

Oulton Primary School

Green Lea, Oulton, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS26 8NT

Inspection dates 5–6 December 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' attainment, although improving, is low in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6. This is the result of previous inadequate teaching which slowed pupils' progress.
- The teaching of early reading skills is not yet good because some pupils are still not secure in their knowledge of the different sounds that letters make to help them to read unfamiliar words. Some older pupils' advanced reading skills are not sufficiently developed.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of the amount and quality of work produced by pupils.
- Most of the senior leaders are fairly new to their role and it is too soon to see the full impact of recently initiatives.
- The curriculum, which is enjoyed by pupils, is in its early stages of redesign and does not yet fully meet all pupils' needs.
- The quality of children's learning in the outdoor classroom of the Early Years Foundation Stage does not match that evident inside. This is because it is the last part of the new school building to be developed.
- A few pupils behave badly at times but are effectively managed by staff.

The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving school. Over the last year, pupils throughout the school have made significant progress in reading, writing and mathematics because the quality of teaching has improved.
- Attendance has improved because pupils are excited about coming to school. Behaviour and safety are good.
- The good leadership of the headteacher has been a key factor in making remarkable improvements within the school in such a short time.
- Leaders have ensured that the new school building is stimulating and welcoming. Pupils say, 'It is a much better place to learn.'

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons taught by 13 teachers. Four of these were jointly observed with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspection team observed pupils working in small groups and short visits to classrooms to look at the curriculum and improvements made by the school.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading and met with three groups of pupils. They also spoke to members of the governing body, a local headteacher who is a Local Leader of Education, two representatives from the local authority, school staff, senior leaders and spoke informally to parents at the start of the day.
- Inspectors took account of the 28 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), telephone calls made by parents, letters written by parents and the 37 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents. These included the school's data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documents, records of the checks by the school on how well it is doing, minutes of governing body meetings and policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Sharona Semlali, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Diane Buckle	Additional Inspector
Lesley Richardson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Oulton is slightly larger than most primary schools. A very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- Almost half the pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is well above the national average. (The pupil premium is additional funding provided for children who are looked after by the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those children of service families.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average. The proportion of those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs on site, which are managed by the governing body.
- There is use of off-site provision at a local Pupil Learning Centre based at a neighbouring primary school.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher was appointed in September 2011 and new deputy headteacher appointed in April 2012. At the beginning of this academic year eight new teachers were appointed, of which three are newly qualified.
- All the senior leaders are fairly new to their roles.
- The school moved into a brand new building in June 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to be consistently good or better by:
 - improving the quality of the outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage to match the indoor classrooms
 - providing opportunities for pupils to respond consistently to written feedback in all subjects
 - sharing the good practice that is already in the school
 - ensuring that the work is at the right level of difficulty and particularly that the more able pupils are given tasks to make them think hard.
- Raise pupils' achievement in English and mathematics by:
 - enabling the newer teachers to have the same high quality training in mathematics as that received by the others so they can deliver effective lessons in the subject
 - embedding the teaching of letters and sounds so that all pupils can read unfamiliar words, and broadening the advanced reading skills of older pupils
 - ensuring that pupils have the opportunity to write at length and produce more high quality, neatly presented written work in all subjects.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - enabling subject leaders to check more fully on their subjects and thus help to improve pupils' achievement
 - ensuring the curriculum develops pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in each subject
 - further strengthening the work of the governing body by enabling it to be more rigorous in holding leaders to account for the school's performance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are well below those expected for their age, especially in their speaking and listening skills. However, by the time they leave the Reception Year their skills in all of the areas of learning have improved.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been low but the current cohort's overall standards are much closer to those expected for age. This is because the quality of teaching in these subjects has significantly improved and pupils have a variety of extra support to help them to make up lost ground.
- The teaching of reading has significantly improved but it still has a long way to go. As a result, some pupils do not have a firm understanding of the different sounds letters make to help them to read challenging words and some of the older pupils' advanced reading skills are not yet secure. Leaders are addressing these issues in a number of ways, for example, by giving pupils personalised support in smaller groups.
- Pupils make most progress in mathematics because they have appropriate opportunities to use a variety of mathematical resources to aid their learning. This was seen in a Year 5/6 class where pupils were working in a small group with an adult looking at 'partitioning numbers.' By physically moving and counting the 'partition number cards,' they developed their understanding of the place value of a three-digit number.
- Because of the school's focus on driving up standards in English and mathematics, pupils' attainment in subjects other than these is not as strong.
- Pupils now have increased opportunities to write for a real purpose, such as writing their own newspaper and magazine articles. However, because teachers do not always expect pupils to do their very best, not all pupils produce a good quantity of neatly presented work.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, those who are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding and those who find themselves in challenging circumstances make good progress given their starting points.
- The attainment of those pupils supported by the pupil premium at the end of Year 6 has been lower than that of other groups in the school and similar pupils nationally, but the gap is closing quickly. This is partly because leaders and governors have agreed to spend the pupil premium funding to employ two learning mentors to support these pupils working from a base called 'The Reef'. Pupils thoroughly enjoy being in this homely and supportive environment that successfully promotes and develops their social and emotional well-being and the quality of their learning. This is helping to close the gap between their attainment and that of other groups.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has significantly improved because leaders have eradicated inadequate teaching. Now there are examples of good and outstanding practice but this is not yet consistent or shared throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching has improved in the Early Years Foundation Stage. At the time of the inspection some of the children in a Reception class were involved in writing a letter to Santa. Teachers ensured that the activities were well prepared which helped to sustain the children's interests. Teachers used lots of encouragement and helpful resources, such as 'phonic mats' to get them to sound out the words they were using. The indoor classrooms are vibrant, well-resourced and organised, but the outdoor area is not yet fully developed and this limits children's physical development.
- Teachers use questioning well. This was shown well in a Years 3/ 4 mathematics lesson where pupils were using bar charts and recalling number facts. The teacher's sharply focused questions, with references to previous learning, helped to secure pupils' understanding of the specific vocabulary, such as 'tallying' and 'frequency chart.'

- In some of the least effective lessons, work given to pupils does not take sufficient account of the skills and knowledge that pupils have already acquired. In particular, some of the more able pupils are not given hard enough work and so their progress slows.
- Teaching contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through their celebration of different religious festivals, such as Hannukah and Diwali. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy dressing up in the different religious costumes. Pupils have the opportunity to learn different types of musical instruments, such as the samba and the steel pans and have successfully held their own service at a local church.
- Marking is consistently good throughout the school and helps to inform pupils what they have done well and the areas that they need to work on. Pupils know their targets and talk about 'tickled pink' and 'green for growth', which is part of the marking policy used by the school. However, pupils' books show that some pupils are not given enough time to respond to the written feedback from teachers.
- Good use is made of the specialist external support to ensure that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum. This is one way that the school is helping to promote equality of opportunity for all. The curriculum is providing increasing opportunities for pupils to use and develop their literacy and numeracy skills in meaningful ways in a range of subjects. However, it is not as successful in developing pupils' skills in other subjects, for example, those in history and geography.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils say they feel safe and can clearly articulate how to keep themselves safe both in and outside school. For example, as a result of the recent construction work, pupils have a good understanding of safety on a building site. Many aspects of the curriculum provide pupils with good information and relevant activities to develop their awareness of safety issues and of how to keep safe.
- The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons and have a positive attitude to their learning. A few misbehave but staff respond promptly and effectively to correct them. Most parents, staff and pupils agree that pupils behave well. Scrutiny of behaviour logs and records show that behaviour is improving.
- The school gives pupils opportunities to take responsibility for their own behaviour and learning. For example, they run the school magazine. In sport, older pupils help to look after the younger ones and help to set up the equipment needed.
- 'The Reef' provides a place where pupils can go if they feel very vulnerable. When pupils attend they feel safe and are very respectful of each other.
- Pupils are very clear about the rewards and sanctions for behaviour and feel this is consistent across all classes. Pupils respond well to the rewards and particularly enjoy 'Golden Time.' Those who always behave are rewarded with a formal invitation to a tea party called 'Always Children.'
- Pupils have a good understanding of what is meant by bullying. Work during the 'Anti-Bullying Week' has deepened their understanding about this. There is some name-calling but it is rare and when it does occur, it is dealt with effectively. Pupils feel confident that all staff will sort out any problems. Pupils say the school is a calm place. The vast majority of parents feel that pupils are safe in school.
- Attendance has improved and is now average. This reflects pupils' increased enjoyment of school and their desire to learn.
- The school provides breakfast and after-school clubs. Pupils are happy to attend and enjoy playing together.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The good leadership of the headteacher, which is fully supported by the appointment of an effective deputy headteacher, has been a key factor in making significant improvements to the school. New senior leaders have been appointed with a view to further strengthening the quality of leadership and management. However, these posts are so new that these leaders have yet to have a significant impact on improvement.
- The main focus over the year has been to improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good. Inadequate teaching has been eliminated. Teachers have appropriate training to help with their performance in the classroom. As a result, teaching has improved and pupils have made more progress during this last year.
- The curriculum is in the early stages of being redesigned. Currently, there is sufficient attention to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics, but too little emphasis has been placed on developing pupils' skills in other subjects. The school provides opportunities for pupils to go on different visits. Pupils in Year 4 and Year 6 experience residential visits that effectively promote their ability to work in teams, solve problems, establish a wider circle of friends and to communicate more successfully.
- There is a range of clubs on offer to pupils including cookery, choir, using computers and cross-country training.
- All safeguarding practices and procedures meet requirements, which helps to ensure pupils' safety in school.
- Parents who responded to the on-line survey, those who took part in the parent survey carried out by the school and those who informally spoke to inspectors, were mostly supportive of the school. Parents commented on how pleased they were with the new school building and a typical comment made was, 'my child is happy.' The school is striving to involve parents more in the life of the school. One of the ways it is doing this is by inviting them into school to read with their child at the beginning of the week and then having discussions over a cup of coffee.
- The local authority supports the school, particularly in providing a personalised training package for the staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors manage finances well and are involved in deciding how pupil premium funding should be spent and in checking on that it is making a difference. The governing body ensures that rigorous performance management of the headteacher and all the teaching staff takes place. Governors have received training in order to carry out this role, but are also supported by the local authority. The governing body ensures that the performance management of teachers is linked to increases in teachers' salaries. Teachers are only financially rewarded if they demonstrate that pupils are doing well. The governors have created the 'Joint Review Group' which has been in operation since February 2012. It works alongside members of the senior leadership team to check on and improve the quality of teaching and on pupils' achievement. Governors have only just begun to more rigorously challenge leaders about the school's performance.

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	107842
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	405126

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	316
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ron Walker
Headteacher	Joanne Smithson
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2010
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