

# Offley Endowed Primary School

School Lane, Offley, Hitchin, SG5 3AT

**Inspection dates** 27–28 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Achievement is good. Pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection and is now good in all year groups.
- The school provides good additional adult support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. As a result these pupils achieve well.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and outside of school is consistently good. They are proud of their school, are keen to learn and enjoy coming to school. Attendance is above average.
- Teaching in all subjects is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers plan interesting and engaging lessons to enthuse and motivate pupils.
- Children make good progress in the Reception class, where teaching and provision are good.
- Governors and staff, including office and support staff, have successfully focused on improving pupils' experiences of learning.
- Families from all religions and backgrounds are respected and hold the school in high regard.
- Pupils feel safe and well looked after. They are encouraged to take an active part in school life, acting as buddies to younger pupils and as representatives on the school council.
- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and is determined in her drive to ensure that all pupils succeed. She sets high standards for all members of the school community and does not settle for anything but the best.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to extend their own learning and use their writing skills in a range of ways across all subjects.
- Pupils do not make as rapid progress in mathematics as they do in reading and writing.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited eight lessons, taught by six teachers and one led by a qualified nursery nurse. Four lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- In addition the inspector made a number of short visits to lessons, attended an assembly, undertook a book scrutiny with leaders and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with school staff and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Formal and informal discussions were held with pupils about their work, their learning and their behaviour in school.
- A wide range of documentation was looked at, including the school's own self-evaluation, assessment data from the monitoring of pupils' progress, improvement plans and minutes from meetings of the governing body. School policies and performance management documentation and records relating to behaviour, safety and attendance, together with the school's safeguarding procedures, were also evaluated.
- The inspector took account of the 31 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own survey undertaken with parents and carers.
- Questionnaires from 11 staff were also considered.

## Inspection team

Christine Mayle, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is significantly smaller than the average primary school.
- Since the previous inspection the school has undergone significant change, predominantly the appointment of a new headteacher in September 2011.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language is lower than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and for whom the school receives additional funding (the pupil premium) is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching from good to outstanding by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to learn on their own
  - planning activities that encourage pupils to extend the use of their writing skills in different ways and across subjects
  - developing further the effective practice in marking across the school.
- Ensure pupils make at least good or better progress in mathematics by providing training to help teachers:
  - plan activities for pupils of all ages that encourage them to use their numeracy skills to solve problems and develop their mathematical thinking.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Strengths in teaching throughout the school allow pupils to make good progress and achieve well.
- The majority of children enter the school with the skills expected for their age, although due to the small cohort sizes this changes year-by-year. Children of all abilities make good progress in the Reception class as adults plan interesting activities for them to take part in.
- Pupils leave Year 2 with levels of attainment consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The inspector's own lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work, and the assessment information held by the school, show that pupils make good progress.
- Outstanding progress was exemplified in a Year 2 mathematics lesson. A variety of well-planned activities grabbed pupils' interest and enthusiasm. The teacher asked questions and introduced games to challenge the pupils' understanding of number bonds. They were then expected to think for themselves and there was evidence of intense concentration as the pupils tried to work out the answers.
- The attainment of pupils in Key Stage 2 is also above average overall. The small size of past cohorts means that no trends over time can be identified. The school's robust assessment information for the small number of pupils in Year 6, a significant proportion of whom have special educational needs, shows that they are making good progress at this stage in the year. This was confirmed by work seen in lessons and in pupils' books. For Years 3, 4 and 5 pupils' progress is already good and they are on track to exceed the national levels expected for their age by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' attainment in writing is good. Opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills in a range of subjects are developing and the school has identified this as a priority. Attainment in mathematics is improving but pupils are not yet making as rapid progress as they are in writing and reading.
- The well-planned teaching of sounds and letters (phonics) allows pupils to acquire good reading skills. Pupils read widely and with enthusiasm and enjoyment.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding are sensitively supported. The funding has been used effectively to employ additional staff and run booster sessions and, as a result, these pupils achieve well. Their attainment varies from year to year, reflecting differences in the attainment profile of these very small cohorts, but is comparable with other pupils in the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar rates of progress to other pupils. Their progress is carefully checked and well-targeted programmes are put in place, through individual support or group work, to help them in their learning.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. This is ensuring that pupils make at least good progress in all year groups.

- As a result of the relentless drive by the headteacher to improve the quality of teaching, planning is increasingly effective in taking into account what pupils need to learn and how they will be successful in building on their previous knowledge and gaining new skills and understanding.
- Teachers mark work regularly and this is helping pupils understand better what they are doing well and what they need to do next. Often pupils respond to their teacher's comments in their books, but this is not yet consistent across the whole school. Pupils take a pride in their work and its presentation is of a high standard.
- In lessons teachers regularly check pupils' learning through effective questioning and discussion with pupils. They then adjust the activities so that pupils learn at a faster rate. For example, in an outstanding Year 5 and 6 lesson, pupils keenly discussed how to improve a piece of writing with 'wow' words. Pupils with special educational needs, working with additional adult support, contributed well to the discussion. In the feedback the teacher skilfully questioned and challenged the pupils' knowledge of adjectives, adverbs and their use of grammar. The lesson was well timed and ignited the pupils' interest and enthusiasm so that they all made outstanding progress.
- Although pupils are given exciting topics which link subjects together, in some classes not enough opportunity is provided for pupils to work by themselves and manage their own learning. In particular, there are not the same rich opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills across all subjects as there are in literacy lessons.
- In the Reception class, activities are well planned and involve a range of resources that interest children in their learning. The outdoor area is well designed to include a large tree and a specially built fort to inspire children's imagination. Children are encouraged to develop their use of language through play. Adult-led activities give all children focused support and as a consequence they learn well.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils work hard to complete tasks and are keen to learn. They always give of their best. At times, however, they are not self-confident enough to take initiative or apply their learning in new contexts.
- Pupils listen well to both adults and each other. Staff make high demands of pupils' behaviour and attitudes throughout the school day, including before and after school and at lunchtimes.
- Bullying and racist incidents occur rarely and the view of pupils and parents and carers is that the school deals effectively with bullying. Pupils understand the various types of bullying including name-calling, cyber-bullying and that related to all forms of prejudice.
- All parents and carers feel their children are safe at school and well looked after. Pupils also say they feel safe and well cared after.
- The atmosphere in school is highly positive and this is reflected in the relationships between staff and pupils, and pupils towards each other. Pupils respond well to the responsibilities they are given, such as being playground monitors, mentoring younger children and representing their classmates on the school council.
- Attendance is above average and any lateness is dealt with directly by the headteacher.

**The leadership and management are good**

- Leadership and management of the school have improved since the previous inspection. The headteacher has very quickly energised the entire school community to perform at a higher level. All staff and governors are supportive of her drive to bring about rapid improvement.
- The headteacher monitors teaching and learning rigorously, through regular lesson observations linked to performance management as well as scrutiny of planning, work sampling and pupils' interviews. Subject leaders, whose roles are developing rapidly, have adopted a similar model and together this information feeds into the school's own accurate self-evaluation. Inadequate teaching and that requiring improvement have been eliminated.
- All statutory requirements are met regarding safeguarding.
- The school week is organised to make sure that all pupils have access to a range of learning experiences that enhance literacy and numeracy skills as well as promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Visits, visitors, and links with the local and wider communities, including the village church, enrich learning and broaden pupils' horizons. The curriculum is varied and meets the needs of all pupils well.
- Music, especially singing, is a strong feature both within lessons and around the school. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 are members of the school choir and have won local and regional recognition for their achievements, including a visit to the O2 Arena.
- The school's strong ethos means that all religions and differences in pupils' backgrounds are valued and respected. The pupils learn about their own and different faiths, representing the school's vision as a place for families of any and no faith.
- Equality of opportunity is well promoted and any discrimination is tackled robustly. The school uses its pupil premium funding effectively to support eligible pupils with a range of extra adult support so that these pupils are making similar progress to their peers.
- Teachers' performance is managed well. Pay progression and promotion are directly linked to whether staff have met their targets and had sufficient impact on pupils' achievement. Professional training is matched closely to the school's priorities as well as teachers' own needs. Staff morale is high.
- The local authority provided effective support for a previously satisfactory school. They are impressed by the evident extent of the improvement since the last inspection and the changes made by the headteacher. All training sessions and other visits have been in negotiation with the school as it moves towards light-touch support.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is fully supportive of the headteacher and the staff in their determination to raise standards. Governors have a secure and in-depth knowledge of the school's performance and how it compares with others. They know how good the teaching is and how this relates to performance management and pay increases. They understand where further improvements are needed, for example in mathematics and writing, and what is being done to achieve them. They hold leaders to account by asking demanding questions on all aspects of the school's work. In addition to a programme of subject focused visits, key governors such as the Chair, the governor with oversight of safeguarding and the chair of finance attend

additional meetings with the headteacher. These enable them to check progress towards targets and to make sure that good value for money is maintained within the school's finances, including the use of the pupil premium and its impact on pupils' progress.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117445
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	405707

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	103
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ros Murray
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anne Peck
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 December 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01462 768392
<b>Fax number</b>	01462 769001
<b>Email address</b>	admin@offley.herts.sch.uk

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