

Oak Tree Nursery and Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132064
Local Authority	Swindon
Inspection number	341281
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Paul Sadler

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	322
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Erica Milsom
Headteacher	Sue Rees
Date of previous school inspection	13 March 2007
School address	Priory Road Swindon SN3 2HA
Telephone number	01793 521903
Fax number	01793 436642
Email address	admin@oaktree.swindon.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2010
Inspection number	341281

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.

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

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons taught by 12 teachers and held meetings with staff, governors and groups of pupils and spoke to some parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including that relating to pupils' attainment and progress, strategic planning and the care, welfare and safeguarding of pupils. The responses to questionnaires completed by pupils, staff and 35 parents and carers were analysed.

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

- pupils' behaviour, attendance and contribution to the community, to see if these are as good as the school assesses
- the consistency of teaching and the use of assessment across the school
- the impact of the curriculum, especially on pupils' knowledge and understanding of British and world cultures
- the precision with which leaders and managers identify and tackle weaknesses
- whether children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make sufficient progress to support the school's assessment of outstanding provision in this area.

Information about the school

This average size primary school serves an area of mixed social and private housing. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Their needs mainly relate to moderate learning, behavioural and emotional difficulties. The proportion of pupils of minority ethnic heritage, while below average, is growing, as is the number at an early stage of learning English. Provision is made for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery and two Reception classes. The governors manage an after-school club which provides childcare.

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

In this good school, children get a fantastic start to their education in the exciting Early Years Foundation Stage where their indoor and outdoor play, supplemented by activities led by adults, ensures that almost all are ready to start more formal education in Year 1. From starting points that are well below those expected, this represents excellent progress. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 to 6 so that by the time they leave the school their attainment in English and mathematics is in line with that found nationally.

This good progress is due to good teaching by staff who have good relationships with pupils and have high expectations of their behaviour. Due to effective assessment, work is matched well to pupils' abilities. Pupils who find the work more difficult are supported well by teaching assistants, so that all groups of pupils make equally good progress.

However, there are some inconsistencies in teaching across the year groups. Literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developed very well so that pupils make very good progress in these areas, but numeracy skills develop more slowly because pupils have limited opportunities to apply their skills in a meaningful way. In some lessons, long introductory sessions cause restlessness among some pupils.

The school places an appropriately high priority on the level of care, guidance and support that pupils receive. It is especially successful in developing their emotional health and well-being, such as through sensitive nurturing and counselling for those experiencing emotional and family difficulties. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They rightly say they feel safe in school, and that there is little bullying. The school has made great efforts, and with some success, to address the issue of poor attendance by a number of pupils.

However, overall attendance remains low. Leaders and managers are reluctant to resort to sanctions as well as support improvement in attendance, so that parents and carers are not always aware of the full range of strategies available to the school.

Nevertheless, most parents show increasing confidence in the school and appreciate its work in supporting their children, which in part is enabled by the school's outstanding partnerships with the local authority, agencies and other schools.

The school has improved significantly since its last inspection. Pupils now make faster progress and attain higher standards, and have increasingly high aspirations. Major improvements have taken place in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The effective headteacher is supported by an exceptionally strong team of senior and middle leaders, so there is considerable strength in depth within the leadership of the school. Governors meet their statutory requirements and support the school well, but much of their work is carried out by a small group and the level of challenge they offer the school is limited.

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

The improvements made stem from the school's good knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses and effective strategic planning, although targets set to monitor progress sometimes lack precision. However, the good improvements made over the last three years demonstrate the school's good capacity to bring about further improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attendance so that by July 2011 externally set targets are met. In particular:
 - ensure that pupils with erratic patterns of attendance are identified at an early stage so that work with their families can start as soon as possible
 - ensure that parents and carers are aware of the full range of available strategies to improve pupils' attendance and that all these strategies are used as appropriate.
- Improve the rate of development of pupils' numeracy skills by:
 - ensuring that pupils always understand how the skills they are learning might be used in everyday life
 - giving pupils plenty of opportunity to use their skills to solve meaningful problems.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils achieve well, in many cases from very low starting points. By the end of Year 6, the great majority can write with confidence and accuracy in a range of styles, and can express themselves well when discussing their work. They are confident users of ICT, as shown when Year 3 pupils, working in pairs, used an effective program based on PowerPoint to develop their own adventure story. They behave well in class and around the school and make a good contribution to the school and local community, such as by caring for younger pupils or singing at local events. Pupils understand the need to take exercise and follow a healthy diet, although they admit they do not always follow this advice. They understand why the school takes security measures for their safety and sensibly report playground accidents to staff.

Pupils have a good understanding of the range of cultures present in British society and enjoy working and playing in their increasingly diverse community. They show an awareness of environmental and social issues and are enthusiastic members of the 'eco-team', starting at the earliest stage by growing vegetables in the Nursery. These qualities reflect their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

A small but significant number of pupils do not attend school with sufficient regularity. However, overall pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next steps of their learning.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Leaders and managers have adapted the curriculum in order to link subjects in a meaningful way. This approach has been very successful in enabling literacy and ICT skills to develop quickly, but less so in the case of numeracy as pupils, especially in Years 4 and 5, are not always sure of the purpose of the skills they are learning and have limited opportunities to apply them in problem-solving situations. Teachers use assessment well to identify and remedy weaknesses, for example when deploying teaching assistants to support groups of pupils. Some teaching assistants are very skilled, for example when Years 3 and 4 pupils were costing a shopping list the teaching assistant continually encouraged a good pace of work and also made sure that pupils recorded the details accurately. Teachers often go to great lengths to ensure that all pupils understand the task, but this sometimes leads to excessively long introductions to lessons, so that some become restless. Marking is generally helpful in enabling pupils to improve the work, although this is not consistently so throughout the school. Pupils are beginning to assess their own and each other's work, improving their confidence and their understanding of what they need to learn next.

Teachers seek to widen pupils' experience, as seen when reception children visited a water park and then followed this with exciting language work describing their experience. There is a good variety of additional activities including sport and other activities, such as when more able pupils visited Bath University to take part in a range

¹ 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

of challenges with pupils from other schools.

Pupils, families and their individual needs are well known to staff and many aspects of care and support are outstanding. These include the emotional support provided, that for pupils with special educational needs and preparation for the next stage of pupils' education, for example through use of a transition project undertaken by all local Year 6 pupils about to enter secondary school. The school has worked hard to persuade families of the importance of good attendance and this has led to improvement. However, monitoring is currently not sufficiently robust to identify deteriorating attendance patterns at an early stage. As efforts to improve attendance have not been completely successful care, guidance and support are good overall.

The after-school care provided by the school ensures that children are safe and makes satisfactory provision for their development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has built a strong team of leaders and managers who have been successful in creating a good sense of ambition and drive to improve the school. The improvements in standards of English and in the Early Years Foundation Stage are particular testaments to their success. Data are used well to analyse pupils' progress and to set targets for improvement, but in some areas, such as improving attendance, this approach has been less precise and therefore less successful. There is a strong culture of inclusion in which equality of opportunity is promoted and any potential discrimination is not tolerated. For example, every effort is made to give pupils at risk of exclusion the support they need to stay in school. Such work draws on the school's excellent relationships with external partners. Parents and carers are offered a range of support, such as in improving their own basic skills, and this has been successful in reaching all except those few whose children do not attend regularly. This, together with pupils' understanding of other people's lives and cultures, reflects the school's success in promoting community cohesion.

All current requirements to keep children safe are in place and the school's work in the field of child protection is a notable strength, with the staff's first-hand knowledge of the child playing a key role in the work of a range of agencies when this proves necessary.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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

The excellent provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is the undoubted strength of this good school. All children in the Nursery and Reception classes make excellent progress, often from very low starting points. They share and play well together and quickly develop independence and social and communication skills. They have an outstanding knowledge of safety and assessing risk. The welcoming and stimulating indoor and outdoor environments are exemplary. Planning is outstanding and very effectively meets the needs of all the children. Assessment is rigorous and is shared effectively with parents and carers, who very much appreciate the high quality education their children receive. Teaching is inspirational and the children are highly motivated to learn. The children's learning and welfare needs are met exceptionally well through adjustments to their individual provision. The leader and her very strong staff team have very high aspirations for the children and effectively plan for continuous improvement by thorough analysis of data.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

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

Views of parents and carers

A small proportion of parents and carers returned the inspectors' questionnaire. Of those that did so, the very large majority said their child enjoyed school and rightly felt they were safe there. A few felt that unacceptable behaviour was not dealt with effectively. Inspectors found that, while a small number of pupils exhibit challenging behaviour, the school deals with such incidents effectively.

A number of parents of children in the Nursery were spoken to by inspectors and rightly expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the provision for their children.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oaktree Nursery and Primary 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 35 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 322 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	43	15	43	5	14	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	11	31	19	54	3	9	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	9	26	21	60	4	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	37	18	51	3	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	26	23	66	3	9	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	26	23	66	3	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	31	19	54	5	14	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)	8	23	24	69	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	31	20	57	3	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	23	20	57	6	17	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	20	25	71	3	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	11	31	21	60	3	9	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	29	22	63	1	3	2	6

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.



9 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oaktree Nursery and Primary School, Swindon SN3 2HA

We very much enjoyed meeting you and talking to you when we visited your school recently. You are confident and friendly young people. We agree with you and your parents and carers that yours is a good school. These are some of the good things about it.

- By Year 6 you reach standards in English and mathematics that are average and improving, meaning you are making good progress.
- The Nursery and Reception classes give the children a brilliant start to their education.
- You do a lot for the community and we were impressed with the work of the eco team.
- Your behaviour is good and you look after each other. Those of you who sometimes find it difficult to behave well are given lots of help.
- You are good at keeping yourselves safe and healthy.
- Teaching is good and you have interesting things to do. The teaching assistants help you really well when you need it. I especially enjoyed seeing Year 3 writing their adventure stories on the laptops.
- Your headteacher, the staff and governors lead the school well and they have good partnerships with your parents and other people who help you.

We have asked the school to do two things to make it even better

- Make sure you understand why you are learning what you are in mathematics or numeracy, and how it can help you to solve problems in everyday life.
- Improve your attendance. You can help by always coming to school unless you are ill.

I wish you all the very best for the future and that you continue to work hard and enjoy school.

Yours sincerely

Paul Sadler

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. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.