

# Oak Green School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110206
<b>Local Authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	337448
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 July 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alison Thomson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	399
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sue Newling
<b>Headteacher</b>	Shela Rowan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 July 2007
<b>School address</b>	Oak Green Aylesbury HP21 8LJ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 16 teachers and 16 lessons, and held meetings with the governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and analysed 90 questionnaires from parents and carers, 135 from pupils and 26 from staff. The team also looked at documents and policies including those relating to the safeguarding of pupils, all the information the school had collected about the pupils' progress and the school's records of its monitoring of the quality of teaching.

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

- current attainment and progress, particularly in reading in Key Stage 1, and of boys in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2
- the involvement of pupils in checking their learning
- the effectiveness of middle leaders' monitoring and evaluation.

## Information about the school

Oak Green is a larger than average primary school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those who do not have English as their first language, is much higher than average. Most pupils are of Pakistani or White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, although the proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school has specialist provision for pupils who have autism. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision in two Nursery and two Reception classes. The school has many awards, including the Healthy Schools award for the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. A higher than average number of pupils enter or leave the school during the year.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Oak Green provides a good standard of education for its pupils. Safeguarding is outstanding with excellent quality assurance and risk assessment systems. This contributes strongly to pupils feeling extremely safe. Parents and carers, staff and pupils are all very positive about all aspects of the school. The following comments sum up the views of the pupils well, 'The school is brilliant because everyone is friendly and if you need help someone always helps you' and 'I really like the whole school because the teachers give their time up just for us.'

Since the previous inspection, there have been many improvements, including the progress pupils make and in the standards that they attain. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, attainment is average in science and just below average in English and in mathematics, the latter having risen considerably this year. This represents good progress from their starting points in the Nursery, which are typically well below those expected at this age. Progress is now more uniform throughout school, having increased this year particularly in reading in Years 1 and 2, and that of the boys in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6. Although progress in writing has improved, attainment is lower than that in other areas. At present, the quality of pupils' writing in other subjects is not monitored and evaluated well enough for its impact on attainment and progress. The quality of teaching has improved and is good. However, in some lessons, the focus of learning for planned activities is not clear enough to enable learning and progress to be checked easily throughout the lesson. In addition, pupils are not always given enough guidance to be able to tell how they are doing. This means that pupils' progress in these lessons is not as good as it might be. Attendance has improved considerably, but it is still low. Much absence is due to extended trips abroad in term time.

Central to these improvements is the dedication of all the staff and the work of the leadership team, including middle leaders. Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate, and has helped focus additional support to drive up improvements. The school recognises the importance of developing the whole child, shown in pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It works hard to provide a wide range of enrichment opportunities, such as visits to the Royal Albert Hall, Warwick castle and the seaside. Pupils are involved in the planning and costing of these trips and the school capitalises well on the experiences gained on these outings as a focus for embedding basic skills in subsequent lessons.

The determination, drive and commitment of all leaders, along with the improvements already made, mean that the school's capacity for further improvement is good.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise attainment and accelerate progress, especially in English, through ensuring that all teaching is consistently good or better by:
  - taking every opportunity to monitor and evaluate the quality of writing in all curriculum areas
  - making sure that the focus of learning in lessons is clear for each activity to enable pupils' understanding to be checked more easily throughout the lesson
  - giving clear guidance to pupils so they can they can always tell if they are being successful in the tasks they are working on and making the progress expected of them.
- Raise attendance to be at least in line with that found nationally by convincing parents and carers of the detrimental effect on pupils' progress of extended absences due to trips abroad in term time.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils are eager to learn and work well together. For example, in a Year 6 science lesson, they were seen enthusiastically discussing which variables to keep constant in an investigation into how well different materials soak up water. Learning and progress of all groups of pupils is good, as the work is generally matched well to their individual needs. This was seen to particularly good effect in a Year 4 mathematics lesson on ratios, where each group of pupils was seen achieving well against their particular challenge. Previous underperformance in some areas, such as reading in Key Stage 1, has been addressed. Excellent progress seen in a Year 1 lesson on sounds and letters exemplified this well. Observation of boys in Key Stage 2 confirmed the school's view that progress in mathematics and writing has improved, although attainment in writing still remains an area for development. Previous differences in the progress of different groups of pupils are now minimal and attainment is just below average overall by the end of Year 6. However, to some extent, mobility impacts on the progress pupils make, with pupils who have been longer in school achieving more highly.

When asked what they might change about the school, one pupil echoed the views of many, saying, 'There is nothing really we would want to change. We like the school as it is.' Pupils say they that feel extremely safe as staff look after them very well. They greatly enjoy being at school and value the responsibilities they are given. Even helping to clear up in the dining room is seen as a privilege; 'It's important we help each other in this way too,' said one pupil. The school council has a strong voice in school and pupils are very proud of their role in helping to design play equipment for a local play park. Pupils have a good understanding of what it means to have a healthy lifestyle, which they are keen to adopt and is recognised in a national award. The school is a harmonious multicultural community where pupils enjoy celebrating each other's cultures. Pupils are soundly prepared for their future with broadly average basic skills, including good skills in information and communication technology (ICT). There are

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many opportunities to take part in enterprise activities with the pupils enjoying the challenge of raising money through their 'bring and buy' sales.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Relationships are good and most lessons move forward at a good pace, with a range of interesting activities and the effective use of interactive whiteboards. Teachers often use good questioning techniques to challenge pupils and there are usually high expectations of pupils in lessons. Teaching assistants work well with teachers and provide good support so that all pupils have full access to their learning. Teachers usually discuss with pupils what it is they should be learning, but sometimes this is not specific enough. As a result, it is sometimes difficult for teachers and for the pupils to tell how well learning is taking place. Teachers' marking is mostly thorough and helpful in making clear the next steps pupils need to take in their learning. This was particularly evident in writing and in mathematics where significant rises in progress have been apparent. Pupils also have individual targets to aim for, and understand their purpose in helping them to improve their work.

<sup>1</sup> 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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The curriculum is tailored well to the needs of different groups of pupils, for example those who speak English as an additional language. Basic skills, such as literacy, mathematics and ICT, are mostly embedded well within other subjects. However, although there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to write, when they do so within topic work and other subjects, the quality of writing is not always checked to the same extent as in literacy lessons. Pupils told inspectors how much they like using the mini laptops in lessons, particularly for doing research. Subjects such as art, music and French are taught well with the help of outside specialists. There are many interesting and engaging extra-curricular activities, although the younger children do not have quite as many opportunities as others.

The school rightly says that one of its strengths is the way it looks after its pupils as individuals, particularly the most vulnerable. There are many instances of significant successes in the way in which the school helps pupils overcome difficulties to achieve well. Pupils who have autism make good progress, spending part of their time in the specialist unit and part of their time working on activities in school, integrating well with other pupils. Right from the start of each day, when parents and carers are welcomed into school to hand over their children to the teachers, children are nurtured extremely well. However, the progress of some pupils is not as good as it might be, mostly due to them taking extended trips abroad in term time. At present, the school has not fully impressed upon such parents and carers the importance of regular attendance.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The leadership team has clear expectations and vision. All staff share a common ambition for the pupils and work tirelessly to enable them to make good progress. Challenging end-of-year targets are set and rigorous tracking systems have ensured swift interventions where pupils are not making the progress expected of them. This has resulted in improvements in key areas such as reading and mathematics. The school engages well with parents and carers, particularly those new to the country, supporting them well through partnerships, for example with the local children's centre. There is a particularly effective partnership with a national bank, whose employees come into school regularly to help pupils with their reading and mathematics. This has had a marked effect on raising not only standards in reading and in mathematics, but also on raising pupils' self-esteem.

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Safeguarding procedures are exemplary and fully adhered to by all, resulting in pupils having a particularly secure understanding of being safe. Gaps between different groups of pupils are narrowing, reflecting the good promotion of equality of opportunity. Community cohesion is good, with strong links locally and with a contrasting school in the United Kingdom. The school also has a link with a school in France and is looking to establish further international links. Governors know the key strengths and areas for development well. They offer good support and challenge the school over underachievement. They are beginning to be more closely involved in areas such as decisions on modernising the school kitchens, but have yet to evaluate their own contributions to the life and development of the school.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children love school, greatly enjoy their learning and gain much in confidence during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children enter the Nursery with skills, attitudes and knowledge overall well below that expected at this age, with a significant number not speaking English. They make good progress and, by the time they leave at the end of Reception, their development in the different areas of learning has risen, but remains below that expected, although better in physical development. Good welfare arrangements and relationships with parents and carers ensure children feel safe and secure and settle quickly. The environment is very stimulating and ensures that children have a variety of engaging and creative activities which sustain their interest. For example, when investigating real fish, one child excitedly pointed to a fish and said, 'look at the scales!' Although there are good opportunities for children to develop their



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spoken language skills, there are relatively fewer opportunities for developing their writing, especially in Reception where progress in this area is a little slower. Adults keep a good overview during the activities that children choose for themselves, appropriately intervening and moving learning on well. Effective learning also occurs outdoors, with activities often extending those begun indoors. Children follow well-practised routines, such as sitting down quietly when eating their fruit. Staff are led well by the new leader who is already building well on the previous good leadership. They work well together as a team and regularly assess what the children know and can do. While these assessments point to generally good progress, they are not always used to fully identify the next steps in children's learning, to ensure even better progress.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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**

About one third of families returned their questionnaire. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school's work. For example, most feel that their children are safe and enjoy school. This enjoyment was very evident to the inspectors. A few parents and carers do not agree that the school seeks their views and acts on them. The inspectors find that on the evidence provided the school positively seeks and acts on the views of parents and carers.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oak Green 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 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 399 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	63	32	36	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	62	34	38	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	51	57	38	42	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	46	45	50	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	48	53	42	47	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	53	38	42	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	48	46	51	0	0	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)	46	51	41	46	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	46	45	50	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	48	43	48	2	2	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	40	46	51	6	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	44	49	43	48	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	50	56	39	43	0	0	0	0

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



15 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oak Green School, Aylesbury, HP21 8LJ

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing how well you learn in class. Your questionnaires told us that you enjoy school very much and that you feel very safe here.

Yours is a good school and has a happy and exciting environment. Your teachers know you very well and find lots of different ways to help you learn and develop as young people. You work hard and make good progress.

There are some things that your school could improve to become even better. It should:

- check more often during lessons on how well you are doing
- always make it clear to you what it is you are learning about so that you can always tell if you are doing well enough in lessons
- check the quality of your writing, particularly in topic work and other subjects, to see that you are making full use of the skills that you have been taught
- convince your parents and carers of the importance of coming to school regularly.

You can help by asking your teachers to make it clear to you how you can tell if you are doing well enough in your lessons.

You can also help by making sure that you come to school as often as you can.

We would like to wish you all the best for the future and hope that you continue to enjoy your time in school.

Yours sincerely

Dr Alison Thomson

Lead Inspector

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