

Oakhurst Community Primary School

Pioneer Road, Oakhurst, Swindon, SN25 2HY

Inspection dates 11–12 December 2013

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| 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 | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress from their starting points. They leave the school reaching standards which are broadly average.
- The experiences children have in the Nursery and Reception classes give them an excellent start to their education.
- Reading is given high priority and pupils are encouraged to develop a love of reading from an early age.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils of all abilities.
- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is a significant strength and helps them to become sensitive young people who are a credit to their school.
- Pupils, parents, carers and staff all agree that the school is a safe place in which to learn.
- The range of subjects and activities offered by the school is interesting and, as a result, pupils really enjoy their learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary at all times. They try their hardest in lessons and this helps them to learn well.
- The headteacher provides exceptionally strong leadership. He is building an effective team around him, including governors, who are all fully committed to ensuring that the school is the best it can be.
- All leaders, including governors, know what the school does well and how it can improve. Their plans for improvement focus on the right things and they are taking effective steps to make the changes necessary to improve teaching and pupils' achievement even further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure that all pupils make rapid progress.
- Teachers do not always use questioning well to extend pupils' learning.
- Progress in writing is a little slower than in reading and mathematics because pupils are given too few opportunities to write at length in their English lessons and in other subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 26 lessons and parts of lessons, some of which were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject and phase leaders, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, parents, carers and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 90 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as 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 43 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Jeanne Simpson, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Alwyne Jolly | Additional Inspector |
| Catherine Beeks | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- Oakhurst Community Primary School is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding (those eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those with a parent or carer in the armed services) is broadly average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils who join the school at different points in the school year is much higher than average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum standards set for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that the next steps that teachers identify when marking pupils' books always relate directly to the learning in the lesson
 - making sure that staff use probing questions more consistently to extend pupils' learning
 - making sure that the work teachers set always provides the right level of challenge, particularly for the more able.
- Raise standards in writing by exploiting opportunities for pupils to write at length more regularly in English lessons and in other subjects across the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children enter Nursery, their skills and understanding are generally below the levels expected for their age, particularly in communication and language. The experiences they have really make a difference and by the time they enter the Reception class they have caught up with where they should be. The Nursery and Reception classes work closely together, so pupils continue to receive the help they need and by the time they enter Year 1, the proportion of children reaching the expected level of development is higher than that found nationally.
- Pupils' progress is at least good in Key Stage 1. Their attainment at the end of Year 2 has improved steadily over the last three years and the standards pupils reach are now broadly in line with national averages. Pupils achieve equally well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school opened in 2009 so some of the pupils currently in Year 4 are the oldest pupils who have been in the school from the beginning of their education. Approximately half the pupils who left Year 6 in 2013 started during the last two years of their time in the school. In spite of some of the pupils having had several changes of school before arriving at Oakhurst, all pupils make good progress from their starting points. However, there is not always time for their attainment to catch up, and so overall standards at the end of Key Stage 2 remain broadly in line with national averages.
- Progress in writing in Key Stage 2 is slightly slower than in reading and mathematics. The school is aware of this and a new initiative has been introduced which helps pupils to prepare well for their writing through practising their ideas verbally. It is too early to say whether this is working. However, pupils have too few opportunities to practise their skills they learn in writing lessons. There are too few examples in pupils' books, both in English and in topic work covering other subjects, of opportunities to write at length.
- Reading is given high priority from the moment that pupils enter school. The youngest pupils understand how to read using their knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make) and as they move through the school, pupils are continually encouraged to deepen their love of books.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress and their achievement is in line with that of similar groups of pupils nationally. This is because the help they get is very precisely matched to their needs.
- The support given to pupils who are eligible for the additional funding through the pupil premium is also effective. Their progress is at least as good as that of other pupils, and gaps in attainment are closing. However, there are too few eligible pupils who have been in the school for the whole of the last two years to make meaningful comparisons between their attainment and that of their peers.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils enjoy doing the work that teachers plan for them. Teachers break up their explanations into chunks so that pupils can keep up their concentration and they let the pupils who understand get on with work by themselves so that they do not waste learning time.
- Most teaching is good and some, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the classes of the oldest pupils, is outstanding. The school uses this practice well to help others to develop their skills, both at Oakhurst and in other schools.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers never miss an opportunity to help pupils to learn. While one pupil was choosing a book for the teacher to read at the end of the day, the teacher very skilfully helped children to discuss what they thought the book would be like and an excellent discussion took place about its size, weight and whether it would be a storybook or an information book.
- Pupils make good progress in lessons because teachers use information about their attainment to set targets which are regularly referred to in lessons and they usually plan work at the right

level of challenge for pupils. Sometimes, however, the tasks set for the most able pupils do not give them opportunities to continue to learn on their own and this can limit their progress.

- Most teachers use questioning well to give pupils opportunities to explain their learning and to check on how well they have understood the new learning. Occasionally, however teachers miss these opportunities by telling the pupils rather than asking them, and at times questions are not probing enough to move learning on as much as possible.
- Pupils' communication skills are well developed because in lessons they are often asked to talk about their ideas and this also gives them opportunities to use the technical vocabulary they have learnt. Sometimes their ideas are shared through a game called 'Popcorn'. This gives the responsibility to the pupils to contribute with no adult intervention. As one child explained, 'We have to give our ideas but we mustn't over-talk or interrupt. We just have to communicate silently with each other about whose turn it is.' This is an example of the excellent attitudes pupils bring to the classroom.
- Teachers explain clearly the new learning in each lesson. They mark work regularly and carefully and pupils know how well they have done through the comments that teachers write. They also tell pupils how they can improve their work but these comments are not always related to the learning in the lesson.
- The support given to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs helps them with their work and their emotional development. There is a 'safe place' called the Fish Bowl for those pupils who are going through challenging times and they feel special when they use this area to talk to the adults who help them.
- Teaching assistants support pupils' learning well. They work closely with teachers to make sure that they understand how they can help pupils of all abilities most effectively and they know when to withdraw support so that pupils are not too reliant on their help.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They come to lessons ready and eager to learn. They concentrate well and they try their best at all times, whether they are working on their own or in groups. They are polite to each other and to all adults and their behaviour around the school is exemplary.
- They have plenty of space in which to play at playtimes and there are also areas where they can be quiet if they prefer. At the end of playtime pupils stop immediately when they hear the bell, and they enter school calmly without any adult having to remind them about expectations, which means that they go into the classrooms ready to learn.
- Parents, carers, pupils and staff all agree that behaviour is a strength in the school. However, there is no complacency and the school has recently changed its policy on managing behaviour so that pupils collect rewards for their team rather than for themselves. They are rewarded for good learning as well as for behaviour and pupils say that they think this is a very good system.
- Pupils feel very safe and parents and carers agree that the school is a safe place in which to learn. Pupils are aware of all forms of bullying. They say that sometimes pupils knock into each other but that these are accidents, not bullying. They say that teachers listen to them, and that if anyone was naughty, it would be dealt with and parents or carers would be called in.
- All incidents of inappropriate behaviour are carefully recorded and tracked so that any emerging patterns can be identified quickly. The number of incidents is extremely small and reducing over time, which shows that the school's systems are working. There have been no exclusions for two years.
- Attendance has improved because of the rigorous approach to following up any pupils' absence and the way in which the school ensures that pupils and parents and carers all know the importance of good attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- All members of the school community are unreservedly positive about the leadership of the headteacher. Since Oakhurst first opened in 2009, he has continuously sought to make the school into a place where pupils thrive and become well-behaved, aspirational young people who love learning. He has been successful.
- Some of the other members of the leadership team are relatively new to their roles and, through the headteacher, they are getting the guidance they need, together with opportunities to put their growing expertise into practice.
- Leaders know how well the school is doing and what needs to improve because they are all involved in monitoring the school's effectiveness, including regular checks on the quality of teaching. Their plans for improvement focus on the right things and the actions they are taking are the right ones. The improving achievement in all phases of the school shows that the school has capacity to continue to improve.
- The school's systems for performance management have made sure that teachers are aware of how they can be even more effective. Teachers say that their targets are very challenging and they value the training opportunities they are given to help them to improve.
- The school's mission statement of 'Motivate, Create, Celebrate' is evident in the way in which pupils' interests are at the heart of everything the school does. The subjects the pupils learn are interesting and they are brought alive by a variety of visits and visitors. There are lots of clubs at lunchtimes and after school, which pupils really enjoy. Literacy is taught well so that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is given high priority. The whole school is rich with artwork and evidence of the opportunities the pupils have to be creative. They learn musical instruments, they contribute to the improvements in the school through the school council and they like the responsibilities they can take on, including helping the younger pupils at lunchtime.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity effectively. As a result, there are no groups of pupils who are underachieving. Pupils feel that everyone is treated fairly, as demonstrated by one pupil who said, 'After all, it is a community.'
- The government's additional funding for sport is being used to develop the expertise of staff and to give additional opportunities for pupils to be involved in sports activities. As a result, there are increased levels of participation and pupils talk positively about the range of sport available to them.
- Procedures for safeguarding of pupils are fully secure.
- The local authority provides light touch support. The strengths of the school are used to support other less successful schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are fully involved in the life of the school. They make regular visits to see what is going on and they take turns to be 'Governor of the Term' when they play an even more active part in monitoring. They are all linked to particular aspects of the school improvement plan so that they can take a special interest in how that area is developing. Governors have carried out an audit of their skills and they regularly attend training to improve their skills further. They are confident in using data to check on how well the pupils are doing compared with what is happening nationally and they provide good levels of challenge to leaders, both in meetings and through their visits. They know about the quality of teaching, including what is done to challenge underperformance, and they make sure that only the best teachers are rewarded by progression through the pay scales. They have taken a particular interest in the way in which the pupil premium is spent and they understand what the information about the achievement of these pupils is telling them. They have ensured that the school is financially secure and that all funding is spent wisely.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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 | 135797 |
| Local authority | Swindon |
| Inspection number | 433887 |

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 | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 470 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Charlotte Welsh |
| Headteacher | Dale Burr |
| Date of previous school inspection | 9–10 February 2011 |
| Telephone number | 01793 734754 |
| Email address | admin@oakhurst.swindon.sch.uk |

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