

Oak Cottage Primary School

Greswolde Road, Solihull, B91 1DY

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2014

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 achieve well because teaching is typically good and some is outstanding.
- Year 6 test results are consistently well above the national average.
- Children experience lively and imaginative teaching, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Parents, pupils and staff are very proud that the school feels like a family where everyone is cared for as an individual.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. The school is a calm and purposeful place where good manners are the norm.
- Pupils feel exceptionally safe at school and have an excellent knowledge of how to keep themselves safe.
- The school gives pupils an interesting range of subjects, topics and experiences which means they enjoy school.
- The headteacher is an inspiring leader. Together with the senior leaders, she accurately evaluates the school's work and knows what needs to be done in order to improve further.
- Rigorous checks on teaching and good use of training and support for individual teachers have sustained classroom practice and pupils' achievement.
- Governors are very committed to the school and make sure safeguarding is a high priority.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not yet high enough.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to write at length and for different purposes.
- The gap between boys' and girls' achievement in writing is too wide.
- Pupils who are supported by extra pupil-premium funding do not all reach the same standards as other pupils.
- Some required information is missing from the school's website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. They visited 17 lessons, including one shared observation with the headteacher and one with the deputy headteacher. Playtimes and lunchtimes were also observed.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other staff, pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 42 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also sought the views of parents through informal discussions at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors checked pupils' written work in a range of subjects and listened to pupils reading.
- They looked at a wide range of documents, including: the school's self-evaluation and plan for improvement; information on pupils' progress and attainment; school policies; records relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour; and teachers' planning of learning.

Inspection team

Helen Morrison, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Amarjit Cheema

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils come from a White British background and few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is low. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A very small minority of pupils are supported by the pupil premium (extra funding to support the learning of those eligible for free school meals, in local authority care and with parents in the armed services).
- Children attend the Nursery class in the mornings only.
- The school shares its site with the independently managed Orchids Nursery which offers afternoon nursery provision. This is subject to a separate inspection and report.
- Independently managed before- and after-school care is also inspected separately.
- 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?

- Make sure that more teaching is outstanding by:
 - sharing more widely the outstanding teaching already found in the school
 - providing extra help to pupils supported by pupil-premium funding so they catch up with their classmates
 - providing writing activities that inspire pupils, especially boys, to write for a variety of purposes and at length in other subjects as well as in literacy lessons.
- Make sure that the school's website contains all the required information for parents.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the school with knowledge, skills and understanding that are above those typically seen in children of the same age. They make good progress in Nursery and Reception because they enjoy exciting activities that capture their interest. As a result standards are high by the time they start Year 1.
- Most pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and in 2013 reached standards well above those found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2013 pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 was a year-and-a-half ahead of what is nationally expected in mathematics, a year ahead in reading and two terms ahead in writing. The percentage of pupils in Year 6 making the progress expected of them from their starting points in Year 3 was average in reading and writing, and above the national average in mathematics. Girls made better progress than boys, and the gap between the girls' and boys' attainment was wider than that found nationally.
- Pupils make better progress in mathematics because teaching is carefully planned to build on what pupils already know and staff use questions well to encourage pupils to work things out for themselves. As a result more than four fifths of pupils exceeded the expected standard and reached Level 5 in 2013, with a quarter reaching Level 6.
- Pupils say they enjoy reading. Younger pupils use their knowledge of the sounds letters make (phonics) to help them read unfamiliar words. Older pupils read a wide range of books confidently and with evident enjoyment.
- Although still above national expectations, standards in writing are lower than reading or mathematics because, in some classes, boys are not always enthused by the writing activities they are given and pupils are not given enough opportunities to write longer pieces of work.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language, make similar progress to the other pupils in their classes because the school provides well-targeted support.
- In 2013 pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium were a term behind pupils nationally in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6; in writing they were over a year behind. In this academic year the school receives funding for only a few pupils. The school's tracking information and work in these pupils' books show that, although most are making similar progress to other pupils and are reaching standards above those seen nationally, some still lag behind their classmates.

The quality of teaching is good

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, learning is exciting and fun. Staff work together well as a team and make sure that children enjoy their learning, both in the classroom and in outside areas. For example, children joined in a 'dragon dance' and used computers to create cards to celebrate Chinese New Year.
- Teachers provide interesting and challenging activities for pupils of all abilities. This is particularly the case in Years 5 and 6 where teachers' plans are carefully pitched at the right

level for the range of pupils' abilities and, consequently, all pupils make rapid gains in their knowledge and understanding. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on fractions, clear explanations and skilful questioning from the teacher, together with excellent support for individual pupils, ensured all pupils enjoyed the increasingly complex tasks they were given and made rapid progress.

- Classrooms are lively places where there is much good humour and where pupils want to succeed. For example, pupils in Year 5 engaged in passionate debate about the pros and cons of living in the fictional 'Weslandia' and became highly animated when trying to convince their friends to share their point of view.
- Reading and mathematics skills are taught well. However pupils, particularly boys, have too few opportunities to write at length and for different purposes so their progress in writing is slower than that in reading and mathematics.
- Highly skilled teaching assistants work well to provide timely support to individuals and groups with specific needs, and at the same time make sure that these pupils develop the skills they need to work on their own. Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language are supported effectively so they make similar progress to other pupils.
- Most pupils supported by the pupil premium receive well-managed help so they progress as well as their classmates, but for a very small number this support has not helped them to catch up.
- Teachers use interactive whiteboards confidently to enhance pupils' enjoyment of learning. Pupils are given many opportunities to use information and communication technology to present their work and to research information and, as a result, reach high standards in this subject.
- A small number of pupils occasionally lose attention and become restless when activities do not interest them. Where pupils were not motivated by a writing activity they lost concentration and did not achieve as much as they could.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils work and play well together. They usually respond immediately to teachers' instructions and move between activities without any delay or fuss. They usually concentrate well in lessons, though on occasions during the inspection a few had to be reminded to get on with their work.
- There are few recorded incidents of poor behaviour and there have been no exclusions in the last three years. There are very few recorded incidents of discriminatory or derogatory language, and none was heard during the inspection.
- Pupils are welcoming to visitors and their manners are excellent. For example, they always say please and thank you and hold doors open for one another.
- Pupils play an active role in school and enjoy taking responsibility, for example, belonging to the school council or eco council or acting as buddies at lunch times.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Almost all parents who responded to the online questionnaire said their children were well looked after and safe in

school. Inspection findings support these views. Pupils feel totally safe at school and say the school is like a happy family.

- They have an excellent understanding of what constitutes bullying and why it is wrong. They say that there is no bullying and, should it occur, staff would deal with it immediately. Pupils are extremely well-informed about how to stay safe on the internet. For example, they know what to do should they ever see anything on a computer that makes them uncomfortable.
- Pupils are also taught very well about how to look after themselves out of school, particularly with regard to road and fire safety.
- Concern for pupils' welfare is a strength of the school. Very strong links with external agencies, together with staff who know their pupils exceptionally well, help to give very sensitive support for pupils whose family circumstances may make them vulnerable.
- Attendance is high, reflecting pupils' great enjoyment of school.

The leadership and management are good

- The strong leadership of the headteacher and effective work of senior leaders have made sure that good teaching and achievement have been sustained since the previous inspection. All staff and governors support the strong ambition of the senior leadership team.
- The school's view of itself is accurate and staff training is carefully linked to the school's priorities. Newly qualified teachers are supported well so they gain confidence and develop their skills. Teachers' individual targets which are set to improve their practice, and decisions made about increases in their salaries, are linked carefully to the quality of their teaching and evidence of the progress made by pupils in their classes.
- Senior staff check the quality of teaching carefully and teachers are told where teaching is good and what they need to do to improve. However, the outstanding teaching practices found in the school are not always shared with other teachers as well as they should be. Consequently, the gap between girls' and boys' achievement is wider than that found nationally.
- The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage is highly effective in ensuring well-planned activities enthuse and motivate children so they enjoy learning and make good progress. Leaders responsible for subjects have been given good training and lead their areas well, although systematic planning to include opportunities to write at length in subjects other than literacy is only just beginning to have an impact.
- The subjects pupils learn are brought together into topics that capture pupils' interests. This promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils very well. Pupils learn about other religions and cultures and have a broad, informed view of the world. They work well together and show respect for the opinions and ideas of others. Help for charities reflects the school's caring ethos.
- The school's leaders, including governors, are committed to making sure all pupils are well cared for and included in all school activities. There are suitable policies and procedures for tackling discrimination should it arise.
- The school operates an 'open door' policy which is valued by parents who say that any concerns they have are very quickly dealt with. However the school's website is not up-to-date and does

not contain all the information required.

- The local authority provides 'light touch' support for school leaders and governors through termly adviser visits which help to evaluate the school's performance. The school works collaboratively with other local schools for teachers' training and for checking the accuracy of assessments. The headteacher acts as a mentor to other headteachers.
- The primary sports funding has been allocated appropriately to provide additional specialist teaching during the school day and at lunchtimes. This has broadened the range of sporting activities available and pupils say they enjoy this specialist input very much. As a result, more pupils are involved in sporting competitions with other local schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors use their skills, knowledge and experience to support, monitor and challenge senior leaders effectively. For example, they join sub-committees relevant to their expertise.
 - They set performance targets for the headteacher and monitor the effectiveness of the targets set for teachers to raise the achievement of pupils. They ensure that teaching effectiveness relates to pay and promotions.
 - They understand the school's performance information well. For example, they know that girls outperform boys and are aware of the 2013 dip in the performance of some pupils eligible for the pupil premium.
 - Governors monitor the school's finances carefully and check how decisions will have an impact on pupils' learning and achievement. For example, a sub-committee checks that the pupil premium funding is now having the expected impact.
 - Safeguarding is a strength of the governing body. Governors are well-trained and some have extensive expertise in this area which is very well-used to ensure that statutory duties are fully met. Governors recently discussed the outcomes of a serious case review in a neighbouring local authority to check any lessons to be learned.

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	104056
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	431509

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	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Goddard
Headteacher	Karen O'Keefe
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2009
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