

Oakhill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130341
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	293630
Inspection dates	11–12 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Andrew Clark

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 on roll	
School	322
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev R Evans
Headteacher	Mrs E Nolan
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2001
School address	Doncaster Road Ardsley Barnsley South Yorkshire S71 5AG
Telephone number	01226 284493
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average, serving the Ardsley district of Barnsley. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal is below average. There are fewer than average pupils with a learning difficulty and/or disability, although a higher than average proportion has a statement of special educational need. Since the last inspection the school has become host to a base for pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties drawn from schools across the local authority.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Oakhill Primary is a good school. Pupils enjoy their lessons and this supports their good progress. The school is open and welcoming and all pupils benefit from working and playing alongside pupils from the speech, communication and language base. Parents hold the school in high regard.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils have an outstanding awareness of the need for healthy lifestyles gained through a very good range of healthy eating choices and their involvement in physical activities. As one pupil explained about school meals: 'Even though the food is healthy, some of it actually tastes nice!' Pupils' emotional growth is very well supported because of the good level of care they receive.

Achievement is good and standards are above average. The outstanding provision in the Foundation Stage ensures children make a really good start to their education. Activities are very closely matched to children's needs and are exciting and stimulating. Consequently, the pupils make very good progress and are well prepared for their move into Year 1. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make good progress because of the good teaching they receive. At the end of Year 6 they leave with standards which are above average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those in the speech, language and communication base, make good progress towards challenging targets because of the thorough planning for their individual needs. A particular strength of the school is the way in which any weaknesses in achievement are quickly identified and strongly addressed, such as improving reading at Key Stage 1.

Teaching and learning are good. Very good relationships ensure pupils generally behave well and lessons are often fun. However, teachers do not always involve the pupils enough in understanding the main purpose of the lesson so they do not make all the progress they could. Effectively trained teaching assistants provide good support for all learners. This particularly helps those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress. The curriculum is good and has literacy and numeracy at its heart; it interests and involves pupils and makes a good contribution to their personal development. A good range of visits and visitors brings learning to life and this often results in high quality art and design work. Outstanding links with parents in the Foundation Stage ensure children are seamlessly integrated into school life. Good assessment and tracking processes help pupils of all abilities make good progress. Despite some examples of very good practice, pupils are not consistently involved in assessing their own progress in lessons so are not as informed as they could be of how well they are doing. At its best, marking provides pupils with a clear indication of what they could do to improve, but this is not the case throughout the school.

The school is led and managed well. The clear and calm direction set by the headteacher has successfully led to good improvement since the last inspection. All staff work effectively as a team and contribute well to school development. Monitoring systems are effective, although sometimes they do not rigorously ensure whole-school initiatives are consistently applied. The school gives good value for money and has good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers make full use of strategies to share the purpose of lessons with pupils so they are clear about what they are learning and how well they are achieving.

- Provide more guidance for pupils through marking and involve them more in assessing and managing their own learning in lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start school with skills and knowledge that are largely typical for their age, although there is an increasing proportion that enters with poorer social and communication skills. The outstanding provision in the Foundation Stage addresses any early weaknesses so that by the time children start in Year 1 the vast majority reach the national expectations for their age. Throughout the rest of the school pupils of all abilities achieve well and standards are generally above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. There has been an upward trend of improvement since the school was last inspected. The school has taken strong initiatives to address relative weaknesses to pupils' achievement in reading in Key Stage 1 and writing at Key Stage 2, which occurred in 2006, and these are proving effective. There has been a good trend in raising standards for the most able pupils so that many reach above-average levels by Year 6. The school meets challenging targets at the end of both key stages.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, with some outstanding features. Pupils say that they feel safe, secure and happy at the school and feel highly valued by the teaching and support staff. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They welcome the many opportunities provided to enhance their personal development by, for example, acting as playground buddies or in being invited to 'take tea' with their headteacher. Members of the school council are very proud of their clear 'voice' in the school's continuing development. Attendance and punctuality are good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in most lessons and around the school are good. Occasionally pupils do not concentrate well enough when teaching is not challenging them sufficiently. However, they behave superbly during the dinner breaks, when they enjoy an extensive and exciting range of activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is underpinned by good relationships and the effective management of behaviour in most lessons. Teaching is often imaginative and good use is made of resources such as interactive whiteboards to motivate and engage pupils so learning moves forward at a good pace. There is a strong structure to the teaching of reading and writing, and good systems to assess pupils' progress. This is very effectively used in the Foundation Stage for the teaching of early basic skills. Teachers make use of good strategies such as partner discussions and 'thumbs up' methods to involve pupils in assessing progress and challenging themselves to achieve more. However, this is not consistent in all lessons. Occasionally opportunities are missed to share the purpose of the lesson with pupils and question their deeper understanding, which holds back the pace at which they learn. Very occasionally lessons are too slow and pupils' concentration wanes. The teachers have high expectations of

pupils' care and accuracy in presenting their work and they are often rewarded with neat and thoughtful written work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is planned well to meet the needs and interests of all pupils. Good emphasis is placed on the teaching of the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology and pupils use these skills well to support their learning in other subjects. There has been good improvement in English since the previous inspection, due to the introduction of a wide range of strategies to improve reading and writing. The school is reviewing the more creative aspects of the curriculum and making work relevant through strong links between subjects, although this has yet to have a full impact as it is generally at an early stage of development. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. The wide range of practical activities, both indoors and outside, engages the children's interest and contributes well to their good progress. Throughout the school, personal, social, health and citizenship education is a strong feature of provision, which prepares pupils well to make informed choices about their own well-being. A good range of after-school activities, visits and visitors extends pupils' learning experiences and contributes well to their personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care and support for pupils is good. The school roll includes a wide range of pupils, some of whom have very complex needs and low self-esteem. There are high levels of both internal and external support provided for these vulnerable pupils, in addition to those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which help them to make good progress. The speech, language and communication base is a particularly strong feature of the school's care and guidance provision and these pupils are fully integrated into school life. This makes a good contribution to the personal development of all pupils. The use of SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) to support personal, social and health education, significantly underpins the school's provision for the pupils' care. It helps pupils to grow in confidence and self-esteem and to manage their personal health and safety. Procedures to safeguard pupils and to keep them healthy are robust. There are good systems to track and support pupils' progress so that work matches their needs well. Some pupils are engaged in evaluating their own work and marking sometimes informs pupils of what they should do improve. However, these practices are not yet consistent throughout the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Since her appointment at the time of the last inspection, the headteacher has provided clear leadership through effective school improvement planning. Good opportunities are created for staff development and this has contributed to rising standards. She has carefully developed an effective senior leadership team. Through a successful system of regular monitoring, involving lesson observations, pupil discussions and analysis of assessment data, subject leaders support the drive for improving standards well. Nevertheless, there is not always a sufficiently robust focus on ensuring that initiatives, such as involving pupils in assessing their own work, are consistently applied in all lessons. The good governing body receives regular presentations

from staff which allow it to contribute well to priorities for school improvement and ensure these are fully resourced. As a result the school's self-evaluation is largely accurate and proves a useful tool for continued development.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for your kindness when we visited your school. We would like to tell you what we found out during the inspection.

We think that Oakhill Primary is a good school. We found that you work hard and enjoy your lessons because the teachers make them interesting and fun. You behave well and get on with teachers and other pupils. You like to take part in the school council and act as buddies and have done many good things to improve the school. You know a lot about how to keep healthy and take part in clubs and sporting events to help keep you fit. You make a very good start in the Foundation Stage classes and by time you leave school in Year 6 most of you are good at English, mathematics, science and many other subjects. You produce some delightful art work. The headteacher and all the staff work very hard to make your learning so pleasant and successful.

There are a few things we have asked your headteacher and the staff to improve. All lessons can be as good as the best by making sure that you are clear about what you are learning and how well you are doing. Also the staff can involve you even more in your own learning and deciding what to do next.

You can all help by continuing to work hard, behaving well and trying to make your work even better.