

Oxhey First School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	124149
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380818
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2012
Lead inspector	Deborah Udakis HMI

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

Type of school	First
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	250
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Shenton
Headteacher	Sally Oxley
Date of previous school inspection	22 January 2007
School address	Pennine Way Biddulph ST8 7EB
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Age group	3–9
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Introduction

Inspection team

Deborah Udakis

Her Majesty's Inspector

Rosemary Keen

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed a total of 17 lessons; a total of 11 teachers and the majority of teaching assistants were seen; inspectors held discussions with parents and carers, groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work in lessons, in work books, pupils' assessments and homework challenges. A total of 126 parental questionnaires were received.

Information about the school

Oxhey First School is an average-sized school compared to others of the same type. It is a stable school which includes Early Years Foundation Stage provision for nursery and Reception pupils. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average.

The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with others coming from a range of minority ethnic groups, and just a few being at the early stages of learning English. There is also a very small proportion of pupils who are supported by school action plus and those who have a statement of special educational needs. Their needs predominantly relate to moderate learning difficulties.

The school has achieved the Quality Mark award in 2009, Healthy eating award in 2011, and the Dyslexia Friendly Level 1 award. In 2011 the school met the requirements for the Anti-Bullying pledge.

An after-school club operates in the school and is run by a private provider.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Pupils are thriving because the quality of teaching is predominantly good and there is some outstanding teaching. It is not an outstanding school because most teaching is good and there is a minority of satisfactory teaching.
- Leaders and managers at all levels are motivated, enthusiastic and highly skilled. They share high expectations and ambition for the pupils and their families. Strong and effective leadership of teaching and robust performance management support improvements well. Teaching is predominantly good. The school is well placed to improve as a result of leaders' and governors' drive to succeed.
- Pupils' attainment is above the national average and they make good progress overall. Therefore, achievement is good. However, boys are not always provided with writing activities to maintain their interest and concentration so that they develop the skills and understanding needed to become successful writers.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and is consistently a source of pride for staff and leaders. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and arrangements to keep them safe and secure are extremely thorough. Throughout the school, they demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Attendance is well above the national average and pupils arrive at school on time and eager to learn.
- Relationships with the large majority of parents and carers are trusting and supportive. However, a small number of parents raised concerns about the arrangements for split classes in Years 3 and 4. Their concerns were referred to the headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Improve the overall effectiveness of the school so that it becomes outstanding by July 2014 by:
 - ensuring that the recent changes are firmly consolidated and that the majority of teaching is outstanding, with no teaching judged less than good
 - ensuring that exciting and relevant writing activities are always provided to maintain pupils' interest and concentration (particularly boys) so that the pace and rate of learning never slows
 - accelerating pupils' progress by improving teachers' use of strategies to promote all pupils active engagement in learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils consistently attain above the national average. Lesson observations during the inspection, teachers' assessments and work in pupils' books show that almost all pupils make good progress and a few pupils make outstanding progress. Boys' progress in writing resulted in a dip in progress in 2011. As a result of targeted interventions, teachers' assessments show that pupils are on track to make good or better progress at the end of Year 4. For instance, 95% of children make better than expected progress in reading, and 65% make better than expected progress in mathematics. Most pupils, including younger pupils in Years 1 and 2, are very able readers and many read beyond their age expectations.

There are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils. Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those new to English make similar progress to their peers within the school. They receive high-quality support which reinforces their good progress and learning in lessons.

Pupils start nursery with skills broadly in line with those expected for their age. They make rapid progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are well prepared for the next phase of their education. Highly reflective teachers carefully monitor the progress of each child and use their knowledge of individual children and their prior learning to plan and provide exciting and challenging activities. For instance, in an outstanding lesson in the Early Years Foundation Stage the children were highly motivated writers as they developed their story books with the support of high quality story-telling puppets, and produced their own passports in readiness for their 'travels to Spain'. However, high level writing activities are not consistently or routinely provided across the whole of the school. The strong and effective cross-curricular links established in Reception reinforce children's learning as they are taught the sounds that letters make (phonics) discretely and develop their learning both indoors and outdoors.

Almost all parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire expressed

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positive views of their children's progress at the school. Most spoke very highly of the school and agree that their children are happy and are achieving well.

Quality of teaching

The majority of the teaching is good. There is some outstanding and some satisfactory teaching. In the most successful lessons teachers ensure all pupils make strides in their learning. However, in several lessons one or more pupils appeared at times not to be fully engaged in their learning and teachers did not consistently address this. In satisfactory lessons, pupils make less progress than they are capable of. Nevertheless, those who responded to the pupils' questionnaire said they learn a lot in lessons. All pupils who made their comments known spoke about their school with pride and affection. One pupil commented, 'Oxhey is a fun place to learn. We always come up with challenging tasks. Our teachers try to make learning fun'. In the nursery and Reception, teaching is consistently good or better. Most parents and carers agree that teaching is good at the school. Most teachers use imaginative teaching strategies and consider the needs of the pupils carefully and consciously at the planning stage. As a result, almost all pupils are engaged and enjoy their learning. One Key Stage 2 pupil was eager to comment that they had just had the, 'Best maths lesson ever'. They explained how they had learned how to use a set square and now fully understood the definition of a right angle.

In most lessons, the learning is well matched to the pupils' needs and there is an appropriate level of challenge for the pupils. As a result, almost all pupils make good progress, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. In good and outstanding lessons, teachers are ambitious for all pupils and they make very effective use of accurate assessment to ensure that all pupils are challenged appropriately. For instance, in a Year 3/4 literacy lesson, pupils showed high levels of enthusiasm and engagement. They worked collaboratively, verbally using increasingly complex adjectives and adverbials to enhance their use of language. However, opportunities for pupils to practice their writing were not prevalent in this lesson. In successful lessons teachers make effective use of steps to success, on-going assessment and regularly check pupils understanding to inform the direction of their learning. Pupils talk confidently about their targets, what level they are working at as they move along the 'Learning Journey Rainbow' and how they are going to improve.

In the most effective lessons, pupils make rapid progress due to the outstanding teaching which is carefully targeted and focused on the specific learning needs of the pupils.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding and this is a consistent feature of the school. Most parents, who expressed a view, agree that behaviour is good and almost all agreed that their child is safe at the school. Pupils say that they feel very safe and secure and that they receive prompt and sensitive

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attention if they become ill or upset. One pupil commented; 'The staff are always there for you if you have any worries'. According to pupils, bullying is not an issue in the school and they are confident that any unwelcome behaviour is dealt with quickly by adults. This is largely as a result of highly effective strategies which are known and understood by children. For instance, the 'Bully Busters' programme, the consistent application of the 'Golden Rules', the positive emphasis on peer support and strong sense of belonging to the school all support the pupils' high levels of emotional well-being.

Pupils develop a sense of duty and responsibility as they take on specific roles such as learning partners, eco-warriors and gardeners, Bully Busters, and as members of the school council. The eco-warriors and gardeners take excellent care of the school chickens. Pupils are encouraged to develop their learning through entrepreneurial endeavours. They hold fund-raising events to make money from their investments. They sell the eggs laid by the chickens and use the money to buy chicken feed. The eco-warriors and gardeners received recognition for their hard work, receiving a local business financial award.

Extra-curricular activities support pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development. In addition to their business projects, pupils participate in a wide range of events to raise money for chosen charities. Adults and pupils treat each other with respect and good attention is paid to equality, inclusion and pupils' individual circumstances. The effective use of learning buddies and peer assessment in lessons is developing a climate and ethos of mutual respect and appreciation between pupils. The learning buddy programme has proved successful in helping to remove barriers to learning and improving pupils' progress and life skills.

Attendance is consistently above average and pupils arrive each morning on time and ready to learn.

Leadership and management

Key leaders and managers, including the governing body, consistently communicate high expectations and ambition. They model good practice and demonstrably work to monitor, improve and support teaching, encouraging the enthusiasm of staff and channelling their efforts and skills to good effect. Planned actions based on accurate self-evaluation to overcome weaknesses have been concerted and effective. Leaders share a policy of zero tolerance of poor performance. As a result, teaching is improving and is predominantly good. Pupils' attainment has been consistently above average for the last three years. This, together with good progress made over the last year and seen in lessons, supports pupils' good achievement overall.

The school's curriculum provides exciting and challenging learning for all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The introduction of 'Discovery themes' is reaping benefits as pupils are becoming increasingly curious and explorative in their learning. This is an inclusive school and inclusion is at the heart of all the school does. Pupils are developing a knowledge

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and understanding of other cultures and differences through planned lessons and trips to mosques, temples, and other places of interest. Pupils' safety and well-being is of leaders' primary concern and the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are thorough. They are well supported in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school works well with parents and carers. Most parents and carers who made their comments known hold the school in high regard. They say that communication with the school is effective and regular.

The governing body plays a vital role in the leadership of the school. Governors hold the school to account through effective use of challenge, questioning and support. Highly motivated and robust leadership at all levels and evaluation systems drive improvements at the school. Sophisticated performance management is leading to good and improving progress for pupils and has improved the quality of teaching. The school has a clear pathway to success.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



29 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oxhey First School, Biddulph ST8 7EB

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing all the exciting things you do each day. We think your school is good. Leaders and teachers are working hard to fire your imagination and love of learning, and the results of this are seen throughout the school. The adults are very skilled at caring for you, keeping you safe and making sure you do well in everything you do. Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. Well done! It is a very friendly and safe place in which to work and play. You said that you feel safe and secure at school. The excellent 'Bully Busters' and 'Golden Rules' ensure that bullying is not a problem. You take great pride in your school and we agree with the school motto that your school is, 'A happy place to learn, achieve and grow'.

These are just some of the things we found are good at your school.

- You make good progress in your learning and you have very good attitudes to your learning. Many of you are strong readers and it was a delight to hear some of you read.
- You enjoy school very much because your teachers are good at making sure there are always something to interest you. There is a wide range of exciting after-school activities to support your learning and development.
- You concentrate hard at everything you do. You are caring and kind and work well together. You are curious and use your imagination very well indeed.
- You come to school each day ready to learn. You are rarely if ever late and attendance is very good.
- Children in the nursery and Reception get a good start to their education and are well prepared for Key Stage 1.
- The headteacher, teachers and governors are working hard to make the school even better.

We have asked the headteacher to help you learn even more. We have asked leaders at your school to make sure that all of you learn as much as possible by ensuring all teaching is good or better, that all pupils are actively engaged in lessons, and that you are always provided with exciting writing activities (especially for boys) so you can practise your writing skills. You all can help by always working as hard as you can.

Yours sincerely
Deborah Udakis
Her Majesty's Inspector

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