

Oakdene Primary School

Ashton Avenue, Rainhill, Prescot, Merseyside L35 0QQ

Inspection dates

1–2 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Most children start school with skills that are typical for their age. They make excellent progress and almost all reached, and well over half exceeded, the nationally expected standards in their tests at the end of Year 6 last year.
- The Reception class provides children with joyful and exciting experiences which are a wonderful start to school life and help them to develop an enthusiasm for learning.
- Lessons are exceptionally well planned and almost all provide interesting and challenging tasks which enable learning to move at a fast pace.
- Pupils respond wholeheartedly to teachers' high expectations and so they make exceptional progress.
- Pupils are extremely polite and very well behaved and treat others with great respect. They are eager to learn and participate enthusiastically in lessons. Attendance is high.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively and this contributes to the harmonious working atmosphere and prepares pupils very well for the future.
- The headteacher shows exceptional determination in driving forward improvements. The rigorous management of teachers' performance by senior leaders has been used to very great effect to identify training needs and so improve the quality of teaching and raise attainment to a high level.
- Governors are a regular presence in school and give excellent support and informed challenge to senior leaders.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed eight teachers in 14 lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. There were also informal discussions with parents in the playground before school.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and scrutinised work in their books.
- They looked at the school development plan and school documentation about pupils' progress, procedures for safeguarding pupils and the monitoring of staff performance. They also looked at the analysis of the use of funding received through the pupil premium.
- Inspectors took account of the 23 responses by parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) as well as the results of a recent survey of parents conducted by the school. They also scrutinised 14 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Shirley Herring, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maureen Coleman

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to the average primary school and each class contains a single age group.
- Almost all pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is low.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average, as is the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs or disabled pupils.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. There is a breakfast and after-school club on site which is managed by the governing body.
- Two new class teachers and a part-time teacher joined the school at the start of this term.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the small proportion of teaching that is good and not yet outstanding by making sure that teachers' explanations are not too long, so these enthusiastic pupils can get on with their work more quickly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Most children start school with skills that are broadly typical for their age. They make excellent progress in the Reception class because the teacher makes very good use of information from assessments to plan work that closely matches the needs of individual children. Letter sounds and counting skills are taught systematically and with great humour which captures children's attention so they make excellent progress in developing these fundamental basic skills. As a result, children start Year 1 with above average skills for their age.
- Pupils continue to make rapid progress in Key Stage 1, and their attainment has been significantly above average for several years. This is because lessons are interesting, suitably practical and build successfully on what pupils already know. For example, pupils in Year 2 practised their multiplication skills as they fed objects into a 'doubling machine' to help them to improve their understanding.
- Pupils make excellent progress in Key Stage 2 because high targets are set and there is excellent teaching and support to enable pupils to achieve these. Though standards have been high for several years, with many pupils doing better than could be expected for their age, the most able pupils were prepared and given the chance to attain even higher in 2012. Some pupils attained the exceptionally demanding Level 6 in English and mathematics, available from 2012, and the school's assessments indicate a similar pattern for this school year.
- Pupils make excellent progress in reading and they reach standards that are above average at the end of Year 2 and are high at the end of Year 6.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do as well as other pupils because they are identified at a very early stage and work is very well matched to their particular needs. They receive high quality support to help them do as well as they can.
- The very few pupils whose first language is not English receive excellent support and achieve at a similar rate to others in their class.
- The small number of pupils supported by the pupil premium do exceptionally well and there is no measurable difference with other pupils.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The outstanding progress made by pupils in recent years supports the view that the quality of teaching has been outstanding over time. Over half of the teaching seen during the inspection was outstanding, confirming that the strength of the quality of teaching is being sustained.
- Teachers have consistently high expectations throughout the school and this is reflected in teachers' comprehensive planning for pupils at different stages of learning to ensure that all do as well as they can.
- Lessons are lively and challenging and grasp pupils' attention and enthusiasm and so they make very good gains in their learning. This was seen in a Year 4 lesson where pupils enjoyed the challenge of using increasingly adventurous adjectives to enliven a 'boring' sentence.
- Learning assistants are very well briefed and deployed successfully in lessons and make an excellent contribution to learning.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is founded on purposeful and well structured practical activities, indoors and outside, that show an excellent understanding of how young children learn. Children respond eagerly to the teacher's high expectations, delivered with great dramatic effect, and they strive to do their very best. This was seen at the start of the day when one child had forgotten to move his name card to register his attendance. Adults made great play of searching for him and the boy quickly realised his mistake saying 'Oops! I forgot!'
- Most lessons move along at a brisk pace and teachers are very skilled in recognising when pupils

are ready to move on to the next stage. This was seen in a mathematics lesson in Year 6 when the more able pupils were set challenging problems comparing imperial and metric measures as the teacher worked successfully with those who needed more practise in converting kilograms to grams.

- Teachers plan excellent opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their basic literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects and this has helped to raise standards in writing and more recently in mathematics.
- Teachers provide extensive opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils work very successfully together as 'perfect partners', take responsibility as class monitors and school councillors and learn about a range of world faiths to help them take their place in a culturally diverse society.
- In those lessons judged to be good rather than outstanding, initial explanations were sometimes too long and so some pupils' attention and interest wandered.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils respond enthusiastically to teachers' high expectations and their behaviour and attitudes to learning are first class.
- They treat both adults and each other with great respect and cooperate very well with each other in lessons and outside. This contributes to the calm, industrious and purposeful working atmosphere in school and enhances their learning.
- They are very proud of their school and thrive on their responsibilities. During an Open Afternoon during the inspection, prospective parents spoke most highly of the confidence and excellent manners of pupils who were showing them around their school.
- Pupils are confident that bullying of any kind is almost unheard of and that rare, minor instances are dealt with swiftly and effectively so pupils feel safe and secure in school.
- Attendance is high. Pupils are happy in school, saying that they looked forward to coming back to school at the end of the holidays and that school is an extension of their family. This was confirmed in discussions with parents.
- They have a mature understanding of how to keep safe, including all aspects associated with using the internet safely.
- They take great pride in their work and are strongly motivated to do their best. This helps them to make such rapid progress.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Though standards have been consistently above average in recent years, there is no complacency here. The headteacher has high expectations of herself and expects no less of others. Staff are very supportive of this approach and say they enjoy the quest for constant improvement in their teaching skills and the achievement of pupils. There is a consistency of approach to aspects such as planning and marking with a strong sense of adults working together and aiming high. New staff say they feel very well supported by their colleagues.
- School leaders have very robust procedures for gaining an accurate view of the school's performance and quickly address any areas that fall short of the highest standard. This was seen in the school's focus on writing which has been successful in increasing the proportion of pupils doing better than the level expected for their age throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching is monitored and evaluated carefully by senior managers and used to identify areas for improvement. The extensive good practice within school is shared to support and develop individual expertise. In service training, linked to the school's priorities, has ensured that teaching is constantly improving, and there is scope for excellent teachers to be promoted

in the school.

- The school's systems for checking pupils' progress are very thorough and are used to identify and provide additional help for any pupil who is not making enough progress.
- The curriculum is exciting and makes pupils keen to learn. It provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and communication skills in all subjects and prepares pupils very well to live in a diverse society.
- Regular newsletters provide very good information about all aspects of school life and parents are very supportive of the school.
- The school is committed to providing equal opportunities for all pupils and discrimination will not be tolerated.
- The before- and after-school club is very well organised and provides a valuable extension to the school day.
- The local authority gives very light touch support to this outstanding school. Indeed the school is held as an example to others and the headteacher supports other schools.
- **The governance of the school is outstanding:**
 - Governors are well aware of their responsibilities and all procedures for safeguarding pupils and staff are in place. Governors have recently completed the very demanding Governor Mark Award which illustrates their expertise and commitment. They are a regular presence in school and have an excellent understanding of the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment, compared to pupils in similar schools. They provide well informed challenge and support for senior leaders and are ready to ask searching questions if required. The Governing Body is well aware of how the pupil premium funding is used to provide support for those for whom it is intended.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	104781
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	402952

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Bromilow
Headteacher	Helen Lee
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2008
Telephone number	01744 678410
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