

# Oaklands Nursery School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123967
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	340458
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Keith Williams

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	42
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Chris Hammond
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sara Bailey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Oaklands Avenue Porthill Newcastle
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 297585
<b>Fax number</b>	01782 297586
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@oaklands.staffs.sch.uk

---

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2010

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. The inspector visited eight lessons during which one teacher (education leader), together with support staff working with groups of children, was observed. Meetings were held with staff and a governor, and informal discussions were held with a few parents. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at its monitoring and assessment records, safeguarding documents and those relating to health and safety. In addition, 29 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were considered, together with those returned by staff.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- the school's evidence to support its view that children make outstanding progress
- how well staff cater for children of different abilities
- the extent to which monitoring is giving leaders an accurate view of the school's effectiveness.

## Information about the school

Children are admitted to this small nursery school in the September following their third birthday and attend part-time, for either morning or afternoon sessions. Most children are from White British backgrounds and none is learning English as an additional language. A few are identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school works in partnership with the privately run Oaklands Childcare and there is an on-site children's centre, both of which are inspected separately.

**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?**

**1**

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

**1**

## Main findings

'I am extremely pleased with Oaklands. Every teacher has time for every child and cares about each and every one. My only wish is that my child could stay longer than one year!' This view reflects the high esteem in which parents and carers hold this outstanding school. A potent combination of outstanding leadership, teaching and support is at the heart of the school's success. Children thrive because staff provide a safe, welcoming and very stimulating environment and a wealth of excellent activities that take full advantage of children's high levels of curiosity. As a result, children thoroughly enjoy everything the school offers and make exceptional progress in their all-round development. Children feel very safe in school, and their parents strongly concur.

Relationships among children and with the adults are very positive. Children and their parents and carers are welcomed warmly as they arrive and, from that moment, children are engrossed in everything they do. Sometimes, sessions begin with children and parents sharing a book, a highly effective way of providing a calm start, promoting a love of reading and giving parents a chance to be involved. Children listen attentively to the adults, even when they are itching to join in, and they take great delight in exploring new ideas. They concentrate for impressively long periods and their behaviour is impeccable. When children first join the school, their skills and experiences cover a broad range but, taken overall, are typical of three-year-olds. Staff are adept at meeting each child's individual needs and, as a result, children of all backgrounds and abilities achieve excellently. By the time they leave, the school's detailed assessment records, and the inspector's observations of the children, show that attainment is well above that expected. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make rapid progress too, because they are very well supported, sometimes using specialist external support, and given well thought-out individualised programmes of learning. Children enjoy taking on extra responsibilities. They contribute very well to the school's smooth running, for example by organising lunchtime numbers, raising funds for charity and they are impressively quick at tidying up.

The headteacher ensures that a very close check is kept on teaching and learning, and leaders have an excellent understanding of the school's effectiveness and what might be improved. Successes are celebrated and areas for improvement are tackled robustly, using a combination of well-focused staff training and in-house support. Consequently, since the last inspection, the quality of teaching and learning has improved, children's progress has accelerated and their levels of attainment are higher. This success shows that the school is exceptionally well placed to sustain further improvement. The governing body has improved its role, too, and governors are in a much stronger

**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

position to hold leaders to account. The school has a good understanding of the community it serves and promotes community cohesion well within it. There are plans to extend links further afield and the school has rightly identified the need to formalise the promotion of community cohesion beyond the local area.

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

- Implement plans to extend the school's promotion of community cohesion beyond the local area.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of children****1**

Children of all abilities learn rapidly in each area of learning and reach high levels of attainment because every opportunity is taken to promote their learning. As one parent put it, 'My child has learnt a lot without actually realising he is doing it.' Children approach all of their activities with great gusto and have an immense thirst for learning. They learn to work independently but equally enjoy playing alongside others. Many children are confident and articulate speakers who contribute enthusiastically to formal and informal discussions, often drawing on their own experiences. Staff have identified that children's attainment in calculating is a little lower than other areas. The staff's success in tackling this relatively weaker aspect was seen in one excellent session, where children quickly grasped how to subtract numbers. On another occasion, a boy calculated that today's date must be 25th May if yesterday's was 24th. Role play is central to much of the learning in the nursery. For example, children write shopping lists of the ingredients they need for their kitchen and they count the number of portions when they cut up a pizza. In the flower shop, they use their knowledge of coins to buy and sell flowers. Children use African drums enthusiastically to maintain and increase tempo, and they enjoy exploring the properties of a wide range of materials, for example by making excellent collage masks.

Children often recall their previous learning to help them tackle new experiences. This was seen to great effect when children used the story of 'Handa's Surprise' to learn about a range of fruit and African animals. They had a remarkable knowledge of the fruit they found in a sack, not just common examples but the more obscure ones, too. By the end of the session, not only could they name all of the animals but they also knew which fruits each had eaten. More-able children rise to the extra challenges they face either through regular extension activities or through the staff's high expectations of them. Children show incredible resilience when faced with difficulty because they are encouraged to work things out for themselves. This promotion of children's personal development is a strength of the school and a key factor in the excellent progress they make in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are enthralled when they discover that their caterpillars have changed to cocoons and take great delight in closely observing mini-beasts. Very positive relationships and exemplary behaviour are clearly evident. They are visible signs of the school's success in promoting a strong moral and social code, and children's cultural awareness is enhanced by celebrating a

**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

range of festivals. They have a very mature understanding of why a healthy diet and exercise are important and they use this knowledge well when they select their snacks. Although not statutory, attendance is broadly in line with that typically found at this age and, as a result, children are well prepared for their future lives.

*These are the grades for children's outcomes*

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

## How effective is the provision?

'Every day is filled with activities which stimulate and promote curiosity - the little touches make such a difference.' The inspector endorses the view of this parent. The school's innovative and exciting curriculum is a prominent factor in children's highly successful learning. Planning is based wholly on meeting children's specific needs and is led by their interests. Staff seize on every opportunity to respond to children's comments or their actions. For example, a spontaneous and very successful session on subtraction stemmed initially from a comment made by a child. There are numerous other instances including, for example, discussions or activities arising from items brought in from home. Children are consulted about what they enjoy or which skills they

<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.

**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

would like to develop. This works extremely well because, alongside their detailed assessments, staff have all the information they need to provide the right activities, additional challenge or extra help. Staff question very well to check on children's understanding and are good at stepping back to let children find out for themselves. Adult-led sessions and those where children choose for themselves are very well organised. Children are often given insightful, individual feedback on how well they have done. Staff build up a very clear picture of each child's progress and this information is used skilfully to plan the next steps. Over time, these assessments build up into excellent 'learning journeys' that celebrate children's success. Children have regular access to the interactive whiteboard and computers. They are rightly proud of their video recordings which were made as part of the school's links with another nursery. Outdoor areas are used imaginatively to promote children's all-round development, and have recently been supplemented by an excellent outdoor classroom and woodland area. A broad range of visits and visitors enhance children's learning and enjoyment. The talented staff team ensure that children learn and play in a safe environment, and that children's welfare needs are very well met. The school works very successfully with the children's centre and childcare group to provide seamless integrated care that enhances children's induction to the nursery. Excellent support is given to potentially vulnerable children.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher, educational leader and support staff work extremely effectively together and share the drive and ambition for school improvement. The monitoring role of the governing body has improved by being put on a more formal footing, although the new system is not yet fully established. Nevertheless, governors are influential in important areas of the school's work, for example in developing the relationship between the school and the integrated children's centre. Links with parents and carers are very effective and are enhanced by regular family residential weekends. Parents' and carers' views are sought and acted upon. For example, there has been widespread consultation about the imminent move towards offering flexible childcare. There are excellent links with local schools and support agencies: these contribute considerably to the learning and welfare of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities

**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

and those who are potentially vulnerable. Every step is taken to safeguard and protect children. Very robust checks are made of the suitability of adults to work with children and potential risks are identified and eliminated. Staff and governors promote equality of opportunity extremely well. They ensure that discrimination is eliminated. They have audited their impact on community cohesion and there are appropriate plans to extend this beyond the immediate locality.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	1
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	2
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	1

## Views of parents and carers

A higher than usual proportion of parents and carers returned the questionnaire and they are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. All those who returned the questionnaire agree with almost all of the statements included in the consultation. Of particular note are the large proportions who strongly agree that they are happy with their children's experience at school, that their children enjoy school, are kept safe and are making enough progress. They also strongly agree that the school informs them about their children's progress, helps them to have a healthy lifestyle, meets their particular needs and deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. They are pleased that the school is well led and managed. The inspector endorses these positive views.



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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Oaklands Nursery 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 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 42 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	83	5	17	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	86	4	14	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	83	4	14	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	83	5	17	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	86	4	14	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	79	6	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	86	4	14	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)	19	66	8	28	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	83	5	17	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	83	5	17	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	79	6	21	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	86	4	14	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	90	3	10	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 children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
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 children. 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 child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
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 children 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 children.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

**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.**



27 May 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Oaklands Nursery School, Newcastle, ST5 0EX

I really enjoyed my visit to your nursery and I was very pleased with what I found. It was great to watch you working and playing indoors and outside. I could see that you behave and get along with each other very well. Many of your parents told me how good they think your school is and I agree. Your nursery is excellent and here are some of the reasons.

The adults care for you very much and make sure you are very safe.

They give you lots of interesting and fun things to do.

The adults keep a close check on how well you are learning and what you should learn next.

They give you the right amount of help and make the work harder for you when you need it.

You try really hard with everything you do.

Your headteacher and the other adults want your school to be even better. I have asked them to help you to understand how different people from around the world get along. You can help by keeping on behaving well, listening to the adults and trying your best at everything you do.

Best wishes

Keith Williams

Lead inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**