

The Oval Primary School

Whittington Oval, Yardley, Birmingham, B33 8JG

Inspection dates 20–21 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- School leaders have checked teaching regularly and given advice, and these things have led to recent improvements in teaching and progress.
- Children make an excellent start to their schooling because the teaching and work set for them in the Nursery and Reception classes are outstanding.
- There are examples of outstanding teaching in all three key stages within the school.
- The progress being made by the pupils has improved across the school and is now consistently at least good across the year groups.
- Pupils behave well and say that they feel safe at school.
- The school is using additional funding effectively to make sure all groups of pupils make good progress.
- The school's promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- Pupils enjoy school because relationships are very good and the lessons are interesting and often fun.
- Teachers involve pupils very well in understanding what they should be aiming for in lessons.
- Marking is outstanding in literacy and mathematics.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The attainment of pupils when they leave the school at the end of Year 6 is not yet consistently at or above national averages.
- Teachers sometimes miss opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Occasionally, the work teachers give pupils is not fine-tuned to match their abilities.
- Although pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress in literacy and numeracy, this is not sustained in other subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 30 lessons, of which five were observed jointly with the headteacher. All classes were observed at least once.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils, with one of the governors and with members of the teaching staff. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- There were 13 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Parents' views were also sought through discussions at the start and end of the school day.
- The inspectors took account of the 28 questionnaires completed by members of the school staff.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, documents relating to safeguarding, and the minutes of various meetings.

Inspection team

Nigel Grimshaw, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Stephen Cox	Additional Inspector
Sarah Noble	Additional Inspector
Pamela Hemphill	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school and is growing in size as it moves from two to three classes in each year group over the next three to four years.
- The school population is very diverse and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average. Almost half of the pupils are from White British backgrounds but there are 36 minority ethnic groups represented in total, with those from Pakistani backgrounds being the largest.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. This is additional funding provided to schools for children in the care of the local authority, children with a parent in the armed services, and those children known to be eligible for free school meals. There are currently no children who are looked after by the local authority and there are no pupils from service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or who have a statement of special educational needs, is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has achieved the gold award for 'Food for Life'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in English and mathematics by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills and knowledge in other subject areas, particularly opportunities for extended pieces of writing
 - making sure teachers take every opportunity to extend pupils' vocabulary.
- Improve progress in other subjects by making sure that:
 - teachers' expectations are consistently high in all subject areas
 - marking of topic work is as good as it is in mathematics and English.
- Raise the proportion of teaching that is outstanding by:
 - making sharper use of pupils' performance data to plan lesson activities that meet the needs of every pupil
 - sharing the outstanding practice that already exists across the school so that teachers can learn from each other.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The quality of teaching and the work planned for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are outstanding, particularly in the Nursery classes. As a result, the children make excellent progress, from starting points where their skills and knowledge are well below those expected for their age.
- Progress in Years 1 and 2 had previously dipped but recent improvements in the quality of teaching in these year groups have ensured better outcomes for pupils. The good progress they are making this academic year is now more consistent with the good and better progress that has consistently been made at Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 has generally been in line with national averages or just below. The school's data and the work observed during the inspection show that current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach attainment in line with national averages this year.
- Pupils of all ethnic groups make good progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language progress well and achieve levels of attainment above those nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because their individual needs are identified early and they receive good quality support from well-trained staff, often in smaller groups.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is consistently good. This, coupled with the pupils' enjoyment of reading, means that pupils make good progress in their reading and writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because the key leaders communicate high expectations and ambition and work closely with parents to achieve positive outcomes for the pupils. One parent commented, 'The support is very good – they do everything possible to help.'
- The school leaders are using the pupil premium funding effectively by targeting support for individuals and small groups of pupils who need the most help. As a result, the attainment of these pupils has improved and their results are above those of similar pupils nationally. In 2012, these pupils in Year 6 were about a term behind their classmates in English and about half a term in mathematics, having made good progress through Key Stage 2.
- The large majority of pupils spoken to during the inspection have a good understanding of the targets set for them by their teachers to improve their reading, writing and mathematics. They enjoy having these targets because they are clear about what they need to improve.
- The school has recently introduced a new system for tracking pupils' progress and staff are still getting used to using it. Consequently, teachers are not always employing the information the system provides as effectively as they might to plan lessons that are fine-tuned to pupils' needs.
- The good progress the pupils make in their reading, writing and mathematics is not reflected in other subjects, where teachers' expectations are not as high.

The quality of teaching is good

- The teachers and teaching assistants work well together and create a positive atmosphere for learning in lessons. Pupils are therefore interested and engaged, and behave well. For example, the use of a range of role-play areas in the Early Years Foundation Stage is rapidly developing pupils' speaking and listening skills, and also their social skills.
- In the best lessons, the work is planned to motivate the pupils and make the learning relevant for them. This was particularly true in a Year 6 mathematics lesson that was linked to planning their end of year 'prom' celebration. The pupils were undertaking an enterprise activity to find ways of raising £500 towards the event and also planning presentations to senior staff for their approval. The work on percentages was challenging but the pupils were totally engaged and enthused.
- Pupils are regularly involved in working with the teacher in deciding the expected outcomes from the lesson. This is effective because pupils are clear about what they need to achieve in order to make good progress. This also helps them to check their own work and that of their peers.
- In the better lessons, the pace is slick and teachers make good use of well-prepared resources, including the informative and stimulating displays in the classrooms that create an attractive learning environment. The quality of questioning in these lessons is good but, in some lessons, there are missed opportunities to extend the pupils' vocabulary and challenge them to find more exciting words.
- The quality of marking in the pupils' literacy and mathematics books is outstanding. It provides detailed explanations for the teachers' positive comments and provides clear guidance to the pupils on how to improve their work. The older pupils are entering into a dialogue with the teacher through this high-quality marking. However, this level of marking is not evident in the pupils' topic books. Therefore, the pupils are not as clear about expectations in these other subjects and the quality of their work dips.
- Teaching very effectively promotes the pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils show strong respect for the views of others, work very well together in lessons, play together harmoniously at break times and show a high awareness of different cultures.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors or who responded to the Parent View questionnaire are very positive about the quality of teaching in the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school, and say that they feel safe and secure at school.
- The large majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning and this is reflected in their eagerness to do well. They show perseverance in lessons because they are motivated by the work planned for them.
- The school's behaviour policy is very clear and is applied consistently by staff. Consequently, routines are well established and expectations are high. Pupils demonstrated during the inspection that they are welcoming, polite and courteous, and the school's records indicate that this is the case over time and that behaviour has improved in the last three years.

- Very few concerns are expressed by parents, carers, staff and pupils about behaviour and safety.
- Pupils are clear about the various types of bullying and have complete confidence that, if instances arise, the adults in school would act promptly and effectively on their behalf. Pupils have a good understanding of the safe use of the internet as a result of work in school.
- The school leaders and the governing body have worked hard to improve attendance significantly over the last two years. As a result, attendance is now almost in line with the national average. Leaders are determined to continue working with parents to make sure that the improvement continues.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is now one third bigger than it was at the time of the last inspection. The large numbers of additional pupils, and the fact that new staff have been taken on, has presented inevitable challenges in maintaining the consistency of outstanding work identified in 2009. Nevertheless, the experienced headteacher, well supported by the two deputy headteachers, has maintained a clear focus on improving classroom practice, and the quality of teaching has recently improved as a result. The staff have appreciated the support and guidance they have received. There are examples of outstanding teaching in all three key stages.
- The recommendations of the previous inspection have been fully met. Leaders know the strengths and weaker areas of the school well. The impact of the improved teaching is illustrated by the more consistently good progress in English and mathematics made by the pupils across the whole school. Areas of weaker progress have been successfully addressed over this academic year. This demonstrates the school's capacity to improve further.
- Staff are given good guidance on how to improve their practice and they value the training provided for them. However, the school has not made full use of the outstanding teachers in school to model their practice for other staff and to support them in their own classes.
- There have been recent changes to the middle leadership within the school and their roles have been strengthened. Subject leaders are now checking the work in school more thoroughly.
- The range of subjects and activities for pupils are generally motivating and are enriched by the effective use of visits and visitors. The work planned promotes outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, topic work does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, particularly in longer pieces of writing and research.
- There are beneficial partnerships with other schools in the area and The Oval Primary also supports other schools by sharing its good practice.
- The involvement of the local authority has been low key because the school has been judged to be consistently good or better over time.
- School leaders have worked hard to engage parents in their child's learning and, from conversations with parents, they have appreciated this.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have played an effective part in maintaining the school’s good and better levels of progress in literacy and numeracy. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and the steps being taken to improve this still further, including a good knowledge of how pay rises for teachers are linked to the quality of their work. They have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including the recent improvements at Key Stage 1 and in mathematics. They are aware of the information from the school’s data and how the school compares with other schools, including the effectiveness of the use of pupil premium funding. Governors have participated in a range of training events, including those to do with safeguarding and the health and safety of pupils and staff. They have ensured that safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements. Governors work closely with the school to ensure that pupils are treated equally and that there is no discrimination.

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	103374
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	411753

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	602
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Hayes
Headteacher	Rachel Chahal
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2009
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