

Oakridge School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110289
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	337464
Inspection dates	4–5 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Alison Thomson

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	347
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Christine Croft
Headteacher	Miss Margaret Jordan
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 17 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and analysed 187 questionnaire responses from parents, 168 questionnaire responses from pupils and 19 questionnaire responses from staff. The team also looked at the data the school had collected about the pupils' progress, and at 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:

- attainment and progress in 2009, with particular respect to girls, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, writing in Key Stage 1 and science in Key Stage 2
- how teachers use assessment information to help pupils improve their work, particularly the extent to which pupils are involved in checking their own learning
- evidence of the impact of strategies to improve attendance
- the effectiveness of leaders at all levels in monitoring and evaluating areas that are less strong, such as writing in Key Stage 1 and science in Key Stage 2

Information about the school

Oakridge primary school is larger than average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those who do not speak English as their first language, is much higher than average. Most pupils are of Pakistani heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have a statement of special educational needs, is lower than average. There is early years provision in a Nursery class and in two Reception classes. A higher than average proportion of pupils enter and leave the school during the year. The school gained the Healthy Schools award 2008 and Activemark 2009 for the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. While the headteacher was in post at the previous inspection, the deputy headteacher has only been in post since September 2009.

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

Oakridge is an improving school that provides a good standard of education in a very caring, family-like environment. Behaviour is exemplary. Parents and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. The views of many pupils are summed up by the following quotes: 'I feel good about this school because it improves all the time and I learn a lot'; and, 'Everyone is kind and helpful and nice'.

Since the previous inspection there have been many improvements. The headteacher and her strong leadership team have been instrumental in bringing about significant improvements in the progress of underachieving groups, in attendance and in the standard of teaching. Children enter the Nursery with an exceptionally low level of skills and many are not speaking English. Pupils make good progress throughout the school and leave at the end of Year 6 with standards that are in line with those found nationally. Achievement between different groups has narrowed, so that girls now achieve as well as boys. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also have good achievement because of the close, well-focused support they receive.

Pupils are extremely polite and courteous and very keen to learn. They enjoy helping others, particularly in assisting the younger pupils to read, and are proud to take on roles such as library assistants and playground leaders. Pupils feel very safe in school and feel that the school values their views. They are most proud of their involvement in the 'Growing Wild' project to transform the field adjacent to the school. This has increased their understanding of the environment and sustainability. The 'ground force' day was greatly enjoyed by parents and other members of the community.

Teaching is good and pupils know their targets and how to improve their work. Relationships in lessons are very positive and pupils are eager to answer questions and to participate. Their behaviour contributes very well to their learning. Pupils welcome the chance to work independently, but they are not always given clear enough success criteria or enough opportunities to be involved in assessing how well they are learning. Occasionally, there is a lack of appropriate challenge and low expectations; as a result, progress slows. The school tracks the progress of pupils regularly. This ensures the early identification of any underachievement. Good individual and small-group support ensures that pupils soon make up lost ground. The curriculum is adapted well to meet the needs of all pupils and it is enhanced by many visits and visitors.

The school knows its strengths and areas for development well. An emphasis on writing and investigative science has ensured that previous lower achievement in these areas has been reversed. The fact that the school has made good improvements in many areas indicates that the capacity to improve even further is good.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all teaching is good or better to accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - providing clear criteria for success so that the learning of individual pupils can be checked easily
 - involving pupils more in assessing their own learning
 - having an ethos of high expectations and providing work that always offers an appropriate degree of challenge for each pupil.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils respond well to the tasks they are set in lessons, showing excellent levels of engagement and sustained concentration and enjoyment. This was evident in a Year 5 English lesson when pupils enthusiastically took part in a 'Dicey Sentences' game to improve their knowledge of clauses in sentences. For the most part, learning throughout the school is successful. It dips occasionally when the pace of lessons drops and when pupils are too directed by the teacher.

The school has maintained broadly average standards of attainment at the end of Year 6. This represents good achievement for the vast majority of pupils from their low starting points. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities respond successfully to well-targeted intervention programmes and support. They make good gains in their skills and confidence. Pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language make good progress. Their improving speaking skills were evident in their good attention and sustained motivation. One pupil commented, 'When I came to England I didn't know English, but now I know English.'

The school provides a calm environment where pupils feel very safe and well cared for. Pupils greatly enjoy being at school and the vast majority of parents agree. All pupils, no matter what their background is, work and play together harmoniously and are very respectful towards each other and staff 'doors were always being held open for others. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good because they have a keen interest in ethical issues, exemplified by their fund-raising activities for the 'African Seeds' charity. They have a good understanding of why a healthy lifestyle is important and participate enthusiastically in a wide range of sporting activities, although some lunch boxes did not always reflect healthy eating. Attendance, an area for development from the previous inspection, has improved and is now average. Pupils are prepared well for their future life because of their mature attitudes and well-developed basic skills in areas such as information and communication technology (ICT).

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are usually well planned and organised. In most lessons, tasks are engaging and teachers maintain the interest of the pupils through innovative activities, including the use of interactive whiteboards. Learning support assistants provide good support that enables pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who do not speak English as their first language to have full access to lessons and activities. Teachers usually discuss with pupils what it is they should be learning, but sometimes this is not clear or detailed enough; as a consequence, it is difficult to tell how well individual learning has taken place. Good assessment is evident in nearly all lessons in helping pupils improve their work, and teachers' marking is usually clear and helpful. In lessons where learning is less secure, teachers talk too much from the front of the class, giving pupils less opportunity to be involved in and to assess their own learning.

The good curriculum promotes pupils' academic and personal progress well. It is particularly strong in its good provision for basic skills, resulting in pupils achieving well in English, mathematics and science. ICT is fully integrated into other subjects. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils produced a film of a family story based on a script. There are increasingly good links between subject areas. For example, a Year 4 history lesson promoted pupils' writing skills well. The pupils' personal qualities are developed well through the many enrichment activities which they appreciate and enjoy and there is a wide range of clubs from basketball to art. These are mainly for Key Stage 2 pupils, but the opportunities for Key Stage 1 pupils to be involved are increasing.

The school works hard to provide a welcoming and very effective learning environment. A great deal of thought has gone into transition at all levels to make sure that pupils are

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comfortable when beginning and leaving school and also when transferring from one class to another. The school makes good use of external agencies to ensure that the different needs of pupils are met well. Planning for individuals' needs is robust and progress is carefully monitored. There is good bilingual support for those new to learning English and 'crash courses' in language acquisition. Evidence was seen of significant individual successes in the way in which the school helps pupils overcome difficulties to achieve well. Despite the school's best efforts, some families have limited impact in helping their children with their learning. However, there is 100% attendance at parents' evenings, with the pupils often acting as interpreters.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, other staff and governors are dedicated to enabling pupils to achieve their best both academically and personally. Staff morale is high and staff are very confident that the leadership and management team will continue to ensure the effective development of teaching and learning. 'It is a pleasure to work with such committed colleagues and keen-to-learn children', is a typical comment from staff. Effective systems for school self-evaluation form the basis for identifying weaknesses and challenging targets are set to drive improvement. Quick action leads to strategies to address underachievement. For example, the focus on writing last year had dramatic effects across the school in raising standards. Currently, all groups of pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress, reflecting good equality of opportunity for all pupils. Some subject leaders are relatively new in post, but already they are playing a significant part in monitoring and evaluating the work in their areas. The recent appointment of a new deputy headteacher is beginning to have an impact on improving the synthesis of data at a whole-school level and its clear communication to others. Governors know the school well and what it needs to do to improve. They act as critical friends effectively, but they are not sufficiently involved in evaluating their own performance. Safeguarding procedures are good, with extensive, clear policies and secure risk assessment systems. Parents and carers agree that the school takes account of their views well, for example in the improved parking arrangements for collecting children at the end of the school day. The school has carried out an extensive evaluation of the three aspects of socio-economic, religion and culture in community cohesion.

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While the promotion of community cohesion within school and locally is very good, links with schools nationally and internationally have not long been established. There is a wide range of very effective partnership involvement, including the 'Sharing of Faith' resulting in a book and DVD. This has impacted well on the pupils' understanding of other cultures and religions. The school achieves good value for money.

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery with skills and understanding that are well below those usually found for their age. Many children are new to learning English and have fairly limited previous experiences outside their homes. The school has good relationships with parents and effective links with outside agencies. There are good induction arrangements, including home visits, and these help children to settle into school and begin to develop friendships, independence and excellent patterns of behaviour. Children are well cared for and many quickly become confident and eager to participate in activities. They make good progress across the areas of learning, although standards remain below average when they enter Year 1, except in disposition and attitudes and physical development. Standards in creative development and calculating are less strong than those in other areas.

Adults support learning well, especially in the development of language skills.

Teaching is good, particularly in the Reception classes. There is a good balance of activities chosen by the children and those led by adults. The learning environment is stimulating, both inside and outside, an improvement since the previous inspection.

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Children were seen learning well about living things and their environment, with the wormery holding fascination and wonder for them. Leadership is good and very effective teamwork is driving up improvements, for example in the outdoor provision. The key worker system is used effectively to assess children's progress and identify the next steps in their learning. Teachers use data effectively to plan activities to address underachievement. For example, in Reception, carefully planned creative activities are already beginning to have an impact on the children's development. However, development plans are not always clear about how improvements will be monitored and evaluated.

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

Over 50% of parents returned the questionnaire. They were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school's work. Ninety-seven per cent of those who replied agreed that their children enjoyed school, a feature that was very clear to the inspectors. A few parents felt that the school did not help them to support their children's learning. Inspectors thought that the school engaged with the parents well, but agreed with the school that there are some language difficulties with some parents which inhibit effective communication. This is something that the school is working hard to resolve.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oakridge 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 187 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 347 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	104	56	80	43	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	107	58	76	41	3	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	79	44	97	53	6	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	73	40	97	53	13	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	87	47	88	48	10	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	73	40	97	53	13	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	71	39	103	56	9	5	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)	67	38	101	56	9	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	57	32	111	62	12	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	64	36	104	58	12	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	52	30	113	64	1	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	79	44	92	52	7	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	96	52	84	45	6	3	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 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.



6 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oakridge School, High Wycombe, HP11 2PN

Thank you for welcoming us to your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing how well you learn in class. We worked very closely with your headteacher and also spent time talking to your teachers and governors and looking at your work. Your questionnaires told us that you enjoy all the things you do at school very much and that you feel very safe there. They also told us that you feel the teachers listen to you well.

Yours is a good school and your behaviour is excellent. It is a happy environment and children from Nursery to Year 6 enjoy being there. Your teachers know you very well and find lots of different ways to help you learn and develop as young people. This helps you achieve well in your work and to develop good personal skills, such as helping others. We think that you do this very well. We were very pleased to see that your attendance has improved. We were very impressed with the 'Growing Wild' project to help you understand the environment better. You were excited about the 'ground force' day and told us that your parents and carers enjoyed working with you on this.

Your headteacher, teachers and governors work together well as a team to keep improving the school. The school keeps a careful check on the progress you make and it finds out what you and your parents think. We have asked your teachers to help you do even better by giving each of you work that makes you think and by being very clear about what they want you to learn. We have also asked them to give you more opportunities to check for yourselves how well you are learning. You can help by asking your teachers to make it clear to you how you will know if you are doing a good job in each of your activities in class.

We would like to wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alison Thomson

Lead Inspector

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