

Oakdale South Road Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131691
Local Authority	Poole
Inspection number	341196
Inspection dates	29–30 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Deborah Zachary

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

Type of school	Middle deemed primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	8–12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	551
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr CD Mann
Headteacher	Mr R Alborough
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by a team of four additional inspectors. They made nine formal observations of lessons, all taught by different teachers, and also carried out a wide range of observations of pupils' learning in different classes and teaching groups. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior managers and a range of staff, governors and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of documentation including the school's development plan, policies and curriculum plans, and records of tracking of pupils' progress. They studied questionnaires returned by pupils, staff and 240 parents.

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

- How well teaching has improved, particularly through the introduction of assessment for learning strategies, as an indication of the effectiveness of leadership and management.
- The improvements made to the curriculum and assessment for writing, and the impact of these.
- Progress made in mathematics by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as the wider impact of targeted support for these pupils.

Information about the school

Oakdale South Road is much larger than most other primary schools. The very large majority of pupils are White British, although 10 per cent of the pupils represent a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A few pupils are bilingual, speaking English as well as a community language, but almost none are at the early stages of learning English. A broadly average number of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They cover a wide range of types of special needs, but the majority have moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low.

There has been a change of headteacher since the last inspection.

The school holds Healthy Schools status, the Activemark for physical education (PE), and the Artsmark (silver) award. It is also recognised as an Investor in People

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

2

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. Pupils develop many excellent personal skills, including extremely good behaviour. Their attainment is high and they make consistently good progress because they are taught well. They receive a first-class preparation for the future at Oakdale South Road. In questionnaires, one parent simply wrote: 'brilliant school', while another commented that 'we constantly recommend it to others'.

The school has made very rapid improvements since the last inspection, when it was judged satisfactory. Two particular developments have been key. Teaching has improved significantly as a result of a close focus on using assessment strategies to help learning accelerate. This has led to a high proportion of lessons judged good, both by inspectors and in the school's own monitoring. In a few lessons, some of these assessment strategies are less well developed, so work is less well targeted to pupils' abilities. Sometimes planning does not identify what outcomes pupils of different abilities should aim for, and sometimes teachers do not reshape tasks quickly during the lesson to meet different pupils' needs. Such teaching tends to be satisfactory rather than better. In tandem with developments in teaching, changes to the way writing is planned and taught have also had a very positive impact on progress. The curriculum is now excellent.

Another great strength of the school lies in the quality of care, support and guidance. Support is extremely well targeted to the needs of the most vulnerable pupils, and all pupils feel safe and secure. They have very high levels of confidence in the adults in the school, and many parents wrote about the help their children had received. The results are confident and exceptionally welcoming and courteous pupils. They thoroughly enjoy lessons, and when given the opportunity show resilience to challenges and the ability to drive their own learning forward. The outstanding lessons observed were marked by pupils taking such opportunities to excel.

The headteacher has had an exceptional impact during his comparatively short tenure. Systems for school self-evaluation are excellent, especially in the way pupils' progress is tracked and patterns of progress analysed to plan for improvement. A highly systematic programme of classroom observations means that strengths and weaker areas in teaching are evaluated and fed quickly into school development planning. These outstanding management strategies have not yet bedded down over a period of time, but they provide a strong basis for the future. Improvement areas for individual teachers are identified and addressed through training and support. However, the system for raising the quality of individuals' teaching is not as fine-tuned as whole-school development, because there is no consistent method for ensuring that areas for improvement identified in the full range of observations are followed up. Nonetheless,

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the capacity of the school to improve further is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding, by ensuring that:
 - where teaching is already securely good, pupils have more opportunities to drive their own learning forward and show how they can persevere and learn through challenge
 - in the very few lessons that are satisfactory, the needs of pupils of different abilities are consistently and more securely met
 - development points for teachers already identified are followed up in future monitoring.

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

Pupils' excellent behaviour in lessons reflects their high levels of interest and enjoyment. They understand what they are trying to learn and use success criteria very well to assess how well they have done and what they still need to do. These are some of the key reasons why learning is good. They also respond well to opportunities to briefly discuss their ideas with a partner, remaining closely focused on the task and listening carefully to the other person's views. In the most outstanding lessons teachers ensure pupils' participation is high, for example testing what litmus paper tells them, thinking how they might question two children to get a different account of a day out, or speaking French, persevering with pronunciation. The pace of learning is often high, but it drops when occasionally pupils are not clear on what they should be doing, or find it too easy or too hard. Nevertheless, there are no differences in the progress made by pupils of different abilities, genders or backgrounds. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress across the subjects, whatever their particular difficulties, as do their peers. Standards at the end of Year 7 are high, typically only about a year below what is average for Year 9 pupils nationally.

Pupils of all abilities and ethnic backgrounds make an outstanding contribution to the school and local community, performing duties such as welcoming visitors, serving on the school council, acting as house captains or playground buddies, and working with the borough to improve paths and parks. They are all very conscious of the importance of being healthy, even criticising the school for not rigorously checking the contents of lunch boxes every day. Participation in sports is high. Pupils' social and moral development is also excellent. They have a good knowledge of other cultures and show the ability to reflect when given opportunities to do so. The school has analysed the contribution it makes to spiritual development and is currently part-way through a strategy to give it more focus.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum provides an excellent basis for pupils' learning, and especially for their personal development ' provision that is reflected in a range of awards and accreditation. It is greatly enhanced by a programme of themes and memorable enrichment days, and by a very wide programme of extra-curricular activities. Cross-curricular skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are applied very well in lessons. Teachers are also very confident with the use of new technology. A wide range of intervention programmes and booster classes in mathematics and English are tailored well to the needs of different ability groups. Across a wide range of subjects, lesson plans show how the work is to be customised to promote the learning of the most and least able, but this is a weaker area in just a few lessons. Similarly, in most lessons, but not all, teachers are highly alert to the pace at which pupils are learning, constantly questioning to assess understanding and changing plans part-way through if necessary.

Support staff as well as teachers and senior managers make a very strong contribution to the excellent care that the most vulnerable pupils receive. Despite the size of the school, highly professional systems and dedicated staff ensure that all pupils are extremely well known. As one parent put it, staff are very good at understanding how individual children 'tick'. Teaching assistants provide effective support in class, which is at its best during group work when their skills are fully employed. They are occasionally

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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underused in lessons when the teacher is addressing the whole class. Induction procedures for new pupils are excellent and they settle quickly. Parents appreciate the school's 'open door' policy and are very confident in the way their pupils will be looked after.

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?

In a questionnaire for the Ofsted team the 44 responses from staff were unanimous in their support for the headteacher and senior managers. They are extremely clear about, and highly supportive of, the direction the school is going. Leadership is delegated exceptionally well, with senior and subject leaders making a very strong contribution to the school's success through the tightly structured system for monitoring and evaluating the school's work. The headteacher has succeeded in inspiring the whole community.

The very good monitoring of pupils' changing attainment has been particularly effective in helping the school to iron out minor differences in the progress of different groups of pupils and promote equality. Last year pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities made slower (though still satisfactory) progress than other pupils in mathematics. The action taken in response has been highly effective, and their progress has now significantly accelerated.

Governors are very well organised and provide high levels of challenge to the school managers and staff. They are also highly supportive and meet their statutory responsibilities very well. Safeguarding practice is outstanding, with very detailed and clear records and strong collaborative working with other agencies. Risk assessments, particularly concerning vulnerable pupils, are exemplary. Governors have also ensured that the school is promoting community cohesion well. They are well aware of the links that have been established with a wide range of communities, including those represented within school, the local area, and at wider national and international levels. The school is currently giving attention to its next area of development: that is pupils' understanding of how different faiths are reflected in and affect those communities.

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

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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	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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are extremely satisfied with the school. There were many positive comments on the questionnaires, and almost all of the few points raised for improvement related to individual cases. A very small minority were concerned about behaviour, including at playtimes. Inspectors found behaviour outstanding at all times, and judged the school strategies to support good behaviour to be very strong. A few also raised a query about their involvement, either in supporting learning or in contributing towards decisions. The school is aware that although links with parents and carers are good and their opinions are surveyed, it has not yet established systems to take their involvement up to the next level.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oakdale South Road Middle 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 240 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 551 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	124	52	106	44	7	3	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	140	58	98	41	1	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	102	43	131	55	7	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	118	49	110	46	12	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	135	56	99	41	3	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	99	41	125	52	15	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	99	41	132	55	6	3	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)	81	34	134	56	6	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	105	44	123	51	7	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	100	42	114	48	12	5	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	76	32	145	60	9	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	122	51	115	48	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	143	60	91	38	4	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

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

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

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

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 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.



4 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oakdale South Road Middle School, Poole BH15 3JR

Thank you for being so welcoming to us when we inspected your school. We were really impressed with your courtesy, not just the way you held doors open but also the way you asked if we needed help and showed us how to find our way around. We think yours is an outstanding school, and you do much to make it so. Your behaviour is exemplary and you give excellent help not just in the school but also in your local community. You have a really good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe, too. You told us how much you enjoy lessons and the wide range of experiences you are given. We think you are taught well and are making good progress. The people who lead the school are doing exceptionally well and it has improved enormously since the last inspection.

The school wants to improve even further. We have said it should work on making teaching even better by doing the things below.

- Make sure that the work you do always suits your different abilities, and is not too easy or too hard.
- Give you more opportunities to play a very active part in your learning in lessons, for example by giving you challenges. You can help by not giving up if you are asked to solve a problem or try something new that seems very hard.
- Make sure that when those who lead the school advise the teachers, the advice is followed up more smoothly.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Zachary

Lead inspector

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