

Overdale Junior School

Eastcourt Road, Knighton, Leicester, LE2 3YA

Inspection dates 11–12 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- The very effective leadership of the headteacher has driven recent school development, increasing the rate of improvement made in all areas.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well as they move through the school.
- Standards are well above national averages, with particular improvement in mathematics in the last year.
- Teaching is good. Staff have strong working relationships with pupils and offer them lots of praise and encouragement.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good. They know how to keep safe and most get on very well together.
- Senior staff and governors are leading the school well. They share a vision and determination that what is provided for the pupils will continue to improve.
- Parents and carers are generally very pleased with the quality of education and care provided for their children.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some groups of pupils do not achieve quite as well as the rest of their classmates.
- A few pupils are not as active in their learning as others and offer few ideas in discussion.
- In a small number of lessons pupils do not understand exactly what they are expected to do.
- Not all support staff have the necessary confidence and skills for their role.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 18 lessons in Years 3 to 5 and two lessons with a small group of Year 6 pupils who were not attending their year group’s residential visit. Inspectors were joined by the headteacher and deputy headteacher for several joint lesson observations.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, including in her role as the special educational needs coordinator, the data manager, the literacy leader, and staff supporting mathematics. Discussions also took place with groups of pupils and representatives of both the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 53 parents and carers from the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke to several parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also reviewed the 29 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including recent data on pupils’ progress, planning and monitoring information, and minutes of meetings of the governing body. Inspectors also listened to individual pupils reading and scrutinised a sample of recent work. They also considered in detail records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sue Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David West

Additional Inspector

Glen Goddard

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized junior school.
- Around 60% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, which is above the national average. Just over half of these pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is half the national average. Currently, this provides additional funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs identified at school action is a little above the national average, as is the percentage supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Since the previous inspection there has been a new appointment as headteacher and several other changes of staff.
- During the inspection the large majority of the Year 6 pupils and the staff who work with them were out of school on a residential visit.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the rate of progress made is always good or better by:
 - checking that pupils are provided with plenty of opportunities to discuss their ideas in depth in order to improve their speaking skills
 - making sure that groups of pupils, including boys, those from different ethnic groups and pupils who are entitled to support from the pupil premium, make the same rapid progress as their classmates.
- Ensure that teaching across the school is consistently effective by:
 - checking that all pupils fully understand what they have to do in each part of the lesson
 - enabling staff at all levels to take part in further training activities to extend their skills and confidence to carry out their roles.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- After a time when previously good standards had started to decline, the last two years have seen a return to rising standards, particularly in mathematics. For example, in the most recent national tests more than half the pupils attained at least a Level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics. This is higher than found in most schools.
- Pupils enter Year 3 with skills and knowledge that are often above the average for their age, and from that starting point all pupils make good progress and achieve well. The school challenges pupils of higher ability effectively as they move through the school. Middle attaining and lower achieving pupils also make good progress and many exceed the progress expected of them. Most disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are now making the progress expected of them because of improvements in the quality of support they receive. Girls do particularly well across the school; the gap between girls' and boys' achievement has recently narrowed because of well-targeted teaching.
- Data indicate that some ethnic groups of pupils have done better than others. The school now has better systems to check and track individual and group progress. Staff are working effectively with pupils and their families to help them develop capacities such as independence and perseverance in their work. This is beginning to have an impact, especially in mathematical problem solving activities.
- Pupils entitled to support from the pupil premium have not made the same good progress as their peers in the past, particularly in mathematics and in reading. The school has evaluated how specific funding is used and, for example, has improved the effectiveness of teaching assistants in providing more challenge within activities. Recent data indicate that these pupils now do better than similar pupils nationally and the gap in English and mathematics of approximately two terms between them and other pupils in this school is closing.
- Many pupils have good speaking and listening skills and are able to express themselves well. This was seen in an excellent Year 5 philosophy lesson where pupils answered probing questions which prompted further discussion about whether it is ever right to steal from others. However, a small proportion of pupils, from all ethnic groups, are less confident in speaking at length and in detail.
- Most pupils read well, and lower attainers have learned a good range of approaches to work out unfamiliar words so that their progress is accelerating. Pupils also write well because they are given a stimulating range of themes and topics. This provides them with some interesting reasons to write, as seen in Year 4 where pupils improved the letters they had written to a Roman character as part of their new topic, 'Banquets'.
- The progress made by pupils in mathematics is improving across the school. Pupils are able to answer mental calculations with increasing confidence, which then shows in how they tackle mathematical problems. Progress in other subjects, including physical education and design and technology, is good because the school has excellent facilities and uses these really well to enrich pupils' learning and personal development.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good overall. Lesson observations and other evidence of teaching quality, including

pupils' work, confirm the school's own evaluation that teaching ranges from outstanding to a small minority that requires improvement. School records show the proportion of good or better teaching has considerably improved in the last year, and the number of lessons requiring improvement is much reduced as the result of focused support from the leadership team.

- The most effective teaching was illustrated by high expectations of what the pupils can do coupled with excellent relationships between teachers and pupils. For example, in an excellent Year 3 mathematics lesson the pupils greatly enjoyed the 'wake and shake' movement sequences where the teacher demonstrated 'Dad dancing'. They then made outstanding progress because they were eager to learn. Pupils were fully involved in a very well planned lesson providing excellent challenge to different groups, representing in different charts how they had sorted shapes into categories.
- Teachers usually have good subject knowledge and sometimes this is excellent. This was seen in an outstanding physical education lesson where gymnastic skills were enhanced by the teacher's use of demonstrations by pupils to illustrate how to improve their balance. Other good or better lessons are characterised by good pace and staff adjusting the activity to suit individual needs.
- Occasionally, teaching was less effective because pupils were unsure what they had to do. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, pupils were confused about how to complete a practical mathematics activity.
- The special educational needs coordinator works effectively with other staff to check where help is most needed, including for pupils entitled to pupil premium funding. This support is often well focused on individual need, exemplified in the very effective one-to-one support of pupils with a high level of disability. The school also benefits considerably from the very skilled support of some volunteers. They have a clear understanding of their role and offer good support to lessons.
- The school has some skilled teaching assistants who provide pupils with challenging work of high quality. However, senior leaders have rightly identified that the quality of support provided by staff is too variable. Some staff lack the confidence to intervene and involve all pupils, or the skills to recognise when this needs to be done. The school is now in the process of keenly encouraging staff to take greater advantage of the additional training available to increase their qualifications, skills and effectiveness in their changing role.
- The feedback provided to pupils to help them improve their work is good, especially through their comments and the use of praise. The sample of pupils' work seen on this inspection shows that the marking of their books has been improving over the last year, and the school is working effectively to promote greater consistency. Pupils know their targets for improvement, although this too is a focus for action in the new school year to ensure it is even more effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in a variety of activities in school and especially in the school's extensive grounds. Many say they particularly enjoy playing in the school's large wooded area and coppice, which they think helps them understand much more about looking after their environment. Pupils also appreciate their regular use of the school's heated swimming pool, with huge smiles of enjoyment and pride in their improving technique, observed in the inspection.
- Many pupils say they like attending school and that they have good relationships with their teachers. Several commented on how much they appreciate both the good humour and firm approach of staff. There is strong evidence of a very harmonious community with no sign of

racial tension between any groups in school. Parents and carers who spoke to inspectors believe their children are well looked after and supported in their personal development.

- School assemblies, such as those involving staff illustrating how to solve a problem by working together, help pupils to consider teamwork. Pupils recognise that the actions and behaviour of all of them have an impact on others.
- Pupils say they feel safe and there is very little bullying in school. The school addresses any such issues well including through philosophy lessons and a focus on good behaviour in whole school activities, including assemblies. Pupils can explain what bullying is and some of the different types including cyber-bullying, name-calling and physical bullying. There have been no recent exclusions.
- Attendance is above average. The school encourages regular attendance and punctuality and the school web-site clearly explains the position regarding holidays in term-time.
- While behaviour is good overall, and most pupils are very polite and respectful of others, it is not outstanding because not all pupils have the very positive attitudes to learning displayed by most of their peers. Across the school, a small proportion of pupils choose not to play a very active part in their own learning. They offer few ideas to discussions and are passive in their approach, sometimes appearing to wait for others to respond or show them what to do. Pupils' books show that occasionally they do not try hard enough with their work.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides very strong leadership of the school, with an incisive understanding of the school's achievements and what remains to be improved. Clear vision, excellent communication skills and a clearly identified route for improvement have contributed towards the rising standards and more effective learning evident over the last 18 months. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher in the drive to further improve teaching and learning.
- The staff questionnaire shows that teaching staff recognise and appreciate the many recent improvements. This is illustrated in the comment, 'We have made huge changes and I am proud to work at this school'.
- The school has extended the use of data to check and track pupils' progress and this is having a positive impact, particularly for the most-able and boys, who previously did not achieve as well as they could. There are effective systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching, especially through the roles of the headteacher and deputy. Subject leaders are also involved in this work, although some are very new to their roles. Discussions show that the work in pupils' books is checked but the school recognises this has not previously been rigorous enough.
- The recent focus on improving teaching has also encompassed the work of teaching assistants. The school has taken action to improve staff skills and encourages all staff to access further professional development activities. The school works effectively with the local authority, maintaining a strong focus on improving teaching even further.
- Senior staff use data analysing pupils' progress and lesson observations to evaluate teachers' performance and decide whether staff should be paid more. Several staff have recently taken on new roles. They demonstrate enthusiasm and a clear understanding of the challenges ahead.

- Senior leaders ensure that additional funding to support those pupils entitled to the pupil premium is used to increasing effect. This includes not only additional support but also access to activities including music tuition and residential visits.
- Nearly all parents and carers are very appreciative of the quality of education and care provided for their children, with some noting the very effective leadership of the headteacher as a pivotal feature. The school is working hard with the local community to involve particular groups of parents more in supporting their children's learning. Cultural links are used well to help pupils learn more about the lives of others in their community and further afield, which helps support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school provides a rich and interesting curriculum. Topics and themes, such as the newly introduced work on banquets, stimulates lots of work across different subjects. Samples of recent art work and illustrations of activities such as the performance of 'A Midsummer Nights Dream' in the school's woodland provide memorable experiences for the pupils.
- The school has prioritised the development of its grounds and facilities to support the development of skills in all areas, including physical education. With high-level teaching skills and excellent facilities, including the school's own swimming pool, the pupils reach very high levels in their performance, as seen by recent successes in city-wide events. The use of the primary school sport funding is being well-considered and targeted to support a wide range of sporting activities.
- Procedures to safeguard pupils meet current requirements. Staff ensure that pupils have equal access to activities and the school fosters good relationships and tackles discrimination. The school is developing links with the main feeder infant school well, especially in sharing assessment information. With the many recent improvements made, the school shows that it has the capacity to continue to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance of the school is good and governors have developed their role well since the previous inspection. With several newly appointed governors, the governing body recognised they needed training to equip them for their changing role. Governors have worked well with the local authority to gain more confidence in challenging the school. They have an accurate grasp of data on pupils' achievement. They have adapted their committees to ensure they fulfil the responsibilities placed upon them. They take seriously their responsibility to ensure pupils are kept safe at all times and wisely consider how best to do this. They respond quickly to issues as they arise and take action to ensure pupils are safeguarded. Funding for specific projects, including support for those entitled to pupil premium funding, is carefully considered. The governing body supports the headteacher in managing teachers' performance and pay-related issues. Governors recognise they have previously been over-dependent on staff for information: to address this they are now in the process of developing better links with year groups, but the impact of this relatively new initiative is not yet measurable.

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	120022
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	424991

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	351
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Lancaster
Headteacher	Juliet Hart
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2011
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