

Oakwood Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116138
Local Authority	Southampton
Inspection number	338733
Inspection dates	9–10 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Anna Sketchley

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Wilson
Headteacher	Ian Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent 60% of their time looking at learning, visited 16 lessons and observed nine teachers. No formal meeting with parents and carers was held but inspectors spoke to a few informally at the school's celebration assembly and studied 62 questionnaires that were returned by parents. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including pupils' work, systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress, plans for improvement, reports written by the local authority, documents about safeguarding and 40 questionnaires completed by pupils and 13 by staff.

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

- the ability of leaders at all levels to sustain current improvement in attainment and progress in English and mathematics and the school's capacity for further improvement
- the progress of strategies in teaching, learning and the curriculum in English and mathematics to improve the attainment and progress of all pupils, but especially boys and the more able
- how well strategies to manage behaviour contribute successfully to learning for all pupils in lessons and their safety in school and on the playground
- provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they achieve as well as they can.

Information about the school

Oakwood is an average-sized junior school. Most pupils are of White British backgrounds and no pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average; the majority of these have either moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social needs. Among the school's most recent awards are Healthy School status, Active Mark and Investor in People. The school is a national lead school for assessing pupils' progress and is helping other schools to develop this strategy. The deputy headteacher is currently on secondment leading another school in the local authority.

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

Oakwood is an exciting place to learn and, as a result, pupils are achieving well. The outstanding drive and ambition of the whole school community, but especially that of the headteacher and senior leadership team, is underpinned by a deeply embedded culture of striving constantly to improve. All staff, governors and pupils have a strong mutual respect and support for each other as well as continually challenging one another to do better. This has brought about very good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the quality of teaching which is now good with many outstanding lessons. A cornerstone of this culture is the regular self-led 'teacher learning conferences' where all teachers, led by the senior leadership team, monitor, discuss and implement new initiatives for driving up attainment and improving progress. This, together with rigorous analysis of data and tracking of pupils' progress, is proving very successful in securing accurate self-evaluation and setting correct priorities. The school is highly committed to working in partnership and plays a leading role in assessment at national level. This is enabling it to develop and improve its own practice whilst helping others to do the same and is mirrored at local level by the lead the school has taken in developing attendance procedures in its local cluster of schools. These very effective systems and procedures ensure the sustainability of the good rate of recent advancement and are giving the school a good capacity for further improvement.

A stimulating curriculum that captures pupils' interest but pays careful attention to the development of literacy and numeracy skills has helped to eradicate underachievement. Pupils' progress throughout the school is now good and attainment, although still average, is rising rapidly, with a steadily increasing number of more able pupils achieving the higher levels in English and mathematics. A focus on speaking and listening through story telling and topics that interest boys is helping to improve boys' writing, resulting in a gradual closing of the gap in standards between girls and boys, although there is still more to do. The number of higher-attaining pupils reaching the standards of which they are capable is also rising significantly because teachers are matching the work more carefully in lessons and planning more challenging work for them. However, this is not yet consistent in all lessons. Gifted and talented pupils are identified at an early stage, but there are insufficient opportunities for them to pursue their particular strengths and extend their skills.

Pupils' high attendance is an indication of how much pupils enjoy school. Their good behaviour and attitude to their work and the excellent relationships that exist between pupils and adults create a positive climate for learning and make a strong addition to their improving attainment and progress. The school has exemplary procedures in place to safeguard pupils and they are exceptionally well cared for. Excellent partnership with

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parents ensures that they are fully consulted and involved in contributing to their children's behaviour and well-being.

The school itself is a very cohesive community and has good local and international links, but its effectiveness in promoting community cohesion within the United Kingdom is more limited.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve progress by:
 - continuing to embed strategies to improve boys' writing
 - ensuring that higher-attaining pupils are fully challenged in every lesson so that they reach the high standards of which they are capable
 - providing more opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to extend their skills.
- Improve the effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion by implementing existing plans to extend pupils' understanding of the United Kingdom as a diverse community.

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

When pupils join the school their attainment is average. Attainment in English and mathematics improved last year and Year 6 test results in 2009 were broadly average, although the number of pupils attaining the higher level especially in English was low. Attainment has continued to improve and in the current Year 6 there is a significant rise in the number of more-able pupils already working at the higher level in both English and mathematics. Progress in lessons is often rapid and work seen in class and in pupils' books during the inspection reflects a strong pattern of improvement as pupils move through the school. Standards in writing, especially for boys, are improving strongly. In literacy lessons, pupils are developing well their ability to share and express their ideas because all teachers make effective use of strategies such as talk partners. Pupils are learning to make 'jottings' and use the 'magpie' technique, enabling them to gather interesting words and phrases from a variety of sources as a useful bank of ideas prior to writing. These techniques are particularly helpful to boys and were especially productive in an outstanding Year 4 poetry lesson. When applying basic skills to a problem-solving situation in mathematics, Year 6 pupils were enthusiastic and totally engaged in the idea of designing and costing a 'Lunar Theme Park'. Once again the technique of 'jotting down' their calculations ensured that they made very good progress and allowed the teacher to see their working out. Pupils use their mental knowledge very well to help solve mathematical problems. Information and communication technology is a strength of the school and standards are above those expected nationally. Pupils were observed confidently using computer notebooks to find information, researching in a structured way and exporting the information quickly. With highly skilled help and good support from teaching assistants, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully included and learn well in lessons.

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Throughout the school almost all pupils listen well, concentrate and work hard. Pupils are polite and well behaved in lessons and around the school and contribute greatly to the calm atmosphere in which all feel very safe. Those with particular behavioural needs succeed in this because of well-structured and effective programmes and support from adults. The pupil voice is very strong and every pupil serves on a committee and participates fully in some aspect of the school community from the 'Go Global' committee to the 'Terrific Technology' committee. Meeting regularly and presenting ideas to the whole school, these committees make an outstanding contribution to pupils' personal and social development and are a strength of the school. Pupils are very proud of the impact they make in, for example, developing an e-learning safety policy and developing the school grounds. Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of how to keep safe and feel secure in school. Through working for the Healthy School award and taking part in an extensive range of physical activities, they have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Basic skills are improving, preparing them well for the future.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good overall. However, their understanding of cultural diversity in the United Kingdom, while satisfactory, is a relatively weaker feature.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	1

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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The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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How effective is the provision?

Teaching is vibrant, making good use of interactive whiteboards and a rich variety of resources and exciting activities. Coupled with teachers' good subject knowledge, this motivates and engages pupils and gains their attention. Planning is thorough and teachers know very clearly, because of excellent assessment methods, what pupils need to learn next. In their turn, pupils know exactly what they must do to improve their work because of very clear success criteria shared with them at the beginning of every lesson. In most lessons pupils are given time to respond to teachers' good guidance from marking. Lessons have a brisk pace and teachers challenge pupils and keep them alert by, for example, drawing a lolly stick with someone's name on it and phrasing questions to check understanding. Tasks are well matched to pupils' needs, although sometimes work is insufficiently challenging for more able pupils and, on these occasions, they do not make the rapid progress of which they are capable.

High-quality planning across all subjects relates learning cleverly to everyday experiences, enthusing pupils and capturing their interest. A very wide range of stimulating opportunities, clubs, visits and visitors, especially residential visits, enrich the curriculum. Innovative strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills across other subjects are accelerating pupils' learning and are rapidly having an effect on raising attainment.

The school looks after pupils exceptionally well. All procedures are extremely well organised and staff carry these out with high diligence. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is very well organised and pupils are given effective support that helps them to achieve well. Links with outside agencies for these pupils, especially those who are vulnerable, are a particular strength of the provision, for example through support from the local family centre, social workers and educational psychologist.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leadership are a dynamic team, determined to offer pupils an exciting and outstanding education and they are well on their way to fulfilling their

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vision. In keeping with the school's Investor in People status, the whole staff team is very aware of the school's ambition and demonstrates a high degree of unity of purpose in the drive for improvement. Although the quality of teaching is developing strongly and, as a result, lessons are often outstanding, the full effectiveness of initiatives is yet to be seen, so that the impact of leadership on teaching and learning is currently good. Governors are fully supportive of the school but at the same time they monitor its work rigorously, constantly challenging it to improve further. They are very knowledgeable, have efficient systems for meeting their statutory responsibilities and play a leading role in the school's strategic development.

The school's involvement with family learning and its links with a school in Africa are good examples of the way in which it promotes community cohesion at both a local and international level. However, school leaders know that links in the United Kingdom are less strong and have plans to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of the different cultures and beliefs elsewhere in their own country. There are extensive and effective links and a wide range of partnerships with outside agencies, particularly with local schools and industry, the local sports centre, and family learning. Promoting equality and tackling discrimination of different groups of pupils are well managed and becoming more effective as progress improves for different groups. Highly effective safeguarding procedures fully comply with statutory requirements and ensure that pupils are safe and secure in school. High quality and regularly updated training supports staff in carrying out their safeguarding obligations exceptionally well and excellent monitoring procedures ensure that the quality is maintained.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are very supportive of the school. In the words of one parent, 'The staff take a pride in the way they teach and care for the children. I couldn't ask for more.' Of the small number of concerns raised most were individual issues. A very small minority of parents and carers are concerned about behaviour. However, during the course of the inspection behaviour was good and the school has effective strategies for managing it for all pupils. In addition, a few parents felt that their suggestions and concerns were not taken into account. Inspectors spoke personally to a number of parents who were all very satisfied with the school's communication systems and felt that they were listened to and well informed. Several commented on the excellent school website and how helpful this and the texting service had been during inclement weather. The questionnaire findings correspond closely with a similar recent questionnaire from the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oakwood Junior 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 62 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 229 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	63	20	32	1	2	2	3
The school keeps my child safe	37	60	24	39	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	28	45	32	52	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	47	29	47	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	52	26	42	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	45	30	48	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	50	28	45	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	30	48	28	45	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	50	25	40	4	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	44	23	37	8	13	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	44	23	37	7	11	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	52	25	40	3	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	55	26	42	2	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.



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11 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oakwood Junior School, Southampton SO16 8FD

On behalf of the team of inspectors that visited your school recently, I should like to thank you for the very warm and friendly welcome you gave us and for spending time talking to us. We really enjoyed meeting you.

Oakwood is a good school and you are making fast progress in your learning because of the actions taken by your headteacher along with all the adults in your school. These are some of the best things we found.

- You really enjoy coming to school and your attendance is excellent.
- You know how to stay safe and are good at keeping healthy.
- You are especially good at helping to run your school through all your committees. We thought this was a super idea!
- Your teachers make learning great fun for you and your attitude to learning is good.
- You behave well around the school and get on really well together.
- You are exceptionally well cared for and you told us that you feel happy and safe in school.

All the adults in your school want you to do your very best. They know what needs to be done next and from our findings we have asked them to do some things to make your learning even better.

- Make sure the boys keep improving their writing skills and ensure that those of you who are capable of reaching high standards in English and mathematics always have challenging work to do. We would also like those of you who have special gifts and talents to have more opportunities to learn new skills.
- We would like your teachers to make sure that you learn more about the different cultures of people who live in the United Kingdom.

Please keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Anna Sketchley

Lead inspector

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