

Oakhurst Community First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113685
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	378742
Inspection dates	11–12 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Rowena Onions

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	131
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rachel Keyms-Burgess
Headteacher	Melanie Davy
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Nine lessons were observed and six teachers were seen teaching. Meetings were held with pupils, governors and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at data about pupils' progress. In addition, inspectors considered the school improvement plan, reports from the School Improvement Partner and a range of other documentation. Eighty seven responses to the parents' and carers' questionnaire were received and analysed, together with 47 pupil and 23 staff responses to their respective questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The success of teaching and the curriculum in promoting boys' progress.
- The effectiveness of assessment, including marking, in helping pupils to know how to improve their work.
- The effectiveness of provision in promoting the personal development and academic progress of minority groups, including the more vulnerable pupils.
- The impact of shared school self-evaluation and development planning on school improvement.

Information about the school

This smaller than average sized school serves its local area on the outskirts of Ferndown. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage, with a small number who are of Gypsy/Roma heritage. Only a very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is rising and is a little above the national average. An above average percentage of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities; these include behaviour, moderate learning, and speech, language and communication difficulties. Children, including those in the Reception year, are taught in single age group classes. The school has gained several awards including UNICEF Rights Respecting School and the International School awards. A number of governors joined the governing body this term and the Chair of the Governing Body was very recently elected.

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

Oakhurst is a good school. Good leadership and management have promoted significant improvements in the education provided since the school's last inspection. Pupils' progress has accelerated and is now good overall and, as a result, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is now above average at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 4. Outstanding care and guidance enable all pupils to be fully supported and this has a particular impact on ensuring that all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. Careful tracking of the progress of each individual is linked with well-planned interventions to successfully promote this. Although boys in the school make good progress overall, school data show that, in some year groups, the progress made by girls is greater than that made by boys and this is an issue that the school is rightly seeking to address. Outstanding, highly effective leadership by the headteacher has provided the school community with the vision, energy and drive to make a wide range of improvements. School self-evaluation is detailed and accurate. The shared commitment to making further improvements, together with the track record of success, shows that the school has good capacity to sustain improvement.

The pupils like school. They talk enthusiastically about their work, being particularly positive about exciting days, often at the beginning of a topic, when they undertake activities such as solving the crime of who stole their teacher's surf board! The school has spent time and effort on developing a curriculum that successfully enables pupils to develop skills systematically in a wide range of subjects. Thought has been given to ways that the progress of all pupils, but particularly that of boys, can be best promoted. Teachers take care to plan interesting and relevant activities in lessons. In the main pupils respond well and are keen to work at these activities, both individually and in partnership with others. In some lessons, the balance of pupil activity and teacher talk is not helpful in promoting good progress as occasionally too much time is given to explanations rather than learning. Boys in particular are affected by this and occasionally a small minority do not listen attentively to their teachers when requested. Although they do not misbehave, this lack of attention slows their progress.

Overall behaviour is good. Pupils are well behaved around the school and play a good part in promoting the good behaviour of others. Their contribution to the school and wider community is exceptional. Through activities such as accompanying governors when they are checking safeguarding arrangements, or through monitoring politeness in their own and linked local first schools, they gain a real

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sense of the rights and responsibilities of belonging to a community. This is further developed through the way they are encouraged to take increasing responsibility for their own learning. Very successful development of assessment means that pupils are always sure what they will be learning in a lesson and how they will recognise success. Marking, particularly in English, is precise in showing pupils where they have been successful and where they could have improved their work.

The development of systems to include staff, governors and pupils in evaluating the work of the school has strengthened leadership and had significant, positive impact on school self-evaluation and improvement. Although the development of this team remains as work in progress, the number of people involved has allowed the school to improve on many fronts over the last three years. Safeguarding and the support of individual pupils are very well promoted by very good links with parents and carers. In many ways, the information provided for parents and carers is strong. However, although they are given information at the beginning of each half term about what will be taught, this is not frequent enough to be specific in telling them how they could help and encourage their children at home. The school has forged very strong partnerships with others that have had impact in promoting both the outstanding way in which the school safeguards its pupils and in extending the curriculum in a way that otherwise could not have been afforded. Links with the local group of schools have enabled this and been instrumental in raising the quality of teaching and learning through shared professional development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that boys in all year groups make progress equal to that of girls by:
 - making sure there is a good balance of teacher talk and pupil activity in all lessons so that all pupils stay on task and maintain concentration
 - developing strategies to encourage all pupils to listen attentively to their teacher when requested to do so.
- Provide parents and carers with more frequent, specific advice about how they can help and encourage their child at home.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' enthusiasm for learning is evident in many lessons. Pupils are eager to discuss with each other and to engage in activities. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, pupils were very keen to discuss possible stories behind photographs and to learn to write these in the style of a newspaper report. Pupils want to please and the precise way in which they are informed about what constitutes success means that they can target their efforts and gain self-esteem through knowing they have done well. This self-esteem extends to all pupils and, combined with very effective personal guidance and a wide range of extra educational support, means that a wide range of pupils including those of Gypsy/Roma heritage, those who are potentially vulnerable and

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the small number who speak English as an additional language, make good progress. The focus on the individual means that each pupil feels known, valued and supported and hence they feel safe and secure in school. Although boys make good progress, the progress of girls in some year groups is close to outstanding and boys' progress does not match this.

Through the school's work to become a Rights Respecting School, pupils have gained a good understanding of the way they need to consider others as well as themselves. They show empathy for others, for example, by choosing to raise money for a charity that supports very sick children because they have experience of a number of pupils in the school who have serious medical conditions. Pupils' behaviour and the way they make a significant contribution to working to improve the school exemplify their good moral and social development. Pupils, through the International Schools Award work, are developing an understanding of the way others live in different countries, but the school is correct in working to extend this to greater knowledge of the United Kingdom community. Pupils are very active and keen to be so; they understand that exercise has strong effects on the heart and other aspects of their health. Pupils know, at a level relevant to their ages, how to maintain emotional health, for example understanding that worries are better discussed. They know about a healthy diet, but the fact that few wanted to add salad to their ham and potatoes at lunch illustrates that they are not always keen to apply what they know.

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	1
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good. Teachers are responsive to pupils' interests and willing to adapt the curriculum. For example, because of Year 4 pupils' interest in photographs used in their lesson, these will become the focus of further work. This means that pupils gain a sense of ownership of what they are learning, further promoting their enthusiasm. The way that English is integrated with learning in other subjects is helping pupils to see the relevance of what they learn. This type of approach is not as well developed in mathematics but is already the focus of school improvement. The work of teaching assistants is well planned and is a very successful aspect of teaching and the curriculum, especially in the promotion of good progress for less able and more vulnerable pupils. Teachers use their assessments of pupils' attainment to challenge them in lessons and to adapt work to the particular needs of different groups. Lessons are generally suitably active, but in their anxiety to ensure that pupils are making the best progress, there are occasions when teachers interrupt pupils in the course of their activities and some interruptions only serve to reduce the time pupils have to complete them. It is in part because the interruptions are not always well judged that some pupils, particularly boys, are inclined not to attend as well as they should.

The very strong care, guidance and support mean that the school is notably successful in engaging with a wide range of parents and carers. Robust and concerted work to promote better rates of attendance has been very successful. Consequently, attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now above average. Very close relationships with other professionals help ensure the best possible provision in terms of support for pupils with additional emotional, physical and social needs. Parents' and carers' views are typified by one who wrote, 'We feel that the school's enthusiasm and support has been outstanding for our child and for ourselves.'

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has very successfully led work towards making the school as effective as possible. The drive towards excellence is clear; some aspects of the school are already outstanding and some are already well on track to being so. Other

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staff are taking an increasing role in checking the work of the school and this remains an area that the school is working to develop. The governing body is now active in working with the school at many levels including the regular first-hand checking of its work. Working with children to do this is a particularly notable feature. Governors, including those who have recently joined the governing body, are taking an increasing role in holding the school to account and influencing development planning but acknowledge that they need to gain more confidence in their ability to do this. Parents and carers too are becoming more influential in suggesting school improvements and the school is very open to these suggestions.

The school has been highly involved in the development of a local partnership of schools and this has led to enhanced professional development for staff and much wider curriculum opportunities for pupils. It has also allowed the school to bid for money to support initiatives, such as the improvement of the outside learning area for Year 1 pupils, which it would have been unable to do alone. This, along with the partnerships forged with local facilities and businesses, has helped the school to manage its resources and budget well. This collaborative work is also illustrative of the work done to promote community cohesion locally as well as within the school community. Work through the Rights Respecting School and International School awards extends this well to the wider world and there are good plans to strengthen work with regard to the United Kingdom community. These initiatives are also aimed at eliminating discrimination and show the school's regard for ensuring equality of opportunity for all. The improved monitoring of the progress made by different groups has been effective in reducing any potential differences in achievement. The school was aware of the difference between the progress made by boys and that of girls in some year groups and had already begun to look at ways to improve this. Safeguarding has been given the utmost importance and is seamlessly integrated with everything the school does, contributing to the good progress of all pupils as well as to their safety and well-being.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2
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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are given a good start to their education in the Reception class. Very strong links with parents and carers, and induction procedures that begin a year before the children enter the school, mean that the children settle very quickly and are happy in school. Opportunities to work alone, in groups or with adults, both indoors and out, and well-planned activities engage children’s interests and promote their learning well. Children were, for example, greatly enjoying playing outside with a range of musical instruments, providing them with a fun opportunity to listen more carefully to a range of sounds. Although they have a wide range of attainments when they enter the school, many of the children have communication and language skills that are below those expected for their age. Because of good interventions by adults to encourage the use of language and the development of vocabulary, children are successfully encouraged to develop these skills. Progress is good and by the end of the year, most of the children have attainments in line with those typically expected in all aspects of their development. A good number of the children exceed this, but it is more often the case for girls than for boys. This is in part because observations show that the girls are more inclined to choose a range of activities, including active tasks and those that require fine motor skills, while the boys tend to spend more time on the active tasks. The staff recognise the need to ensure that some children, particularly boys, are challenged more precisely by receiving more direction about which tasks they should undertake.

Effective work has been done to develop provision in the Reception class since the last inspection and this demonstrates good capacity to improve further. The development of ongoing partnerships with parents and carers is strong: as a result, they are encouraged to come into school and to continue these positive habits when their children move to Year 1 and beyond.

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

An above average number of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire. The vast majority of parents and carers were highly positive about all aspects of the school. Inspectors’ judgements match these positive opinions. A very

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small number of parents and carers expressed concerns about the way unacceptable behaviour is dealt with in school. Inspection findings are that most pupils behave well overall and that there are good systems for ensuring this.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oakhurst Community First 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 87 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 131 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	64	30	34	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	62	71	24	28	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	54	62	32	37	0	0	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	54	62	31	36	0	0	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	64	74	22	25	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	64	74	22	25	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	57	66	29	33	0	0	0	0
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)	59	68	24	28	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	55	63	30	34	0	0	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	41	43	49	5	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	49	39	45	2	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	63	72	22	25	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	67	77	18	21	1	1	0	0

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 all 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



13 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oakhurst Community First School, Ferndown, BH22 0DY

We really enjoyed our time in your school and want to thank you for the helpful way you spoke with us. We agree with you that your school is good.

These are some of the things we liked best:

- The good progress you make in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The excellent contribution you make in helping your school community to run well and to improve. We especially liked the way some of you have worked with the governors to do this.
- The good teaching you receive and the range of exciting activities planned for you which help you to be interested in your work.
- The way your teachers help you know how to improve your work.
- The partnerships with other schools that help you and your teachers to make your school even better.
- The outstanding way in which your headteacher, teachers and other staff take care of each and every one of you, which makes you feel safe and valued.
- We think your headteacher is really special in the way she has helped your school to improve.

To make things become even better we have asked your school to do these things:

- Make sure all the boys always make as much progress as girls by:
 - ensuring there is a good balance of the time you all have for activities and the time you spend listening to your teachers
 - helping you all to have the self-control to always listen properly to teachers when you are asked to.
- Give your parents and carers more information about ways they can help you at home.

You can all help to do these things by listening really hard in class. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Rowena Onions
Lead inspector

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