

High Oakham Primary School

Nottingham Road, Mansfield, NG18 4SH

Inspection dates

21–22 November 2012

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| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils from all backgrounds achieve well. Standards in English and mathematics are above average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils develop good reading and writing skills. They greatly enjoy reading and are very keen to talk about their choices of books.
- Children get off to an excellent start in Reception and make particularly good progress in developing their reading, writing and social skills.
- Across the school, teaching is consistently at least good. Some is outstanding. Teachers take care to match work closely to pupils' needs and ability levels so they all make good progress.
- Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to learning. They are polite, courteous and friendly, and willingly support each other.
- The headteacher, deputy and other school leaders have worked successfully to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards since the last inspection. Staff are very committed and many say that they are proud to work at the school.
- The governors have played an important part by providing high levels of support while challenging leaders to keep on improving pupils' education. They have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and know the school very well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers ask questions skilfully to involve the whole class in discussions or to make pupils think harder.
- Teachers' marking does not always show pupils how to improve their work, and when they occasionally talk too long at the start of lessons this cuts the time available for learning.
- Although leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, their development plans are not sharply focused enough to help accelerate further improvements.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons taught by 15 teachers, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher. Inspectors also made a series of shorter visits to lessons, listened to pupils read and observed an assembly.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils and two governors. A telephone discussion was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 54 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, as well as letters submitted during the inspection. They also considered the views of the 32 staff who returned the inspection questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked closely at a range of documentation, including information on pupils' performance, the school's own analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding and behaviour policies, and records and documents relating to the targets set for teachers to improve their work.

Inspection team

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|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Julie Price Grimshaw, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Andrew Timmins | Additional Inspector |
| Pamela Hemphill | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- High Oakham is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with a very small minority coming from other ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for additional support through pupil premium funding is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are catered for in the Reception class. Children join from over 20 pre-school settings across the locality.
- The school meets the government's floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A pre-school group and an after-school club share the school site; these are subject to a separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by making sure that:
 - teachers improve their use of questioning to involve every pupil in discussions and make them think harder
 - lesson introductions are kept brief so that pupils have more time to develop their learning skills, particularly in groups or on their own
 - marking and feedback always clearly show pupils how to improve their work.
- Accelerate the school's progress by making sure that development planning is sharply focused on the main priorities for improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' progress has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now good. All groups of pupils achieve well and attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average in English and mathematics.
- Children's skills when they join the Reception class vary considerably, but overall are in line with expectations for their age. They benefit from outstanding provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and many make excellent progress during the year, entering Year 1 with above-average skills, particularly in reading and writing. Children choose to write frequently, supported by exceptionally high-quality resources. One child said, 'I write all the time, I just enjoy it so much!'
- Older pupils build on this excellent start and go on to achieve well in Key Stages 1 and 2. Their enthusiasm for reading and writing is promoted further across both key stages, leading to particularly good achievement in English by the end of Year 6. Pupils are confident and keen readers who enjoy talking about their choice of fiction and non-fiction texts.
- Pupils also achieve well in mathematics and develop good numeracy skills. They particularly like using their mathematical skills in real-life situations, as seen in a Year 1 lesson when pupils thoroughly enjoyed weighing tomatoes and discussing a range of questions relating to this task.
- All groups of pupils achieve well. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the careful attention paid to providing tailored support, for instance through one-to-one help and guidance from teaching assistants.
- Pupil premium funding has been used very successfully to support not just the academic achievement, but also the personal development of eligible pupils through activities such as trips and visits out of school, leading to increased confidence. Consequently, these pupils do better than similar groups nationally.

The quality of teaching is good

- Staff create a very positive climate for learning across the school through high-quality classroom displays, often featuring impressive examples of pupils' work, and positive relationships with pupils. Each classroom features a wide range of resources, including good-quality books, to support learning.
- A key strength of teaching across the school is the way in which teachers use the information they collect on pupils' attainment and progress to set work that closely matches pupils' individual needs. Lessons are well prepared and much thought is given to providing a suitable level of challenge for each pupil. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils investigating methods of subtraction were set different tasks at just the right level of difficulty. The teacher and teaching assistant supported and checked the understanding of all pupils, so that everyone made good progress.
- Teachers plan work together, taking on board each other's ideas. Lessons are well structured with clear learning aims, and this supports pupils' good progress.
- The quality of teaching in the Reception class is outstanding. Teachers and support staff understand when it is appropriate to intervene to support children's learning and when it is more

beneficial to allow children to play together and learn for themselves. Children's progress is recorded and celebrated, resulting in happy, confident learners who are eager to talk at length about their achievements. Across the school, teachers track pupils' progress thoroughly and are setting increasingly ambitious targets for them.

- Support staff make a strong contribution to learning in most lessons, particularly for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- In a few lessons, teachers ask searching questions to check pupils' understanding and extend their learning. However, this good practice is not widespread enough and in some lessons teachers rely too much on pupils putting their hands up in response to questions, rather than involving all pupils by targeting questions at individuals and groups. Teachers also occasionally miss opportunities to develop pupils' thinking skills through skilful questioning.
- All lessons include opportunities for pupils to work individually and in groups on a variety of tasks and activities. Nevertheless, in a few lessons teachers talk for too long rather than encouraging pupils to be more active and to develop the ability to work on their own without direct supervision.
- Most teachers provide encouragement and guidance in their marking on the next steps that pupils need to take. However, not all staff check that pupils follow up their advice.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well, both in the classroom and around the school building. They are polite and courteous to each other and to adults, including visitors to the school. During the inspection, many pupils spontaneously offered help to inspectors, including giving directions if needed.
- Attitudes to learning are good. Pupils enjoy lessons and say that teachers work hard to make lessons fun. They apply themselves well to tasks, respond well to opportunities to take on responsibility, and enjoy providing help and support to each other.
- Pupils have a clear awareness of what constitutes bullying and know how they should respond to such behaviour. They are aware of cyber-bullying and prejudice-based harassment but feel that bullying is not an issue within the school as pupils respect each other. They also say that staff are caring and deal very well with any concerns they may have.
- Staff manage behaviour well. Pupils are aware of the school's behaviour management systems and know that staff have high expectations of them. The great majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that behaviour was good at the school.
- Attendance is above the national average and pupils are punctual.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders have been very successful in tackling the areas for improvement identified during the previous inspection. As a result, pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching have improved considerably.
 - The staff share a vision for the school's future and are extremely committed to their work. The
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staff questionnaires reflect high morale and a strong team spirit. They made comments such as, 'I feel privileged to be part of this team,' and, 'I have been supported in every possible way since joining the school.'

- Teaching is managed well; consequently, all teaching in the school is at least good. Staff benefit from senior leaders' thorough and regular lesson observations, data analysis and checking of pupils' work, and the good range of training and coaching they provide. These systems enable the headteacher to make fair judgements on teachers' pay rises and career progression.
 - Leaders are aware of the school's main strengths and weaknesses. However, this is not fully reflected in their development planning documents, which are not based clearly enough on the key priorities they have identified to really help the school improve.
 - Pupils enjoy a good range of interesting and stimulating activities. There are plenty of chances to use their literacy, numeracy and communication skills across a good range of subjects. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Moral and social development is particularly strong; pupils are aware of the meaning of the school's motto, 'Be true to yourself' and this is evident in their self-respect and respect for each other.
 - Pupils also enjoy a good range of activities beyond lessons, particularly in music. The ukulele group was observed making excellent progress during a rehearsal, and there is also a school choir and rock band. Pupils say that they greatly appreciate these activities.
 - The local authority has appropriately provided 'light touch' support to the school on the basis of its good performance.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have played an important role in improving the school since the last inspection. They have supported the school's leaders while asking searching questions about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. They have an accurate understanding of the school's performance in comparison to similar schools nationally. Governors have contributed to discussions on how the pupil premium funding should be spent, and have checked the impact of the support and guidance provided for eligible pupils on their progress. Governors are also well informed about the systems for managing staff performance and the way pay rises are decided. They make a strong contribution to the governing body's work through a range of specialist skills and expertise. They are well trained and meet all their responsibilities, including national requirements for safeguarding children. Individual governors are linked to various aspects of the school's work, including literacy, numeracy and special educational needs, and have encouraged leaders in charge of subjects and aspects to develop their management skills.
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What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 133278 |
| Local authority | Nottinghamshire |
| Inspection number | 406507 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 5–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 416 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | John Sankey, MBE |
| Headteacher | Peter Mansfield |
| Date of previous school inspection | 10 March 2011 |
| Telephone number | 01623 461313 |
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