



Oakridge Primary School

Inspection report

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 124130
Local Authority Staffordshire
Inspection number 292897
Inspection dates 1 November 2006
Reporting inspector Barbara Crane

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Silvester Way
School category	Community		Stafford
Age range of pupils	3 - 11		Staffordshire
			ST17 0PR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01785 354620
Number on roll (school)	243	Fax number	01785 354622
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Andrew Chell
		Headteacher	Mr Paul Fisher
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2001		

Age group	Inspection date(s)	Inspection no.
3 - 11	1 November 2006	292897

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school on the outskirts of Stafford. Most pupils come from families in favourable circumstances. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. A few pupils have English as an additional language but none are at an early stage of learning English. A Nursery class was introduced in September 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school **Grade: 1**

This is an outstanding school. It prepares pupils very well for the future and parents rightly have a high level of confidence in what the school provides for their children. Pupils' excellent achievement springs from their enjoyment in learning and high quality teaching that gives pupils all they need to succeed. The Nursery and Reception children get a first-rate start to their education and by the time pupils leave the school standards are exceptionally high when compared to national averages. Pupils develop as well-rounded individuals whose outstanding personal development and well-being is underpinned by the excellent level of care, guidance and support provided by the staff. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they show a high level of respect for themselves and others. As one pupil put it, 'Choosing to do the right thing gives me a good feeling inside as well as getting me rewards.' Pupils are proud of their school and have a strong sense of responsibility for shaping their community.

The school's guiding principle of 'Reach for the stars' is very well represented in all aspects of its daily work and reflected in the aspirations of the pupils and staff. Teachers aim high and use assessments very effectively to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Pupils know what they need to do to reach their challenging targets. The staff know the pupils very well as individuals and give them very good feedback on how well they are doing. Pupils are involved in checking their own progress from an early age and relish opportunities to use their own ideas, for example when they might use information and communication technology (ICT). In mathematics and science, however, teachers do not always plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to use their initiative in finding ways of solving problems or setting up investigations. An outstanding curriculum gives pupils a wealth of experiences and activities through which they can apply their skills in literacy and numeracy and develop their talents, particularly in sport, art and design and music.

The headteacher's drive and enthusiasm inspire the staff and pupils. He leads a talented team who are happy in their work and are committed to getting the best for pupils. Outstanding leadership and management maintain a close focus on improvement and rigorous checks by staff identify where things can improve. People's strengths are very well used at the right times and in the right places to bring about change for the better. This has led to improvements in standards in writing and in boys' achievement. Governors ask the right questions to hold the school to account for its performance and check for themselves how well it is doing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' opportunities to use their own ideas in solving problems and investigative work in mathematics and science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Pupils make excellent progress throughout the school. Children start with above average attainment and most go well beyond the goals expected for their age by the end of the Reception Year. By the end of Year 2 pupils' standards have generally been well above average in recent years and were exceptionally high in 2005. For Year 6 pupils, standards over time have been consistently exceptionally higher than the average. Indications from the 2006 results are that this pattern is being maintained. High quality work in art and design and ICT is evident throughout the school. While pupils show good skills in solving problems in mathematics or investigating in science, the work for pupils sometimes lacks the challenge that they need to do their very best. Pupils with learning difficulties make outstanding progress because of high quality teaching.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They face the future with poise and confidence because they meet with success. There are very warm relationships between pupils of different ages and backgrounds. Pupils say that it is easy to make friends and they value the benefits of working together. This was well exemplified by a group of Year 5 pupils who said that they had 'faced their fears together' on a residential visit that tested their skills in adventurous activities such as kayaking. Pupils know what they need to do to reach their targets in their work, as well as how to make the right decisions over everyday matters. Older pupils enjoy helping each other through suggesting improvements that could be made in each other's work. Pupils know how to keep safe and stay fit through eating healthily and being active. Behaviour is excellent and pupils show a high level of maturity. Attendance is good but is prevented from reaching a higher level because of the number of families taking holidays in term-time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Outstanding teaching ensures that pupils know how to learn and work with others. Exciting activities in the Nursery and Reception classes mean that children learn at a rapid rate. Very good questioning by adults prompts the children to answer in a variety of ways. Pupils of all ages know that their ideas will be taken seriously and so they express their views confidently. Teachers make excellent use of assessments to plan work for pupils' different capabilities and to provide challenging targets for pupils. Pupils understand what they need to do next and the consistency with which teaching reviews their progress is a major factor in the pupils' success. Specialist teaching in music, art and design

and sport provides a very good level of challenge for pupils and raises their achievement in these areas. Teachers use ICT very competently to engage pupils' interest, particularly the boys'. There are a few times when teachers too closely direct pupils' learning in problem solving and investigating in mathematics and science, and so pupils do not sufficiently use their own ideas.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

A vibrant curriculum contributes to pupils' enjoyment of school and the high standards achieved. Links with other schools and extra activities, such as opportunities to work with artists or sports coaches, mean that pupils' talents are fostered very well. First-hand experiences gained through interesting visits are used very effectively to enable pupils to use and extend their skills. Year 6 pupils' residential visit to a school in Ireland, for example, led to some excellent artwork based on Celtic designs. Pupils use ICT very well to present their findings, as when Year 1 pupils produced multi-media presentations of their visit to Llandudno. Field visits to a local river by Years 5 and 6 pupils brought learning alive as pupils used their skills in data handling, geography and ICT. Sixty pupils learn a musical instrument and many pupils perform in the school choir and orchestra.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents and pupils rightly praise the school's happy and friendly atmosphere. The outstanding quality of care, guidance and support provided results in pupils feeling well cared for and valued as individuals. They readily seek help if they need it and know that adults will quickly provide the necessary support. They know what their targets are and how well they are doing in their work. Pupils blossom because of the encouragement and high quality guidance from teachers. Quick identification and support for pupils' particular learning needs mean that difficulties are overcome. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are very robust.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Outstanding leadership and management underpin the school's success in maintaining very high standards in pupils' work as well as in their personal development. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership that spurs the staff and pupils on to do their best. He is supported by very able senior staff who have been very influential in raising pupils' achievement through the introduction of target setting. There is a real sense of teamwork and no hint of complacency despite the school's success. The school knows itself exceptionally well because of the rigorous self-review systems. Frequent checks on teaching and learning lead to the identification of where practice is at its best and can be shared. Effective support is given where improvements are

needed. Data about the pupils' performance is used very well to identify areas for improvement and intervention is swift and effective. Boys' achievement, for example, has lagged behind girls' but the school has acted to bring about changes to teaching and the curriculum that have led to the gap being closed. Current priorities include improving opportunities for pupils in problem solving and investigation. The introduction of a Nursery class has been very well managed and monitoring shows that this has boosted children's attainment as they start in the Reception Year. Governors have an excellent understanding of why the school has arrived at its priorities and they are fully involved in monitoring the school's progress. The school knows exactly where it is going and how it will get there.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

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.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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



2 November 2006

Dear Pupils

Oakridge Primary School, Silvester Way, Stafford, Staffordshire ST17 0PR

Thank you for giving me such a warm welcome and helping me with my work when I visited your school. You told me that you are proud of your school and I can see why. It is a great place for you to learn and be with your friends. I enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. This is what I found out about your school:

- You know your targets, make excellent progress with your work and reach very high standards.
- You are a credit to your school because you behave so well, work so hard and help each other.
- You know how to make the right choices about keeping fit, healthy and safe.
- There are so many things to take part in and you told me how much you enjoy the trips and clubs.
- Teaching is very good and teachers make lessons interesting so that you want to learn.
- Everyone takes very good care of you and you get extra help if you need it.
- The people in charge of the school know what they need to do to make the school even better for you.

We have asked your teachers to make sure that:

- You do even better in solving problems in mathematics and investigating in science.

You already play a big part in helping your school to improve. You can help even more by thinking hard about different ways to approach problems or investigations and sharing your ideas with your teachers and classmates. I wish you the very best in the future and keep on 'Reaching for the stars'!

Yours sincerely

Mrs B Crane
Lead inspector