

Oak Farm Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102430
Local Authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	308002
Inspection date	27 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Raminder Arora

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	350
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev. Cliff Bergdahl
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Shasha
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2004
School address	Windsor Avenue Hillingdon Uxbridge UB10 9PD
Telephone number	01895 234375
Fax number	01895 271930

Age group	3-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the extent to which the school's ethos promotes and supports pupils' achievement; the effectiveness of the school in providing the right academic guidance to pupils; and the impact of subject leaders in the drive to improve standards. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, samples of pupils' work and scrutiny of main planning and monitoring documents. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This popular, larger-than-average school draws pupils from very mixed social backgrounds, reflecting changes in the local area. One third of all pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, and more than double the national average do not speak English as a first language. A growing number of pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average, although the proportion with statements of special educational need is slightly above. Building work, to include a Children's Centre, is currently being carried out. The school holds the Basic Skills award and the Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Oak Farm Infant is an outstanding school, which offers a caring learning environment that is both stimulating and secure. One parent spoke for many by writing, 'I find Oak Farm to be exceptional, because the outstanding leadership of the headteacher instils an ethos where each child is an important member of a great team'. The headteacher gives an extremely strong direction to the school's work. This is underpinned by the shared vision and commitment of all staff, governors and pupils, all working for the pursuit of excellence.

The majority of children start in the Nursery with skills and understanding below those usually expected. They make good progress during their time in the Foundation Stage, so that by the time they enter Year 1, just over half have reached the expected learning goals for their age. Pupils make excellent progress in Key Stage 1. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those new to learning English make similar progress; all staff support them with great tenacity to ensure that they settle at school and benefit as much as possible from its provision. By the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently above average.

The school is very effective in overcoming potential barriers to learning. For example, mentoring is offered to pupils with social and emotional difficulties. The school is continuing to work effectively, with constant vigilance for health and safety, during the refurbishment of the building. Parents whole heartedly support the school and value both the good academic standards and the way their children's confidence and abilities in all areas are developed and sustained. One parent wrote, 'Oak Farm's child-centred approach and good standards are a recipe for success'.

Key to the pupils' outstanding achievement is the high quality of teaching and learning. Teaching in most lessons observed was consistently good and often outstanding. There is a shared understanding between pupils, parents and staff that children must attend regularly and enjoy their learning. One parent commented, 'I am so pleased with the progress my son is making while having lots of fun at school'. Teachers make effective use of the interactive whiteboards and hands on experiences, which enliven pupils' learning. In one lesson pupils, testing absorbency of different materials, had a lively discussion. 'Polythene paper is silly, does not absorb water', commented one. Teachers' planning shows the outstanding curriculum creatively linked across different subjects, to make it motivational. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills through drama, role-play and talking partners. The more able, including gifted and talented pupils, receive their own programme of challenges. The curriculum is further enriched with an excellent range of clubs, visits and visitors. Some popular clubs, such as multi-skills, tennis and skipping, are over subscribed.

Pupils' outstanding personal development is supported by an excellent level of care, guidance and support. Pupils are very well supported in setting and reviewing their learning targets for continuous improvement. This provision is rightly being extended to include regular opportunities for pupils to be involved more fully in assessing their own learning to increase further their understanding of what they need to do next to improve their work. Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is exceptionally strong. Their behaviour is exemplary in and around the school. They know right from wrong and have an excellent sense of staying safe. The school is a harmonious community where diversity is celebrated and respected. Pupils feel free from bullying and have a sensitive awareness of the issues involved. They are fully committed to

healthy living, bringing healthy packed lunches to school and taking plenty of exercise. One pupil, enjoying the physical programme of 'early morning skills', commented, 'It is helping me to lose weight and get healthy'. Pupils carry out a variety of responsibilities as monitors and as members of the school council. They support the community through recycling paper and vegetable waste, and by engaging actively in various charity events, for example, the non-uniform day, Poppy Appeal and the Red Cross. Pupils' excellent personal skills, along with their well-developed basic skills, fully prepare them for their future schooling.

The school maintains a high quality of provision and standards through its excellent leadership and management. Members of the leadership team, which includes subject leaders, maintain and improve their own teaching. They also enhance the teaching and learning of others through joint planning, looking at pupils' work and sharing new ideas. The governors are fully involved in the school's work. As a result the school's self-evaluation is rigorous and priorities for further improvement are well considered. They are being addressed successfully, for example, the priority to improve boys' progress in reading and writing. The school's strong partnership with the Primary Strategy Network has greatly impacted on this area. Another strength is the way policies and procedures are applied consistently across the school by all staff. Consequently, pupils know exactly what is expected of them. This shows the high expectations that the school has both of the staff and the pupils, and ensures that the school has an outstanding capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The stimulating environment, both indoor and outdoor, and the wide range of well-planned activities, provide firm foundations for children's learning. Teaching is consistently good. The staff have a secure understanding of how young children learn. Children settle well and make good progress as a result. Children's speaking and listening skills are actively encouraged, especially through role-play. They were seen enjoying a puppet show of Goldilocks and using language, such as, 'perform' and 'audience'. Additionally, a skilfully taught language programme is successfully improving children's knowledge of letter sounds. Children presenting speech and language difficulties are very well supported. There is a good balance of teacher directed activities and activities which children choose for themselves. Whilst there is a planned approach to monitoring what children do, a few individuals are sometimes left too much to their own devices and show a lack of motivation.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend opportunities for pupils to be fully involved in assessing their own learning to increase further their understanding of what to do next to improve their work.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the 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

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

07 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oak Farm Infant School, Uxbridge, UB10 9PD

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. You were all very helpful and polite. I thoroughly enjoyed looking at your work and speaking to you. It was great to find so many children who said that they like their school and think it is an excellent place to be. I agree with you. Your school is outstanding. Most of you make exceptional progress. Your behaviour is excellent in and around the school. My working lunch with the school councillors was very helpful. They told me all about the excellent things that the teachers plan to make your lessons 'fun', and how well they look after you. I agree with them.

Here are some more things I like about your school.

- Teachers always teach you very well.
- Some children who find work difficult get excellent support. Along with all of you, they also make rapid progress.
- Everyone, including yourselves and your parents, work well together as a great big team. This means that your school is always looking for ways to get even better.
- Your headteacher, governors and senior staff lead the school very well indeed. They are very keen for you all to do your best.

Here is what I have asked your headteacher, the staff and the school's governors to do to make your work even better.

- Give you lots of opportunities to check your own work in lessons and see how well you are doing and what you need to do next to improve your work.

I hope that you will always enjoy your future education as much as you do at Oak Farm.

Yours sincerely

Raminder Arora

Lead Inspector