

Oakington CofE VA Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110833
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	337585
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Keith Williams

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Sutherland
Headteacher	Sally Daggianti
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2007
School address	Water Lane Oakington Cambridgeshire
Telephone number	01223 232328
Fax number	01223 232328
Email address	head@oakington.cambs.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2010
Inspection number	337585

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 two additional inspectors, one of whom visited the school for half a day, specifically to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures. Inspectors visited 10 lessons during which five teachers were observed. Meetings were held with pupils, staff and the chair and vice-chair of governors, and informal discussions were held with a few parents. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at its monitoring and assessment records, safeguarding documents and those relating to health and safety. In addition, 33 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were considered, together with those returned by pupils in Key Stage 2 and by staff.

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

- whether the performance of current pupils matches the improvement seen in the 2009 assessments
- the extent to which attainment in writing in KS2 has improved
- the impact of teaching on progress in Key Stage 1.

Information about the school

Most pupils at this small primary school are from White British backgrounds, although a small proportion are from a range of other backgrounds, including some who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities, largely moderate learning difficulties, is average. The proportion in receipt of a statement of special educational needs is well above average. A below average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage join the school in the Reception year. They are taught in a Reception class each morning and join younger Year 1 pupils for afternoon sessions. The headteacher was appointed in September 2009. The school has Activemark and Healthy Schools status. Governors provide an after school club. There is an on-site playgroup that is privately managed and is 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Parents are very supportive of this good school. Among a number of positive views expressed to inspectors, one noted that the school, 'provides a safe, welcoming environment and the children thrive; they are considered individuals and their different needs are met.' Inspectors endorse this view. The school takes advantage of its small size because each pupil is well known to staff who keep a close check on their welfare and well-being. Pupils report that they feel safe in this supportive environment and, together with an interesting and varied curriculum, this adds to their enjoyment of school. As a result, pupils achieve well academically and make good progress in their personal development.

When children first start school, they arrive with widely differing needs and skills, including some who have significant special educational needs and/or disabilities. This varies considerably from year to year, however, as does the proportion in each year group who is capable of reaching the higher levels. Taken overall, most children are equipped with the skills typical of their age, although their language development is often a little lower. Whatever their starting points, pupils of all abilities make good progress as they move through the school and, by Year 6, their attainment is above average. This is building on the improvement seen in the results of the 2009 national tests for pupils in Year 6, which were the school's best for some time. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with moderate learning difficulties and pupils with more significant needs, are well supported. They often make rapid gains in confidence, which enables them to achieve as well as their classmates. Pupils of all abilities work hard and concentrate well. Their behaviour is good, in and out of lessons. The school works closely with parents to tackle absence. While current figures show that the rate of attendance is rising, attendance levels do not fully reflect pupils' high levels of enjoyment of school.

A number of initiatives were introduced at the beginning of the year to improve teaching and learning, and the way they are assessed and monitored. Some of these are already beginning to bear fruit and are resulting in consistently good teaching and learning. Teachers make good use of assessment information to check on pupils' progress, match work to pupils' particular needs and target extra help. They give pupils good written and verbal feedback at the end of lessons. However, the newness of some strategies, including those used to check on pupils' understanding during lessons, means that there are inconsistencies in the way they are implemented. For example, staff identify what pupils are expected to learn, and how they will know if they are successful (known to pupils as 'success criteria'), but these are not always explained clearly enough. Although teachers use the discussions at the end of lessons to check on pupil's understanding, in

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

some instances, pupils are insufficiently involved in assessing their learning for themselves. Nevertheless, improved monitoring systems ensure that leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance. Areas for improvement are identified and tackled robustly. Leaders' success in raising standards and accelerating pupils' progress shows they are well placed to secure further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the assessment of pupils' understanding during lessons by:
 - building on the new systems to provide greater consistency
 - ensuring that success criteria are shared effectively
 - increasing pupils' involvement in assessing their own learning.
- Work with parents to raise attendance levels.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The progress of pupils in Key Stage 1 is accelerating because they are consistently well taught. Small numbers mean that analysis of national test results must be treated cautiously, as the performance of individual pupils can have an exaggerated effect on the results. Year 2 results have been broadly average in recent years. The work of pupils currently in Year 2 and their assessment records show that they are on track to reach higher standards this year.

The last inspection challenged the school to improve pupils' writing, particularly those in Key Stage 2. Successful work to improve teaching and raise the profile of writing, particularly among boys, resulted in Year 6 pupils reaching exceptionally high levels in 2009. Although attainment among current pupils is not as high, due to lower starting points, there are many examples of good quality writing in books and on display, and their attainment is above average. Attainment is above average in mathematics too, and in an outstanding lesson, Year 5 and 6 pupils were seen using their well-developed calculation skills to convert imperial measurements to metric. Pupils of all abilities made rapid progress and, indeed, across the school; there is no significant difference in the progress made by different groups. Pupils who are potentially vulnerable are well supported in lessons, so that they make good gains in their learning. The few pupils learning English as an additional language make similar progress to their classmates. Pupils' good progress in basic skills and their above average attainment mean that they are well prepared for their future lives.

Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is underpinned by a strong Christian ethos. Relationships among pupils and with adults are warm and supportive. The few pupils who occasionally present challenging behaviour are well managed. Pupils learn about a range of cultures and faiths, although their knowledge is sketchy, and they have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. They make a strong contribution to the smooth running of the school by taking on extra responsibilities, such as joining the school council. Pupils are well involved in local activities, one parent

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

describing it as 'a true community school'.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

One of the school's strengths is the way it meets pupils' widely differing needs. Systems to care for pupils and ensure their safety, including those for the after-school club, are good and this is valued by parents and their children. The school's supportive environment helps staff to promote good attendance, although attendance rates do not yet reflect pupils' enjoyment. Nevertheless, a combination of good teaching, timely support and a well-thought-out curriculum contribute to pupils' good learning. Good support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are potentially vulnerable and the few pupils learning English as an additional language is instrumental in ensuring that pupils are fully included and able to learn. Teachers plan lessons carefully and pupils appreciate the way they make learning fun. Objectives for learning are clear and shared. Teachers usually check that pupils understand how their success will be judged, but this is not consistent. Teachers and support staff work well as a team to ensure that all pupils, regardless of ability, are fully engaged in the lesson.

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

Questioning is usually brisk and challenging. Marking is good and, in the best examples, pupils are given opportunities to reflect for themselves on how well they have learned. This works well, but some pupils are not sufficiently involved in self-assessment during and after lessons.

The broad and interesting curriculum places a strong emphasis on promoting literacy, numeracy, and pupils' environmental awareness. Their personal and social development is promoted well, and the school's commitment is reflected in successfully securing Activemark and Healthy School status. The spacious grounds, including the excellent nature reserve, are well used to make learning exciting and fun. Planning for writing has improved and this contributes to the rising standards. The school has improved the links made between subjects, and has rightly identified this as a continuing priority. Pupils' learning and enjoyment are enhanced by a wide range of trips, visits and visitors, and there are plentiful extra-curricular activities. Provision for gifted and talented pupils has improved since the last inspection and extra opportunities are often provided in conjunction with the local secondary school. Arrangements for pupils to transfer in and out of the school are good.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

There is a strong commitment amongst the headteacher, staff and governors to provide the best for pupils and a shared ambition to secure improvement. New systems to place monitoring on a more formal footing have provided a robust two-year programme that is building up an accurate picture of strengths and what can improve. Although the first year of the cycle is not yet complete, staff have already worked successfully to ensure that teaching and learning are consistently good across the school. The governing body contributes well by monitoring the school's effectiveness and holding leaders to account. Leaders ensure that all groups of pupils are fully included and valued, and any discrimination is tackled robustly. Policies are reviewed regularly, although it is not always sufficiently clear how the impact of initiatives will be evaluated.

The school works closely with parents and provides them with good information about their children's progress. There are good systems to seek out parents' views, including regular 'parents forum' meetings. Effective links with a wide range of outside agencies contribute strongly to pupils' good progress, particularly those who are potentially vulnerable and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Systems to

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

safeguard pupils are rigorous, and careful checks are made of the suitability of adults to work with children. The school has a good understanding of the community it serves and promotes community cohesion well within it. Links extend further afield through, for example, the study of contrasting areas of the United Kingdom and work to raise funds for two schools in Kenya. There are appropriate plans, devised alongside the 'cluster' of local schools, to develop links and extend the evaluation of impact further.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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	2
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	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

Good teaching in Reception means that children make good progress and most reach the goals expected of them by the end of the year. The teacher leads the setting well and works closely with the teaching assistant to provide an interesting range of activities in the classroom, covered outdoor area and elsewhere in the school's grounds. There are good opportunities for children to select activities for themselves or work under the guidance of an adult. From the moment they arrive in the morning, children join in activities enthusiastically and learn happily alongside other children. Relationships are just as positive, and learning is just as good, when children join younger Year 1 pupils for afternoon sessions. Children enjoy writing, although the writing area is rather cramped and uninviting, and are developing a good knowledge of letter sounds and shapes. Careful assessments build up into helpful records of children's progress. The school does not currently extend this information to produce celebratory portfolios of children's learning for children and their parents to enjoy. Staff ensure that children's welfare needs are met.

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

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

Those parents who returned the questionnaires, and those to whom inspectors spoke, are very supportive of the school. Few disagreed with the statements included in the consultation. In particular, almost all parents report that their children enjoy school and are kept safe. They are pleased with the information they receive about their children's progress and feel that the teaching and leadership are good. Almost all report that they are happy with their children's experience at school. Inspectors endorse parents' positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oakington CofE VA 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 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 103 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	76	7	21	0	0	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	21	64	11	33	0	0	1	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	42	18	55	0	0	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	39	17	52	1	3	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	20	61	12	36	0	0	1	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	39	17	52	2	6	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	58	13	39	0	0	1	3
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)	15	45	11	33	0	0	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	48	15	45	1	3	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	45	15	45	1	3	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	33	20	61	1	3	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	11	33	21	64	0	0	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	58	13	39	0	0	1	3

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.



20 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oakington CofE VA Primary School, Cambridgeshire, CB24 3AL

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently. Many of you, and your parents, told us that you think you go to a good school. We agree. There are many things your school does well.

You make good progress in your learning because you work hard, behave well and your teachers give you interesting things to do.

They keep a careful check on your learning, make sure the work is hard enough and give you extra help if you need it.

Your headteacher, staff and the governing body take good care of you and make sure you are safe.

They keep a close check on how well the school is doing and plan carefully to make it even better.

There are two things we would like them to do to achieve this.

We have asked your teachers to make sure that you always understand the success criteria in your lessons, and to give you more chance to think about how well you have learned and what your next steps might be.

We want them to work with your parents to make sure that all of you come to school as often as you can.

We know you all will want to help. Please keep working hard and trying your best and, remember, the more you come to school, the more you learn. Perhaps the school council can think of ways of helping, too.

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