

Oakley Church of England Combined School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110448
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	337502
Inspection dates	23–24 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Tony Shield

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Anderson-Lewis
Headteacher	Joanne Garlick
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The inspectors visited 11 lessons, and held meetings with governors, members of staff and pupils. They also talked to parents in the school playground. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation, including the self-evaluation form, safeguarding and other policy documents, the school improvement plan and records of pupils' progress. They also took into account the views of parents, pupils and staff expressed in questionnaires.

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

- the extent to which improvements in writing at Key Stage 1 and mathematics at Key Stage 2 have been sustained
- how consistently the teaching and curriculum provide effective challenge through the personalised curriculum
- the reasons for the high rates of absence and how successfully the school is tackling them
- how well the school looks after its most vulnerable pupils, including Traveller pupils, and ensures they make as good progress as other pupils
- the extent to which new staff have been integrated and are committed to the school's values

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. Most pupils are of White British origin and about 12% are from Traveller families. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is just above average; most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in its Reception class. There is a pre-school setting on the school site which is managed privately. The school is accredited as an 'eco school' and has a number of other awards including Healthy Schools, Activemark and the International Schools award.

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

Oakley Combined School provides a good education for its pupils. It has made significant strides since the last inspection and is ambitious for further improvement. A caring and welcoming atmosphere encourages pupils of all backgrounds and abilities to thrive and achieve well. Parents are very supportive and consider the school to be at the heart of its community. Above all, pupils enjoy their learning and are keen to do well. They relish getting involved in everything and do so with pride. These positive attitudes are an important feature in their success. The school has a good capacity for further improvement, demonstrated by the determined and intelligent leadership of the headteacher, the commitment of all staff and governors to ensure all pupils achieve their best, and realistic and accurate self-evaluation which provide a springboard for the future.

Good relationships throughout the school create a culture of care and respect. Pupils are valued as individuals. They are friendly and polite, and their behaviour around the school is thoughtful and courteous. Some aspects of pupils' personal development are outstanding, notably their awareness of a healthy lifestyle and their contribution to the community. Good personal development is encouraged by the school's outstanding care, guidance and support. Typical of the careful nurturing of pupils is the care shown to Traveller pupils, who are fully integrated in the school and take part in all it has to offer. While pupils' personal care is given a high priority, academic support is also thorough and ensures that all pupils are encouraged to do well.

Children get off to a satisfactory start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are made to feel welcome and quickly settle into school routines. While children in the Reception class make good progress in many aspects of their learning, progress in developing children's writing skills, and in manipulating number, is less secure. Above average standards in English, mathematics and science are reached by the time pupils leave in Year 6. This is because good teaching promotes an enthusiasm for learning, high expectations and encourages all pupils to do their best. Pupils enjoy their lessons and the imaginatively and flexibly planned curriculum provides exceptionally well for their needs. There are many opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to develop independence and resilience in their learning, and pupils respond very positively to this approach, developing good skills in persevering and solving problems independently of the teacher. However, teachers do not always make good use of ICT and the interactive whiteboards to inspire and motivate pupils. Lessons are usually pitched effectively to suit the needs of pupils of different abilities, but sometimes planning does not identify clearly enough exactly what individual pupils should achieve by the end of the lesson. However, the progress of all groups of pupils, including the most able, is good through

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the school.

The headteacher's leadership has been instrumental in driving through improvements in all areas. Teamwork is an important feature of the school's good leadership and management. Accurate self-evaluation, based on a detailed analysis of performance data, has provided the framework for a carefully considered plan for improvement. Parents are extremely supportive, valuing the small school ethos and community spirit of the school. 'I am absolutely delighted with pretty much all aspects of Oakley school. My children are settled, well cared for and stimulated whilst there.' This comment sums up the views of many parents. Challenging targets have been used by the school to raise expectations and provide a spur for further improvement. School leaders use data well to track pupils' progress and identify trends in achievement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure more consistently effective teaching and accelerate pupils' progress by: - sharpening the focus on what individual pupils and different ability groups of pupils are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson - making more imaginative use of information and communication technology (ICT) to inspire and motivate pupils' learning.
- Improve the progress made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly their writing and number skills, by: - providing more opportunities for children to develop their writing skills - developing a closer link with the pre-school to promote greater confidence in assessment data on entry.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

- sharpening the focus on what individual pupils and different ability groups of pupils are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson
- making more imaginative use of information and communication technology (ICT) to inspire and motivate pupils' learning.
- providing more opportunities for children to develop their writing skills
- developing a closer link with the pre-school to promote greater confidence in assessment data on entry.

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	2
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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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?

Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and manage their classes very well. They have high expectations and explain things clearly. More than anything, assessment is used well to check pupils' understanding and adapt the next step. Marking is particularly helpful in guiding pupils to think about how to improve their work, and pupils themselves are often encouraged to assess how well they have achieved the objectives of the task. Although most planning is well geared to the needs of individual pupils, sometimes what different groups of pupils are expected to achieve by the end of the lessons is not sharply enough delineated. Teachers are skilled in making the learning interesting and asking questions to make the pupils think for themselves. They link aspects of the curriculum together in a way that enables pupils to see the relevance of their learning. For example, in a Year 5/6 lesson, pupils enjoyed plotting sunrise and sunset times, and learning on the computer and then analysing and writing about their findings. They used their literacy and ICT skills well to deepen their understanding of both science and geography. The work of teaching assistants in supporting the learning and leading some of the intervention groups for pupils in need of additional help is well targeted and effective.

The outstanding curriculum is very effective in ensuring that pupils achieve well and develop pupils' personal qualities. A recent week devoted to promoting pupils' personal development through focusing on aspects of Every Child Matters is typical of the imaginative approach to curriculum planning. The curriculum is well planned to ensure good attention to basic skills while promoting a lively interest in other subjects. Flexibility is built in to inspire and motivate and make learning fun. For example, time

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given for personalised learning is very effective in encouraging pupils to make sensible choices about what they need to work at, and developing their abilities to work on their own and solving problems without help from the teacher.

Many pupils commented on how much they appreciated the extensive range of clubs and the programme of visits and visitors.

The school's outstanding provision and commitment to the high quality care and welfare of every child is reflected in its comprehensive policies and robust procedures. Pupils are confident that they are well looked after and systems are underpinned by excellent relations between all adults and children. Arrangements for the support of vulnerable pupils, including Traveller pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or with behavioural problems, are very effective in helping them to achieve.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Inspirational leadership by the headteacher has created a strong momentum for continuing improvement. Despite recent staff changes, her vision is widely shared and all staff are ambitious to do their best for every child. The school's commitment to equal opportunities and tackling discrimination is very strong. It ensures that all pupils have every chance to take part in everything. As a result, all groups of pupils feel valued and confident to achieve well. The school also makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Through a comprehensive audit, it has developed an understanding of the needs of its local community and actively engages with them, for example by providing harvest boxes for the village. It has also developed a strong international dimension to its curriculum. While pupils' awareness of cultural diversity within the United Kingdom is less well developed, the school has well-considered plans to overcome this. The school works effectively to live up to its maxim of 'being different, belonging together'.

The school's commitment to raising achievement is evident in its ambitious targets which were largely met in 2009. High expectations are endemic and newly appointed staff are relishing the opportunity to contribute. Leaders are well supported by the very committed and knowledgeable governing body, whose experience and expertise are proving effective in holding the school to account. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are comprehensive and the school ensures that pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

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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	2
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

On entry to the Reception class, children's attainment varies but is generally much as expected for children of that age. However, for a number of children, their language and number skills are well below those expected. The welcoming learning environment ensures they settle quickly and gain confidence. Sometimes, however, children are slow to respond to the teacher and time is wasted before meaningful activity takes place. However, once settled, children play purposefully. Staff place a high priority on building positive relationships and, at the time of the inspection, children were happy and clearly enjoying school. They also clearly benefit from working alongside older pupils in Year 1. Activities are well organised with an appropriate balance of guided and free-choice activities. Many children are already confident in organising activities independently. They learn to share equipment and cooperate with a good awareness of the needs of others. Particularly good use is made of the secure outdoor area to promote learning. Progress is good in some aspects, particularly in their social development and attitudes to learning. This gives them a head start in Year 1. However, some children still have much to catch up in their language, literacy and number skills when they enter Year 1, and children have insufficient opportunities and support to develop their emerging writing. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led, with a strong focus on helping all children to do well. Good self-evaluation has enabled a clear view of what needs to be improved. The school has satisfactory links with the on-site pre-school but currently there is more to be done to develop confidence in the use of assessment data on entry.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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

Responses were received from 23 parents which represents nearly one half of the families. Those responding were overwhelmingly positive about the school. All believe that their children enjoy school and very few indicated concerns in any area. Parental comments commended the safe and welcoming environment, the improvements made in the last few years, and the challenging teaching. There were very few negative comments and inspectors did not find parents' concerns about behaviour, for example, borne out by inspection evidence.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oakley C of E Combined 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 89 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	57	10	44	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	70	6	26	0	0	1	4
The school informs me about my child's progress	12	52	9	39	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	52	10	44	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	57	8	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	61	9	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	74	6	26	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)	13	57	9	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	52	9	39	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	26	14	61	2	9	1	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	57	8	35	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	70	6	26	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	57	9	39	1	4	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.



25 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oakley C of E Combined School, Oakley, HP18 9QY

I am writing to thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we visited your school recently. We agree with a lot of what you told us and are not surprised that you enjoy coming to school so much. Your school is providing you with a good education and is getting better all the time. Here are some of the good things about it:

- You especially enjoy coming to school and try hard to do your best in lessons.
- You behave very well, and are thoughtful and kind to one another.
- Everyone at school gets on well together.
- You make good progress because of your enthusiasm for learning and the good teaching.
- Teachers make learning fun and your classrooms are lively and interesting places to be.
- The school takes considerable care of you, and makes sure you feel safe and well looked after.
- The headteacher and all the teachers are working successfully to make your school even better.

We have asked the teachers to do the following in order to make things even better:

- Ensure you learn even more things by making it clearer what you are expected to learn by the end of the lesson.
- Ensure that children in the Reception class make good progress in their writing and number work.

Thank you once again for your help during our visit, and good luck with your work in the future!

Yours faithfully

Tony Shield

Lead Inspector

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