

Oakthorpe Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131407
Local Authority	Enfield
Inspection number	315802
Inspection date	14 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Sudworth

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 on roll	
School	490
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A Hall
Headteacher	Mr G Cumner-Price
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2004
School address	Tile Kiln Lane London N13 6BY
Telephone number	020 8807 4689
Fax number	020 8807 3302

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school with a particular focus on: a confirmation of the school's apparent strengths in attainment, provision and leadership, the effectiveness of teaching in mathematics and the provision for pupils whose first language is other than English. Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, the vice-chair of the governing body, staff and pupils. Parents' questionnaires were analysed and visits were made to lessons. Work samples and a range of documents and data were examined. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's assessments given in its self-evaluation were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

Oakthorpe is an over-subscribed and larger than average primary school. Children begin the Reception class in small groups and all have begun full-time by the start of the second half of the autumn term. Prior to entry, the children attend a large number of pre-school settings. A significant number does not attend any pre-school provision. Almost half the pupils speak a language other than English as their first language. Nearly one in ten pupils is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than the national average. The school serves a community that contains some areas of high deprivation, but the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is around the national average. Just over four-fifths of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Oakthorpe Primary is an outstanding school led by an outstanding and inspirational headteacher, supported very effectively by a very committed and hardworking staff. Excellent teaching and high levels of care, support and interest in each individual pupil contribute greatly to the pupils' excellent achievements. This is a lively, action-packed place of learning, filled with fun and happiness. Pupils love their school and develop into confident young people with a zest for learning and an intelligent interest in life. As one pupil puts it, and typical of others, 'If I had the choice of staying at home or going to school, I would choose school every time.' This is shown in the pupils' well above average attendance and excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning. This is a very welcoming school with a warm, family atmosphere.

Classrooms are full of learning. Very attractive displays demonstrate pupils' access to a wide range of learning experiences, which is one of the school's great strengths. Pupils thrive in the positive, creative environment and reach well above average standards. Pupils learn from an early age how to investigate in science and so by Year 6 pupils are very competent in planning and carrying out their own experiments. They apply their English skills well in different settings and develop a very good ability in speaking and listening. Pupils acquire a very secure foundation of mathematical competency. They are prepared extremely well for their futures.

Good results are not achieved by an over-concentration on basic subjects. Indeed, the range of the curriculum is one of the school's major strengths. All classes learn German and have excellent opportunities in the arts. In art week, they explored the ideas of different artists and learned much from trying out different artists' creative styles. The imaginative curriculum opens the children's minds and helps to mould them into well-rounded individuals. School productions are a strong feature of the pupils' experience and enable them to put their creative skills into meaningful contexts, for example designing the scenery. The productions, together with the annual speech-making competition, promote pupils' self-confidence extremely well. The school plays a leading role locally as a source of excellence in the humanities and in science. It makes very good use of visits to museums to assist pupils' understanding, for example in history and special weeks that motivate the pupils' quest for knowledge. Pupils excitedly built and set off rockets during science week.

Parents are highly supportive. Many parents write most glowingly of the various features that make this such a successful school. They are highly complimentary about its staff, their approachability and commitment and the fun opportunities that they provide that make their children's education so rewarding. They are clearly extremely proud that their children attend Oakthorpe and regard it as a school of the highest calibre. One parent writes and echoes the views of many, 'Every day my child wakes up with a smile on his face and comes home each evening with a smile and something exciting to tell me about his day of learning.' Others describe Oakthorpe as being 'a jewel of a school' and 'with a fantastic learning environment'.

This is a school that is ever alert, never resting on its laurels and always seeking to improve even more. The staff are always prepared to go the extra mile for the pupils' benefit, for example visiting their link school in Germany and accompanying the residential coastal studies visit when pupils search for fossils. The school's success is shown in the many awards of distinction it has received, including the 'International Award'. Pupils and staff benefit significantly from its link with a school in South Africa and pupils raise money to provide for its needs. Additionally, they

support a range of charities, helping them to appreciate the needs of others. They sing locally to the elderly in the community.

Oakthorpe's quality is recognised in its status as a training school for many new teachers. The students are deployed very beneficially, along with the large number of teaching assistants, so that pupils often receive small group tuition, which ensures that pupils are matched very well to their needs. This contributes significantly to the pupils' excellent progress. Lessons are lively, challenging and active. In a mathematics lesson about angles, pupils put their knowledge of degrees into immediate practice by estimating and measuring angles to make origami designs.

The governing body contributes very effectively to the school's work. Their understanding of the school and staff's monitoring contribute extremely well to the school's excellent knowledge of itself. The exemplary leadership and management structure ensures work is regularly overseen, quality assured and pupils' progress tracked regularly. Monitoring of lessons is very thorough and supports teachers' professional development. Monitoring also ensures that every child is known very well. This enables staff to put in extra teaching for pupils who are not making enough progress so that they have every chance of catching up. There is very good provision for pupils who find learning more difficult and their needs are met very well. Very good provision is made for pupils who have limited skills in the English language and ensures that their proficiency in English improves significantly as they progress through the school.

The teaching organisation successfully meets pupils' learning and emotional needs. Consequently, pupils are confident to approach the adults if they have any worries. They feel very safe and valued. They have an excellent understanding of healthy and safe living and take part enthusiastically in the wide range of sports and other extra-curricular activities after school. They understand the importance of a healthy diet. The recent visit by chefs from a London restaurant added further to this knowledge. The considered voice of the school council helps pupils acquire negotiating skills and to understand democratic processes. Council members have also contributed to local authority debate on several issues. The excellent relationships between staff and children enable the pupils' to grow in self-worth with a healthy respect for each other. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. They draw on influences from a wide variety of cultures, such as Caribbean stories, as a model for their own writing and research African designs to create outfits for their own fashion show. It is a great joy to be in this school in which pupils rise to new heights. The school demonstrates an outstanding capacity for further development.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is slightly below expectations overall. Very stimulating teaching ensures that the children make very good progress. There is a very good balance of purposeful activities that the pupils choose for themselves and those that the staff lead. Learning themes, such as the beach study where the outside area was imaginatively set out as a seaside resort, engaged the children in lots of learning. Children designed sea scenes and traded at the side shows. Staff teach the children letter sounds very effectively, which helps them to make a good start to reading and writing. Most securely reach the expectations in different areas of learning for the end of the Reception year and a significant number of children exceed them. Staff track the children's progress very effectively and use the information well to move pupils' learning on. Leadership and management of the provision are very good. The children quickly settle because of very effective induction arrangements.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no major areas for improvement but the school should continue to fine tune its provision through the developments listed on its school development plan, such as the provision for gifted and talented pupils and raising even further the achievement of some pupils whose first language is not English.

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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?	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	1
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	1
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	1

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

03 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oakthorpe Primary School, London, N13 6BY

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit and talking to you about your school of which you are justly very proud. Your parents think that this is an excellent school and I agree with them. I was very impressed with your excellent behaviour and the interest that you show in your work. The teachers make the lessons really interesting for you and plan exciting activities throughout the year. In addition, there are many things for you to do after school and lots of you join in. You have a good understanding of a healthy diet, keeping safe and the need for exercise.

You are developing very well as young people. The staff take extremely good care of you and they work very well together as a team under Mr Price's excellent leadership. They track your progress very carefully so that you all keep up with your work. The teachers plan the work very thoroughly and meet your individual needs. As a result, you make excellent progress and reach well above average standards. Your work in science really impressed me and you are very confident in planning and undertaking experiments.

I was very interested to learn of the school's links with Gomeri in South Africa and the way in which you raise money to help them. I was impressed to find out that you are learning German and that you also have a link with Germany. Your school productions are highly professional and I was pleased to know that you help so much with the design of the scenery and in other ways. I enjoyed watching the videos of these during the weekend after my visit.

There are no major areas for improvement in your school but I have asked the staff to ensure that they continue with the plans they have set out to develop aspects of the school's work.

I hope that you will continue to work hard and that you will fulfil your ambitions that you shared with me. Thank you once again for being such friendly and helpful pupils.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Sudworth

Lead Inspector