

Oak Tree Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133276
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	334166
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Roy Bowers HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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)	242
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 Dave French
Headteacher	Mrs Tamsin Caputa
Date of previous school inspection	4 December 2007
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Jubilee Way North Mansfield NOTTINGHAMSHIRE NG18 3PJ
Telephone number	01623 458261
Fax number	01623 458864

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2009
Inspection number	334166

© 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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average and serves an area of high social deprivation. Children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities that are well below those typically found for children of their age. Almost two-thirds of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and a small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Many of those receiving support have moderate learning difficulties and find basic literacy and numeracy difficult. The school has gained the Healthy School accreditation and Activemark in recognition of its contribution to pupils' development in these areas. The school makes provision for Nursery and Reception aged children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. When the school was last inspected in December 2007, it required special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Since the last inspection there have been significant improvements. The headteacher's strong and determined leadership, supported well by an increasingly skilled leadership team, has had a positive impact on all aspects of the school's performance. Although standards in all year groups are still below average, they are improving and pupils' progress over time is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2. The school now provides a satisfactory and improving standard of education. Therefore, in accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Although the 2008 end of Key Stage 2 tests showed that standards had risen significantly, the school's own information shows that they have declined in 2009. This is because the majority of the pupils in the current Year 6 entered the school with exceptionally low skills in literacy and numeracy and, for many years, their progress was poor because of inadequate teaching.

Since the last inspection, there has been a rigorous focus on eradicating inadequate teaching and improving the quality of learning throughout the school. The quality of teaching and learning overall is now good. During the inspection the teaching observed was never less than satisfactory and in some lessons it was outstanding. In the best lessons, teachers use assessment information extremely well. They plan highly focused learning outcomes which are matched very carefully to pupils' differing capabilities and skillfully guide pupils through the small learning steps as the lesson proceeds. However, in some lessons this does not occur and consequently, a proportion of pupils, often the more able, are not challenged sufficiently. Where this occurs, pupils' progress in lessons is only satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to most other pupils. This is because of the good range of support activities which are focused carefully on pupils' needs.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils have a good awareness of being safe and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They behave well and have positive attitudes to their learning. Relationships are very good throughout the school. Pupils are friendly and enthusiastic, and enjoy learning. They say that the rare instances of bullying are dealt with quickly and fairly by the teachers. Efforts by the school to improve attendance have been successful. Attendance is now average.

Pupils' moral and social development is good, but their spiritual and cultural development is not as strong. However, pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Most pupils are kind, tolerant and forgiving, and show respect for each other and the adults in the school. Pupils readily take on responsibilities offered to them, and the school council members feel that teachers listen to their views. Most pupils respond well to the opportunities provided to support others. The school makes a good contribution to the local community. These positive attitudes, together with their increasing academic success, give pupils a satisfactory grounding for their future learning.

The curriculum meets the needs of the majority of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, the school is aware that it is only beginning to be used to address the needs of the more able pupils. Sport is strong throughout the school and pupils are proud of their recent achievements in cricket. Although there are an increasing number of links between subjects, opportunities are not always taken to improve upon pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in all areas of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support are good. Teachers know the pupils well and are always alert to signs that a pupil might be worried or anxious. The school works well with external agencies to support vulnerable pupils. Progress of pupils is monitored well and systems are used to identify those who are falling behind with their work and who may need extra guidance. Most pupils are set challenging targets in literacy and numeracy. When these are linked with the lesson's learning outcomes and reinforced in teachers' marking, they play a major role in helping pupils achieve well. In some classes, teachers' marking gives very good guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. However, both the effectiveness of target setting and the quality of marking are inconsistent.

The headteacher has been instrumental in putting into place many of the improvements which have resulted in rising standards and improving achievement. Leaders at all levels, including the governors, have responded very well to the challenges over the past eighteen months and improvements have shown that the school has good capacity to improve even further. Monitoring and evaluation systems are now rigorous and the tracking data are used effectively to hold teachers to account for the progress made by the pupils. Plans to accelerate the rate at which standards are being raised through developing the roles of existing and new leaders are beginning to be implemented. The school has made a satisfactory start to the promotion of community cohesion. It has audited the needs of the community and is ready to implement all aspects of its plan.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, because of their low starting points, especially in communication, language and literacy, by the time they enter into Year 1 standards are below average. In the Nursery, children achieve particularly well in their social and emotional development. This firm foundation is built on well in the Reception class and children continue to make good progress in most areas.

Teaching in both the Nursery and Reception classes is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers and teaching assistants play major roles in children's development. A particularly effective and enjoyable feature of the teaching is the use of song to aid and reinforce children's learning. Effective links are made between the various activities, especially to promote literacy skills. There is a good balance of teacher directed and child initiated activities. Resources, both indoor and outdoor, are chosen and used well. However, the lack of a covered outside area restricts outdoor experiences in inclement weather and inhibits the free-flow of activities.

Leadership and management are good. Planning is detailed and thorough. Assessment is used well to identify the needs of all children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those most vulnerable. Staff work together well and show a high degree of sensitivity in the way they treat and safeguard the children in their care. During the inspection, many parents commented positively on the ease with which they could approach staff and discuss matters concerning their children and families. These very positive relationships with parents help ensure that children settle into school quickly and feel secure when they are there.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by ensuring that pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are reinforced in all areas of the curriculum.

- Improve achievement, especially of the more able pupils, by ensuring that in all lessons learning outcomes are highly focused, closely matched to pupils of all abilities and the small steps which help ensure effective learning are planned carefully.
- Promote community cohesion by fully implementing the plan based upon the current audit of needs.
- Develop the roles of the new and existing leaders to accelerate the drive to raise standards and improve achievement.

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

Pupils are currently achieving well in all key stages, but, because of previous underachievement, progress over time is only satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but, because of their very low starting points, by the time they enter Year 1 the vast majority of children have not reached the expected levels for their age. Although there is some variation between classes, especially in Key Stage 2, the actions taken to improve standards and achievement are having a positive impact on learning in lessons. While standards overall are rising, they remain below average in all year groups. The improved quality of teaching and learning, and the variety of support activities are increasingly effective in helping more pupils reach the levels expected for their age. However, the proportion of pupils who reach above the expected levels is still too low throughout the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and appreciate what it offers them. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning helps ensure a calm and productive learning atmosphere and makes a strong contribution to pupils' improving achievement. Pupils willingly undertake the tasks set by the teachers and cooperate well when required. They socialise very amicably at play times. Through assemblies, class discussions, individual support, and effective programmes for personal and social education, pupils develop a good awareness of moral and social issues. Pupils are confident, willingly discuss their learning and develop a good level of independence. They show respect for each other and the adults in the school. Pupils' cultural development is only satisfactory because their awareness and understanding of the diversity of cultures and faiths in the United Kingdom and worldwide is not well developed. The school and class councils provide pupils with a means of helping to improve the school and the local environment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Since the last inspection, the school has made significant improvements to the quality of teaching and learning in all key stages. Where pupils learn most effectively, the assessment information is used to plan highly focused learning outcomes and the small steps which help ensure effective learning for pupils of all levels of attainment. However, this does not occur in all lessons and a small proportion of pupils, often the more able, are not challenged well enough.

In some lessons, pupils are given the opportunity to evaluate their own learning and that of others. Pupils do this very effectively where they receive clear guidance from the teacher about the main learning outcomes and know how these outcomes are going to be measured. Many of the teaching assistants are highly skilled. They make a significant contribution to the achievement of those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, especially in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. In some classes, the teaching assistants are also beginning to support the more able pupils very well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school's strong emphasis on improving English, mathematics and science has been an important factor in raising pupils' achievement. Although the curriculum meets the needs of most pupils, it is not used effectively enough to challenge the more able pupils. The school is beginning to improve upon pupils' learning experiences through creating links between subjects and reinforcing pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy through all subjects. The school is justifiably proud of its sporting achievements. Partnerships with other local schools give pupils good opportunities to take part in a variety of activities including rugby, martial arts and fencing. The school is aware that music is an area for improvement. There is a wide range of after-school clubs and activities which are popular with pupils. A variety of visitors and visits enrich the curriculum well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

At the time of this inspection, arrangements for child protection and safeguarding were secure and met government requirements. Care and support are particularly strong for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those most vulnerable. Academic guidance has improved considerably since the last inspection. Pupils' progress is now closely monitored and pupils who begin to underachieve are identified early. In some classes, target setting is used very effectively to raise achievement. There are also many examples of good quality marking which provides pupils with constructive feedback on how to improve. However, both these areas are still developing and, in some classes, the effect on pupils' achievement is not as great as it could be. The school works closely with a range of external agencies and works hard to involve parents and carers to maximise pupils' learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's determination and commitment to raise standards and improve pupils' achievement have been major factors why the school has made such good progress since the last inspection. Following the last inspection, she quickly established an ethos where inadequate teaching would not be tolerated. The rigour of the monitoring and evaluation systems was improved and reasons for underachievement of pupils were recognised. Systems for improvement were established and changes were monitored carefully. The school now knows itself well. Leaders at all levels have become increasingly skilled and have supported the headteacher well through monitoring and evaluating within their areas of responsibility. Governors have a good knowledge of the school and are making increasingly effective use of the information they receive to hold the school to account for pupils' achievement. Although the school works well

with the local community and is beginning to implement its plan to promote community cohesion, it has not yet developed well enough pupils' understanding of the diversity of cultures in the United Kingdom and overseas. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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?	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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

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	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

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?	3
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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
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	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**

2 July 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Oak Tree Primary School, Mansfield NG18 3PJ

Thank you for making my colleagues and me so welcome when we recently visited your school. Thank you also for making my other visits to your school such enjoyable experiences. Over the past eighteen months I have seen your school improve considerably. The school no longer requires special measures and it now provides you with a satisfactory and improving standard of education. Teaching and learning are good. Standards are rising and you are making better progress. You behave well, have positive attitudes to learning and obviously enjoy your lessons. We also noticed that more of you are coming to school regularly. We were very impressed with how polite you are and we particularly enjoyed your singing in assembly. Congratulations also on your achievements in cricket. Well done!

Your headteacher and I believe that you could do even better. Here are some of the ways we are asking the school to improve.

- Raise the standards of your work by making teaching even better and increasing the number of opportunities you have to practise your literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects.
- Improve the progress you make, especially those of you who are already doing well, by ensuring that the work you are given is closely matched to your abilities and you are guided carefully in your lessons.
- Make sure that you have a good understanding of all the different groups of people in this country and in other parts of the world.
- Make sure that all the school leaders and any who are new to the school help you make even better progress.

You can help by continuing to work hard at school, keep coming regularly and trying your best to meet your targets.

Because your school has improved so much I shall not be making another monitoring inspection of your school. I wish you all every success and hope you have an enjoyable and successful end to the school year.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly.

Yours faithfully

Roy Bowers

Her Majesty's Inspector