

The Oaks Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134733
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	341517
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Heather Weston HMI

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	335
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs C Matthews
Headteacher	Mr Jeremy Pentreath
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2007
School address	Aster Road Ipswich Suffolk
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 half lessons plus in excess of 12 part lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, and informally with parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work, evidence of the schools monitoring, and a range of documents including headteacher's reports to governors, school assessment data, pupil and staff questionnaires and 65 parent questionnaires.

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

- current standards and rates of progress in both Key Stages 1 and 2.
- the impact of leadership and management, including governance, on improving progress and raising standards.
- why standards in English, having risen, drop so markedly in 2009.
- the quality of teaching and its impact on learning.
- how effectively assessment data is used to promote pupil progress.

Information about the school

The Oaks Primary School opened in September 2005. It is slightly larger than most primary schools. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is nearly twice the national average. The proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than average and the number at the early stages of learning English is low. The number of pupils with special educational needs is above average, but an average number have a statement of special educational need.

Since the last inspection the school has been through a period of significant change. Nine of the fourteen teachers were appointed within the last two years and the headteacher and deputy head took up their posts during the autumn term 2008. In September 2008, just under half of the positions in the governing body were vacant. The governing body now has seven new members, and a new chair and vice-chair who took over their roles in June 2009.

The governing body manages 3 early morning clubs and extended school provision which were in the inspection.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Pupils love coming to The Oaks Primary School. Phrases such as, 'I think The Oaks is a fantastic school and I never want to leave' and, 'This school is so nice and helpful' are repeated time and again in pupils' comments. Pupils know that they will be helped with any problem they may have. This enjoyment and sense of security is the result of the commitment of the headteacher, his deputy and senior leaders, who provide good strong leadership. Their passion for improving outcomes has resulted in a culture of shared responsibility among staff, who are also committed to improvement. Parents are equally supportive of the school, are happy with their child's experience at school and very confident about approaching the school with any concern or issues. These outcomes are just a few of the examples of improvement which demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve.

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory because standards are still too low in English, mathematics and science. Rates of progress are satisfactory and are securely improving and standards are rising in Year 1 and throughout Key Stage 2, although remain too low in Year 2. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress from exceptionally low starting points on joining the nursery, due to good provision.

Many pupils have significant barriers to their learning. The school is rigorous in overcoming these barriers through its good procedures for the care, guidance and support of pupils. The satisfactory curriculum is enriched well with numerous visits and visitors, and a wide range of out of hours clubs from hip hop and circus skills to sport. Music is a strength of the school. Pupils have a variety of musical experiences and opportunities to perform. In recognition of the need for a more appropriate and stimulating curriculum, revised arrangements were introduced this term. However, as yet, writing across the curriculum is not yet well developed and pupils are not given sufficient time to write independently and at length.

Overall, teaching is satisfactory with a number of good features. A key development during the last year has been the regular, half-termly assessment and tracking of pupils' progress. Teachers now know how well the pupils in their class are making progress. Teachers use this data well when planning their lessons and use ongoing daily assessment to refine future planning. However, most teachers are not using this data sufficiently well to tailor learning to the whole range of pupils' needs in each class, or to identify precise learning outcomes for different groups and thus accelerate learning. Teachers make useful comments about pupils' work in their marking, but only occasionally are pupils asked to improve their work the light of these comments.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise standards in English and mathematics.
 - Refine the use of assessment in lessons by identifying precise outcomes closely tailored to the needs of different groups of pupils.
 - Ensure that pupils carry out improvements in response to teacher's marking feedback.
 - Create opportunities for pupils to write independently and at length across the curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment is low, but it is clear from the school's tracking data and from pupils' work that standards are rising throughout Key Stage 2 and are now broadly average. Standards reached by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 have declined in recent years and are still too low in the current Year 2, but pupils in Year 1 are also working at higher, broadly average standards.

Pupils apply themselves well to their learning. Rates of progress across the school are good in the Early Years Foundation Stage, satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory but increasing in Key Stage 2. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with social, emotional, or behavioural difficulties, also engage well with their learning. They make at least satisfactory progress in writing and maths, and good progress in reading, due to the impact of intervention strategies.

Pupils say they feel safe at school and that the rare incidents of bullying are dealt with well. Behaviour around the school and in almost all lessons is good. Occasionally a few pupils become restless when teaching fails to catch their interest. They show a good awareness of leading healthy lifestyles, understand the dangers of smoking, alcohol and drugs and enjoy the range of sporting activities. Attendance is satisfactory and improving due to the rigorous action taken by the school to ensure pupils attend regularly and arrive on time. The good level of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is demonstrated by pupils' polite, respectful and sensible behaviour, by their positive engagement in the offered opportunities for art, music and dance and by their awareness of different beliefs, religions and cultures.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	3
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

All teachers have good relationships with pupils, supporting their learning sensitively and encouragingly. Classrooms are stimulating and interesting with a real focus on learning. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to ask probing questions and in the best lessons allow all pupils to be actively involved in seeking answers by, for example, the use of 'talk partners' to aid their thinking. Activities in many lessons are interesting and stimulating. Time is used well in some classes, but in a number of lessons pupils are not given sufficient time to practise key skills. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils, although in some lessons this support is not utilised throughout the whole lesson. The revised curriculum introduced this term is broad and balanced. It is developing well, with an impressive range of practical activities taking place in some lessons across the school. The range of opportunities provided by out of hours clubs have a high impact on pupils' enjoyment.

Arrangements for making sure that all pupils can access their learning are good. The school's strong links with a wide range of agencies ensures pupils at risk are supported well. The nurture group provides effective support for those with emotional difficulties. Exclusions have reduced dramatically, so learning opportunities are no longer lost. Staff are well deployed and are particularly effective in ensuring good support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Transition arrangements are good.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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	
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The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership roles have been distributed strategically and improvement planning is based on effective monitoring and self-evaluation. Leaders have set challenging targets for improvement. Although the impact of teaching on learning is satisfactory, action taken to develop the use of assessment means that it is improving and promoting better progress. The majority of governors are new to their role, including the chair and vice-chair. However, they fulfil their responsibilities, are well organised and know their role in holding the school to account.

The strength of partnerships with parents and with a number of other partners is having a positive impact on pupils' well-being and learning. The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils can access their learning. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory. All staff are fully informed of procedures and child protection concerns are identified and dealt with effectively. Risk assessments are secure. Community cohesion is satisfactory. Cohesion within the school is good, the school is actively promoting links with the local neighbourhood and local schools and plans are in place for extending these links nationally and globally.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
	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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3

<p>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</p>	
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Children make good progress in their learning from very low starting points on entry, and enjoy their first years at school. Strong links are in place with the majority of parents who feel included in their child's education. Children play a dynamic role in their learning, form good relationships with each other and with adults, and understand how to keep themselves safe. Behaviour is well managed and children are usually engaged in their learning. Both leadership and the quality of provision are good with outstanding features. Staff have a strong team ethic and a shared sense of purpose and commitment. Adults have an exceptional knowledge of their pupils and support assessment very effectively. Activities are well planned, but responsive to the interests of the children. Resources are attractive and stimulating, and the outside area is used well to support all areas of learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Responses in the questionnaires and informal discussions with parents show that they feel the school has a great atmosphere. Parents commented on the improvements made in the last year and how much they appreciate being greeted each morning by the current headteacher. They say teachers are approachable and value the support they receive when either they or their children are experiencing difficulties.

A very small minority feel that either their children are not making sufficient progress at the school or that the school does not take account of their suggestions or concerns. Inspectors agree that progress could be improved and have identified ways the school could improve progress. However the inspection team feel that the school listens carefully to parents views and concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Oaks Community 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 65 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 335 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	64	21	34	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	61	24	39	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	38	62	22	36	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	66	17	28	3	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	45	74	15	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	64	21	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	57	25	41	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)	34	56	22	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	61	23	38	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	56	24	39	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	61	18	30	3	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	42	69	17	28	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	49	43	49	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 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.



16 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Oaks Primary School, Aster Road, Ipswich IP2 0NR

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently, for talking to us and showing us your work. We very much enjoyed our visit and finding out about the interesting things you do in lessons and in clubs. It was a shame we couldn't join in with the circus skills club! We could see how much you enjoy school and we thought that you are very polite, respectful and sensible. We also thought that all the adults at school work very hard to help you do your work.

We think your school is satisfactory because at the moment the standards you reach in your work are not as high as they could be. All the staff are working hard to help you make progress and reach higher standards, and you are helping by attending regularly and behaving well. To help you make better progress we have asked the governors, Mr Pentreath and the staff to do these things:

continue to raise standards in English and mathematics

make sure that your work is neither too easy nor too hard, and that you know how to carry out a successful piece of work

ensure that you have time to read your teachers' comments about your work and have time to carry out their points for improvements

make sure you have more time to write at greater length

You can help by reading your teachers' comments carefully and using them to help you improve your work, and by thinking carefully about your writing to make it as good as you can. Also, carry on enjoying school!

With best wishes

Heather Weston

Her Majesty's Inspector

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