. Teachers work hard to create stimulating classrooms to inspire pupils' learning; for example, two classrooms were decorated as Roman villas to support pupils' learning about life in Roman times.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of all pupils well. There is a strong emphasis on creative tasks, and on links between different subjects. Consequently, pupils enjoy learning and make good progress. There is a good number of support groups that are provided to support those pupils requiring extra help. There is good provision for information and communication technology, and there is a good range of visits, visitors, themed weeks and clubs, which provide pupils with many additional opportunities. Links with other schools and with the local community

enhance provision in a number of subjects, for example in sport and music. The school grounds include a woodland area, which pupils use well for learning more about the natural world.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils receive good care, guidance and support. The school sets challenging targets to help move pupils' academic progress on at a quick pace. Pupils understand how to improve because teachers write helpful comments on their work, which shows them what they have achieved and what more they need to do to reach their targets and to get to the next level. Pupils who find learning more difficult make good progress because of effective support and the outstanding partnerships with parents and other agencies. The school places a very high priority on ensuring that pupils from all backgrounds are fully included. One parent wrote, 'Polish children are totally included, welcomed and supported.' Inspection evidence shows this is the case for pupils from all backgrounds and different abilities. The school has procedures in place for safeguarding pupils that meet requirements. All the necessary child protection procedures are fully in place and the health and safety of all pupils is paramount.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

A strong senior leadership team and group of subject leaders effectively support the excellent work of the headteacher. Together, they monitor and evaluate school performance in their areas of responsibility, preparing action plans for improvement. These enable the school to create an exceptionally clear self-evaluation and a basis for rapid improvement. Governors support this work well. Many have recently joined the governing body, but already are beginning to ask challenging questions. Although effective, they have not yet worked out their own plan for monitoring school effectiveness. They are generally working within the headteacher's remit and at this stage of the school's development, this is appropriate. The school has established a strong working partnership with parents. It has excellent links with the local community, using these to develop pupils' skills in economic well-being, for example. Through the links with a school in Kenya, pupils are aware of their role in the wider world and the difference lifestyles of others. Pupils integrate well with each other and learn about one another's cultures and beliefs.

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?	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?	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?	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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	1
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

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?	2

Leadership and management

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	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	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**

19 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oak View Primary and Nursery School, Hatfield, AL10 8NW

Thank you all for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We appreciated you being so open and ready to talk to us about your school. You are clearly very proud of Oak View and you all do your very best 'not to let the side down'. We enjoyed meeting you and your teachers and visiting lessons to watch you at work. It was interesting to speak to you to find out what you think about the school and how you contribute to making it a very pleasant place to be.

You go to a good and rapidly improving school. Those of you we spoke to, speak highly of your time there. All the staff work very well together to provide you with a good quality education. You make good progress in lessons and standards by the end of Year 6 are clearly improving.

You help a great deal by behaving exceptionally well and trying hard to do your best. We were impressed by how well you respond to your teachers and are willing to try hard. We liked the sensible way in which you make friends and care about each other. You help to make others feel very safe in school. Those of you we spoke to said how much you enjoy school and find it interesting. You are well prepared for the next stages of your education.

To make things even better, we are asking the staff and governors to:

- help you improve your language skills in the early years of your education
- make sure that all teaching is consistently good or better so that you all make good progress as you move through the school.

I am sure you will all help make the school become even better by continuing to cooperate with your teachers.

I wish you all the best in the future.

David Speakman

Lead inspector