

Oakley Vale Primary School

Cheltenham Road, Corby, NN18 8RH

Inspection dates 2–3 May 2013

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | 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' achievement requires improvement because they have not made enough progress over time in writing and mathematics.
- The pace of learning in writing and mathematics, although improving, is not raising standards fast enough.
- In Years 1 to 4 teachers do not always plan their lessons to make sure that all pupils are given work that gets the best out of them.
- Gaps between groups of pupils are not closing rapidly.
- Teaching is not good enough to make up for the low attainment of many newly arrived pupils and to ensure all pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
- Marking is not used consistently to improve pupils' work.
- Teachers do not check pupils' work in lessons carefully enough and adapt activities if pupils find them too easy or too hard.
- Underachieving pupils are not identified quickly and provided with appropriate support to secure good progress.
- Leaders' judgements about the progress pupils are making have been over-optimistic. Expectations have not been high enough.
- Governors have not asked searching enough questions of school leaders about pupils' progress in writing and mathematics.
- Monitoring has not always been sufficiently rigorous. Pupils' attainment and progress in writing and mathematics are not tracked as well as they are in reading.
- Not all middle leaders are clear about their role in monitoring pupils' progress, teaching and school improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- A focus on developing reading skills has resulted in a sustained rise in pupils' achievements in reading.
- Children make good progress in the Reception classes and in Year 6 because the teaching is at least good.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of exciting opportunities which appeal to pupils' interests and contribute well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Behaviour is good. Most pupils enjoy school, feel safe and have good attitudes to learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons involving 13 teachers, which included two joint observations with school leaders and an assembly.
- Inspectors held discussions with school leaders, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including improvement plans, the systems for tracking pupils' progress, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and samples of pupils' work. They heard groups of pupils read and spoke with others about behaviour and safety arrangements at the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 99 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views expressed by those parents and carers who spoke with them at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Michael Bartleman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynn Alexander

Additional Inspector

Christopher Ogden

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The new school opened in 2008 and has grown rapidly to its present size. A significant number of pupils have arrived at the school at times other than the start of the school year.
- The majority of pupils come from a White British background. An increasing proportion comes from Black African and East European backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for specific groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of two Reception classes.
- A private provider, Acorn Childcare, runs before- and after-school care. This was not part of the inspection and is subject to separate inspection and reporting arrangements.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to raise standards in mathematics and writing in Years 1 to 4, make sure that all teaching is at least good and an increasing proportion is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - teachers make good use of assessment information to plan tasks which are set at the right level of difficulty for pupils of different abilities so that learning moves at a rapid pace
 - activities in lessons help pupils to improve their basic skills in number, spelling, punctuation, grammar and sentence construction
 - leaders use the pupil premium funding more effectively so that gaps in the performance of eligible pupils and their classmates are closed quickly in mathematics and writing
 - pupils have opportunities to apply their basic literacy and numeracy skills in a range of subjects
 - all pupils understand how to improve their work and have time to respond to teachers' comments.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - extending the role of the governing body in challenging leaders over the quality of teaching and pupils' progress
 - making sure that prompt action is taken to identify pupils who are underachieving and that measures are put into place to secure good progress
 - setting challenging targets for all pupils and making sure that they are achieved
 - ensuring that self-evaluation provides an accurate reflection of pupils' progress data, work in books and the quality of teaching
 - ensuring all leaders are clear about their roles in school improvement and are fully involved in monitoring teaching and tracking how well pupils are doing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because a few pupils from groups including those eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, do not make enough progress in writing and mathematics to reach the standards they are capable of.
- Many pupils, particularly boys, do not write confidently, often making careless errors in spellings, punctuation and sentence construction. Basic mathematical skills, including those of calculation, have not been reinforced sufficiently over time. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their basic literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Accelerated progress in Year 6 in 2012 national tests enabled attainment to be at expected levels in reading. Taking account of the large numbers of pupils who are arriving at this growing school, attainment of all pupils is broadly average by Year 6. Fewer pupils attain the higher levels in writing and mathematics.
- Children enter the school with skills at expected levels of typical four-year-olds. Recent improvements are enabling children to make better progress because activities are carefully planned to develop a range of early skills.
- The school has worked effectively to improve the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) by using teachers and teaching assistants to run daily, small group sessions. Results in 2012 national phonic screening show that Year 1 pupils achieved higher than national figures.
- Achievement in reading has also improved because the school has focused on building basic skills effectively as well as checking pupils' progress carefully and developing a reading culture across the school.
- Pupil premium funding is used to provide additional teaching assistants, a family support worker, workshops and curriculum enrichment opportunities. The overall attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium in 2012 was the equivalent of two terms behind their classmates in English and one term behind in mathematics. The school's current information shows that the gaps between their performance and that of other pupils are not closing rapidly enough.
- The majority of parents who spoke to inspectors or responded to Parent View believed that their children were making good progress. While inspectors agree that in a few classes progress is improving, they find that it requires improvement overall.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Inspection evidence and the school's records show that while there is some good and outstanding teaching, there is a small minority that requires improvement. Teaching over time has not enabled all pupils to make the progress they are capable of in writing and mathematics.
- A few teachers do not always check the progress pupils are making in lessons carefully enough. This means that pupils who are stuck do not get the help that they need to succeed and that pupils who finish tasks quickly are not challenged further.

- Where teaching requires improvement, expectations of progress are not high enough, especially for the more-able. Teachers' questions fail to assess how well pupils are learning. Although marking is done regularly, time is not routinely given to pupils to improve their work.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium receive well-managed help with reading but are not yet reaching the same standards as their classmates in mathematics and writing. Learning slows for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language when they are not provided with activities in class which precisely meet their need.
- Reading is taught well. Pupils have good opportunities to read to adults and to talk about books they have read. The regular use of the library adds to pupils' enjoyment of reading. The recent focus on developing basic skills, for example 'terrible tables' at Key Stage 2, and for opportunities to write at length have not yet raised standards sufficiently.
- Teaching is good in the Reception classes, where adults provide interesting activities which engage children. They intervene at appropriate points to enhance children's learning and regularly assess and record their progress. Language development is promoted well.
- In the best lessons, pupils are clear on how to achieve their learning goal throughout the lesson (known by the school as 'the steps to success'). Teaching assistants and the teacher provide good support for individuals and small groups of pupils; teachers plan their lessons so that they build on pupils' prior learning and all pupils are engaged and on task throughout. This was seen in a Year 5 and 6 mathematics lesson, where pupils developed and extended their knowledge of division strategies.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in and around the school. They play well together, making full use of the good range of activities on offer. The good relationships between all pupils and adults contribute to the positive values, attitudes and beliefs and sense of belonging in the school.
- Pupils are keen to learn, although a few, very occasionally, find it difficult to manage their own behaviour. These pupils are supported well and school behaviour records show improvement over time.
- Pupils told inspectors that, 'It is fun at our school; we sing a lot and have fantastic allotments'. They like the rewards they get for good behaviour and work.
- The school has close working relationships with outside agencies to support pupils and their families whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Pupils' attendance is average.
- A majority of parents and carers said that their children are safe and well cared for. This view is reflected in the confidence expressed by pupils that they feel safe at school. They report that behaviour is good. They say that there is some occasional bullying and some 'fallings in-and-out' which are resolved quickly.
- Pupils are well informed about all forms of bullying. For example, they remember precisely what they have been told about the dangers of cyber-bullying. School leaders make sure that pupils have a good grounding in road, fire and rail safety.

- In school, pupils take on responsibilities supporting younger pupils, helping the school run smoothly, being librarians and maintaining the school allotments. They also work more widely with members of the local community to raise funds for a wide range of local and national charities.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because actions taken to improve the quality of teaching and to raise achievement since the previous inspection, particularly in mathematics and writing, have not been rigorous enough or timely. Expectations have not been high enough.
- The analysis of data on pupils' progress is not precise enough to identify targets and take appropriate action. As a result, actions to close gaps in attainment between groups of pupils, especially those known to be eligible for pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and boys in writing, are not having enough effect. Equal opportunities for all to succeed are not yet sufficiently well promoted.
- Leaders, including governors, have been successful in creating a vision that all staff share. Morale is high. However, this focus has not yet resulted in good achievement for all pupils. Leaders have sufficient capacity for further improvement.
- Where efforts have been concerted and effective, such as in the teaching of phonics and reading, achievement has improved noticeably. However, other new initiatives, for example, developing numeracy skills, have not had the same impact.
- Although self-evaluation is used well to identify the right areas for improvement, the judgements made are over-generous. Systems for managing the performance of individual teachers are rigorous and are now being used to raise teachers' expectations of pupils' progress.
- The curriculum is rich, varied and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development well. All subjects are linked through a creative curriculum, although basic skills are not consistently well promoted for all groups of pupils. A wide range of after-school clubs, thoughtful assembly themes and celebrations, 'Forest Schools', imaginative subject content and visits contribute to broadening pupils' horizons.
- The school works in close partnership with the local community. It has developed family learning workshops where parents can work alongside their children.
- The local authority representative visits the school termly to facilitate links with other local schools and to assist with monitoring.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have managed the challenges of opening and running a new and growing school well. They have a clear understanding of how the school compares with other schools nationally, although they have not always used this knowledge to challenge leaders robustly. They know that improvements are needed to achieve better academic outcomes. Governors support the headteacher in setting exacting targets for teachers in their annual performance appraisals. They understand the link between pay and performance and reward better teachers accordingly. Governors attend training as they know it will equip them with the skills they need to discharge their duties effectively. They manage the school's finances and the

support for the pupil premium well, although they have yet to scrutinise the data in detail. The governing body carries out its statutory duties effectively, ensuring, for example, that procedures for safeguarding pupils are well managed, regularly reviewed and fully meet the regulatory requirements.

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

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| Unique reference number | 133551 |
| Local authority | Northamptonshire |
| Inspection number | 413463 |

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 | Foundation |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 360 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Andy Cuddihy |
| Headteacher | Michael Deane-Hall |
| Date of previous school inspection | 24 February 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01536 461199 |
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