

Okehampton Primary School and Foundation Unit

Glendale Road, Okehampton, EX20 1JB

Inspection dates 10–11 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 make good progress and their attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is starting to overtake national averages.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding.
- Information about pupils' progress is used well to meet the learning needs of pupils.
- Pupils enjoy reading and they reach above average standards because they are taught well.
- Pupils feel safe and they enjoy coming to school because the work they do is interesting.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and there are high levels of respect.
- The rich experiences pupils have across the curriculum contribute strongly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of what the school does well and what needs to improve and have brought about improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governors hold leaders to account for the continued improvement of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet enough excellent teaching to ensure that achievement is outstanding.
- Teachers do not always give pupils time to put into practice the advice they give them when marking their books.
- Teachers do not always check thoroughly enough whether pupils have fully understood the new learning in the lesson.
- Teaching assistants do not always allow pupils opportunities to try things out for themselves.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 31 lessons and parts of lessons.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other leaders in school, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, parents and carers and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 51 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as the views of parents and carers from discussions in the playground.
- Information about how well school leaders know how good the school is and their plans for school improvement, as well as assessment information, minutes of meetings of the governing body, teachers' planning, pupils' work and safeguarding procedures were examined.
- Inspectors analysed 81 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Jeanne Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Julie Bourdon-Pierre

Additional Inspector

David Nebesnuick

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Okehampton Primary School and Foundation Unit is a much larger-than-average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families) is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is slightly higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics in Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching by:
 - sharing the outstanding practice which already exists in the school
 - making sure that all teachers always give pupils information about how they can improve their work when marking books and then giving pupils time to respond to the teachers' comments
 - using questioning more thoroughly in all lessons to find out whether pupils have fully understood all the new learning in the lesson
 - making sure that teaching assistants give pupils a greater sense of independence by letting them try things out for themselves and learn from their mistakes.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of children begin in Nursery and Reception with skills which are well below those expected for their age, particularly in communication skills. They quickly settle into the welcoming, safe environment provided and make good progress because the teachers understand how to help young children to learn. By the time they leave Reception, most children are reaching the levels of development expected for their age.
- Teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is very effective and a much higher percentage of pupils than average reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. Reading is a strength throughout the school. Pupils report that they read regularly at home and they make good use of the school library.
- Good progress continues throughout Key Stage 1 and standards at the end of Year 2 are slightly above national averages, particularly in mathematics. There was a slight fall in standards in writing last year but the gap has been successfully closed because of the focus on the subject this year.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have been gradually rising but it has taken a while to make up for the underachievement of pupils in the past. Standards this year are on track to be broadly in line with national averages in reading and slightly above in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who are eligible for the additional funding through the pupil premium make better than expected progress because of the extra support they receive. The gap between their attainment and that of their peers is closing rapidly, particularly for the younger pupils. However, at the end of Year 6, they are still about two terms behind their peers.
- Standards in the phonics screening check and in all subjects at the end of Key Stage 1 for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are in line with those of their peers. About three quarters of similar pupils currently in Year 6 have made better than expected progress during Key Stage 2 in reading and writing and about one third in mathematics. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment dropped last year in all subjects, particularly in mathematics. The gaps have been successfully closed this year.
- Writing skills are taught well, which has resulted in rapidly improving progress and attainment. This is evident in all year groups from Reception to Year 6. Standards in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 have also improved and are on track to be above national averages this year.
- When progress is inconsistent, leaders are quick to respond and the actions they take are effective. This puts the school in a strong position to reach higher standards of attainment in the future.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved over time so that teaching is good and some is outstanding.
- Pupils come to lessons ready and eager to learn because they are confident that the learning will be interesting. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent and there is a very positive climate for learning where pupils are not afraid to ask questions or make mistakes.
- Teachers use the wealth of information they have about pupils' attainment to plan lessons that give just the right level of challenge for pupils of all abilities. They successfully find ways to make sure that all pupils are totally involved in the learning.
- For example, in an outstanding lesson in Year 5, pupils went on a mathematics trail around the school where they had to solve problems relating to equivalent fractions, decimals and percentages. The trails were on different coloured cards with increasing levels of difficulty so that all pupils could achieve success. The answers could be unlocked by a code which gave the answer to a riddle. The pupils could not wait to get going!

- Most teachers use open-ended questions skilfully to check pupils' understanding and the follow-up questions require them to explain or justify their answers, which really makes them think. Occasionally, teachers move on too quickly before all the misconceptions have been dealt with and some pupils are not able to get on with their independent work as a result. When this happens, the teachers usually notice and provide extra help, but the pace of learning slows for these pupils.
- Pupils are frequently asked to discuss their ideas in pairs or small groups, which helps them to develop their understanding and also gives them opportunities to use correct technical vocabulary.
- Teachers explain what the pupils are expected to learn in the lesson and what they have to do to be successful, carefully related to the pupils' abilities. They mark work in books thoroughly and their comments relate to the success criteria. However, not all teachers give pupils advice about what they need to do to make their work better and when this does happen, pupils are not always given time to put the advice into practice.
- Some teaching assistants provide effective support. They use questions well and they encourage pupils to use the resources available to support their learning. However, sometimes they take over too much, which prevents the pupils from practising the skills and then learning from their mistakes.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to practise their English and mathematical skills in other subjects. During their work on marine conservation and pollution, pupils in Year 4 wrote to the mayor of Okehampton about making the environment litter-free. They organised a litter-picking day involving the community, including a local supermarket.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- In lessons, pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently positive. They concentrate well and are able to work cooperatively and independently. Their relationships with each other and with all adults are very strong and they are courteous and polite at all times.
- Pupils feel safe. They say that behaviour is 'great', that there is no rough play or bullying and that if anything does happen, it is sorted out.
- Most parents and teachers recognise that behaviour is improving but a few parents expressed concern. Some pupils need extra help to manage their behaviour and they receive good support which helps them to make the right choices. Minor incidents in lessons are well managed by teachers so that the learning of other pupils is not affected. The school's records indicate that behaviour over time has improved.
- Pupils understand the behaviour policy and they appreciate the new focus on rewards for those who always behave well, which has a positive impact on attitudes and good behaviour. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 can become ambassadors if they consistently demonstrate good attitudes through wearing their uniform and through volunteering to take on responsibility in the school. This gives them certain privileges, such as to introduce assemblies and to give out stickers for good behaviour at the end, which also contributes very positively to their personal development.
- The playground is a happy, lively place. There is plenty of space in which the pupils can play safely and there is a good range of activities for them to do, such as the climbing frames and the very popular hula hoops.
- Attendance has improved and is broadly average. This improving picture is as a result of the way in which absence is rigorously followed up through phone calls and texts to parents on the first day of absence.

The leadership and management are good

- When asked to think of three words to sum up the school, the pupils responded with 'safe, exciting and challenging'. That is the vision which the headteacher, together with other leaders in school, has created. She is passionate about making sure that the pupils get the very best

opportunities to learn and flourish and the improving standards demonstrate that she is successful.

- All leaders have a clear understanding of what the school does well and where it needs to improve because they make regular checks. Their plans for improvement focus on the right things and members of staff say that they know what the school is trying to achieve.
- Senior leaders make sure that pupils' progress information is regularly shared with teachers. This information is used to provide carefully tailored support for pupils' individual learning needs, which means that the school is promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. If leaders discover that pupils are not making fast enough progress, they make appropriate changes so that the pupils can catch up.
- Communication is good. Pupils say that they are regularly asked about what changes they would like to see and that the headteacher 'merges our ideas with safety and fun'. Parents are frequent visitors to the school and the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View said that they would recommend the school to another parent.
- Teachers have good opportunities to develop their skills, both in school through working with colleagues, and through attending local and national courses. The systems in place for managing performance are very thorough and as a result, the quality of teaching is improving.
- Pupils' learning experiences are based around themes such as 'Detectives and Spies' and 'Sun, Moon and Stars'. Pupils really enjoy these interesting topics which are further brought to life by visits, visitors and other events such as the recent star-gazing evening which involved parents.
- There is a flourishing school orchestra, including strings and woodwind instruments, and, at the time of the inspection, the school was waiting to hear whether Arts Mark Gold had been achieved. There is a wide range of well-attended clubs and the school has a strong link with Lithuania. These activities all contribute strongly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, which is a strength of the school.
- The local authority provides light-touch support for the school.
- Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are fully secure.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Under the guidance of the Chair, governors hold leaders to account well. They have made sure that they have the skills they need through attendance at courses and they use these well through the allocation of different roles. They make regular visits to the school and meet with teachers to discuss their areas of responsibility. They know about performance data and how the school compares with other schools nationally as well as about the quality of teaching. They know how good teachers are rewarded by progression through the pay scales and how underperformance is tackled. They monitor spending carefully, including whether the funding from the pupil premium is being spent wisely.

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	113260
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	400085

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	599
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Della Ball
Headteacher	Hazel Fox
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 May 2011
Telephone number	01837 52866
Email address	admin@okehampton-pri.sch.devon.uk

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