

Oakwood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135146
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	333757
Inspection dates	30 November –1 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Colin Lee

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	285
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patricia Lopez
Headteacher	Mark Lees
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 22 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, the school strategic plan, lesson and curriculum planning and procedures for keeping pupils safe. 86 parental questionnaires were returned and scrutinised by the inspection team, who also spoke with a number of parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6
- the consistency of pupils' progress across the school
- the way that senior and middle managers monitor and evaluate the school's provision and its impact on pupils' achievement.

Information about the school

The school is one of two schools in the Southernway Federation. It and its partner school, Beechwood Primary, are led by two team headteachers. Oakwood was created in September 2008 following the amalgamation of Langley Infant and Junior Schools. After a phased building programme, all pupils were housed in the new school in September 2009. The school is larger than average. Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The current proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, with a significant number having emotional and behavioural difficulties. The proportion who have a statement of special educational needs is also above average.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. There are some good features in aspects of its provision and the outcomes for pupils. Staff have quickly developed a strong sense of teamwork that has been fostered by the headteachers' own shared drive and ambition. Strong emphasis has been placed on helping pupils to settle into the new school and there are clear expectations of pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships with one another. As a result, many aspects of pupils' personal development are good and this has helped a real sense of community to develop very quickly.

Pupils enjoy coming to school because they feel valued and cared for. They behave well, show a pride in their school and welcome the good opportunities they have to take on responsibilities and help the school to run smoothly. Achievement is satisfactory rather than good because there have been variations in the pupils' progress in different year groups that have affected standards. This has been most marked in Years 3 to 6. By the end of these pupils' first year in the new school there was sufficient information to show that progress wasn't good enough and standards at the end of Year 6 were too low. There has been a prompt response to this. The senior leaders have focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning as well as making the tracking of progress more rigorous. This has made progress more consistent and standards in Year 6 show improvement. However, they are not at the above average levels seen at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the end of Year 2 so there is still work to do, especially in getting greater consistency in the quality of teaching and in raising mathematics standards.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but some teaching has outstanding features from which all staff can learn. At the same time there are inconsistencies in the extent to which teachers in Years 3 to 6 check pupils' progress during lessons to see if pupils are finding work too difficult or too easy. This is particularly so in mathematics, where standards are not generally as high as in reading, writing and science. More generally in all subjects, it also means that some of the more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently by work they are given.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has quickly come to know itself well. It has a satisfactory capacity for improvement in the future. There is accurate self-evaluation and a wide range of strategies have been introduced to bring about school improvement. It is too soon to see the impact of many of these initiatives but some successes are already apparent. A strong partnership has been developed with parents and carers, and with the local community. This is the result of the school's good promotion of community cohesion. The effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures is also good. Pupils say they feel safe and cared for at school and this

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reflects the good quality of the care, guidance and support given to all pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in mathematics by ensuring that pupils' progress is consistent across the school.
- Make the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 more consistent by carrying out frequent assessment of pupils' work during lessons to check that tasks are matching pupils' needs, particularly those of the more able.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' enjoyment of school is seen in their obvious enthusiasm in lessons. They relate well with each other and with adults. Behaviour is good in lessons, assemblies and as pupils move round the school. It is satisfactory at playtimes and this is partly due to the unfinished state of external areas and lack of equipment for creative play.

Many parents are confident that their children make good progress. This is certainly true of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. For example, Year 2 pupils of all abilities progressed well in a numeracy lesson where computer, practical and written calculation tasks grabbed their interests and improved their skills. Past fluctuations in progress in Years 3 to 6 are gradually being removed, with more consistent progress over time in literacy in particular. The concentration on improving pupils' skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing across the school is successfully raising standards. Priority has now been placed on mathematics, where progress and standards have been falling behind. Early evidence shows that a large majority of pupils in Years 3 to 6 are now attaining the standards expected of their age. For example, improved writing standards of Year 4 pupils were seen in a lesson on describing characters in a story. They used a broad vocabulary that was first stimulated by interviewing a visiting pop star, who bore a passing resemblance to their teacher. The more able pupils should exceed expected standards but not enough do so as some teachers are not setting work with sufficient challenge. In contrast there is far more consistency in the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This owes much to the good quality of support from teaching assistants. Beyond the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, there is further evidence throughout the school of the above average levels of pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT).

Pupils are eager to contribute to school life, and those with specific responsibilities, such as school councillors, librarians or playground buddies, carry out their duties very conscientiously. Pupils from both schools in the federation form the school parliament where issues common to all are discussed. Pupils have a sound understanding for their age of other cultures and faith groups and the school has firm plans to develop pupils' multicultural education, although there is not enough planning for their spiritual development. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the importance of healthy eating and are keen to take regular exercise. The outcomes in academic and personal development mean that pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage in their education.

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Attendance is average. Recent improvement reflects the school's continuing work with families needing support in order to reduce their children's levels of absence.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teachers explain the learning objectives at the start of lessons and together with pupils set the success criteria for showing if objectives have been achieved. This helps pupils to assess their own progress. Marking of work is detailed and helpful, informing pupils well about how they can improve. Teachers of Years 1 and 2 constantly check progress throughout lessons and are quick to see where new challenges need to be set or more guidance is needed. This is less evident in the later years. Other variations in teaching include pace of lessons and expectations. Younger pupils enjoy the brisk pace, the well-planned progression of interesting learning activities, the constant reminder of expectations and the frequent use of praise. All these contribute to good progress in these better lessons. Such features vary considerably in lessons in Years 3 to 6. Teachers follow a schedule of regular testing and assessment at fixed points during the year. They use this information constructively to get a picture of long-term progress and

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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to identify groups or individuals who are not reaching targets set for them. Programmes are set up to help pupils falling behind or finding learning difficult and the success of this provision is reviewed regularly.

The school has a broad, balanced curriculum that has been planned in a two-year programme of topics. Subjects are often combined in topics and this makes learning interesting. There is also good attention to developing and reinforcing writing skills in these topics and ICT is used well as a tool to help pupils' learning. Visits, visitors and good use of the local environment as a resource for learning aid many aspects of pupils' learning and their developing sense of citizenship. A satisfactory range of learning opportunities is provided in activities out of school hours, with good provision for music and sport. These are popular and take-up levels are high.

The good quality of pastoral care, guidance and support is an aspect of provision that has significant impact on pupils' personal development. The needs of any vulnerable pupils are fully met and there is extra help and support for any pupil who needs it. This support extends to families through the work of specialist support assistants who coordinate programmes to help parents and carers to have a positive impact on pupils' lives at home and at school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school has a complex management structure based on a consistent, unified approach to the leadership and management of both schools in the federation. Staff from the schools work closely together in teams to provide consistency in the planning of the curriculum and the monitoring of pupils' academic and personal development. Staff enthuse about these arrangements and have recognised the benefits of using the range of staff skills and expertise for improvement of the federation's effectiveness. It is too soon to see the impact of much of the collaborative work already underway but early successes include the way that subject leadership has raised pupils' standards in literacy and ICT. In contrast, leaders of other subjects have yet to get a clear picture of pupils' attainment and progress. This is because time has not been given to them for monitoring and evaluating provision or standards in their subjects. Senior leaders place great emphasis on monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning and teachers benefit greatly from this focus on their professional development.

Improvement planning by senior leaders has direction and clear goals. The school is

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starting to make effective use of various partnerships, in particular with the many local pre-school providers, professional networks and community organisations. These links have a positive impact on the quality of provision.

Governance of the two schools is by a single governing body. This governance is satisfactory at present due to governors not having had enough time to get a full picture of pupils' standards across the whole curriculum. Governors ensure all requirements of equalities legislation are met, that safeguarding arrangements are thorough and that staff are well trained and vigilant in their attention to health and safety, risk assessment and child protection issues.

Senior leaders have formulated a well-planned approach to evaluating the impact of the policy and action taken to develop community cohesion, which is becoming a significant strength of the school. The life of the school and of the local neighbourhood has been greatly enriched by the initiatives to help parents and carers support their children's education.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

A rigorous induction process enables children to settle quickly into early routines. They start school with attainment levels slightly below those expected of four-year-olds due to weaknesses in both their language and personal development. Early provision focuses strongly on these areas and the provision as a whole is good. The internal learning environment is well resourced and organised. Outdoor learning awaits development. It is currently restricted due to structural work awaiting completion but staff use this

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environment as often as they can. Staff work closely together and show good levels of concern for children's welfare. Leadership and management are good. Teaching is good and all staff carry out systematic observations and assessments of children's learning. This information is used well to plan activities tailored to the needs of individual children. Children are encouraged to show initiative and they quickly become independent learners who work equally conscientiously at the stimulating activities planned by teachers or at the activities they choose for themselves. This richness of learning helps them make good progress. By the end of the Reception year, although some weaknesses remain in writing, almost all children reach average attainment levels in all other areas of learning, and a good proportion are above average.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents who returned questionnaires or who spoke to the inspection team are very happy with the school and are supportive. They say their children enjoy school and make enough progress. Inspectors were very impressed by pupils' enjoyment of all that they do at school and saw that younger pupils are making good progress and older pupils are starting to make better progress than in the past. There were very few negative comments. Most were references to experiences of individual parents or families that were unique to them. A relatively small number of parents felt they could be better informed about their children's progress but inspectors found communication satisfactory. Inspectors found good features in leadership and management and do not support the view of those parents who disagree that it is effective.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oakwood Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 86 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 285 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	56	35	41	2	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	53	62	32	37	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	31	36	48	56	6	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	43	43	50	5	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	39	45	43	50	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	40	47	55	3	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	42	47	55	3	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	30	35	41	48	2	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	35	48	56	4	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	37	46	54	3	4	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	40	40	47	4	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	36	42	35	44	6	7	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	54	35	47	3	4	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



2 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oakwood Primary School, Plymouth, PL6 6QS

Thank you for making us welcome in your school and for talking with us so willingly. We thoroughly enjoyed joining you in lessons and seeing you at work. We think your school gives you a satisfactory education overall and some things are good. This is what we particularly appreciated.

- In Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 you are all taught well and this helps you to make good progress. By Year 2 you have good reading, writing and numeracy skills for your age.
- You behave well in lessons.
- You have a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and exercise.
- You say how much you enjoy the opportunities you have to take on responsibility, such as being a school councillor, a librarian or playground buddy, and you make a good contribution to the life of the school.
- You say you feel safe in school ' this is because all the adults do a good job in looking after you and making sure that you are safe and get help whenever you need it.
- The headteachers are working hard to improve the school and all the adults, including the governors, work well together in planning how the school can get better.

We have asked the school to do two things to help make things even better.

- Standards in mathematics must be higher and you must all work hard to try and achieve this.
- Adults will check your work frequently in lessons to make sure it isn't too easy or too difficult. This will help to make sure that those of you who find learning easy will have work that really challenges you.

We hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make Oakwood Primary School to be an even better school.

Yours sincerely

Colin Lee

Lead inspector

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