

Oakfield Community Primary School

Edinburgh Road, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 8BQ

Inspection dates

4–5 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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 school that requires improvement.

- The school is not yet good because by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, their overall achievement is below expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Too few pupils reach the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2.
- By the end of Year 6, the overall achievement of girls is much better than that of boys.
- Occasionally, work is not hard enough, particularly for the most able pupils, who also do not always have enough opportunities to produce longer pieces of writing.
- Teachers do not always check to see if pupils have followed their written advice or improved their work having acted on their suggestions.
- The school is yet to fully evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives put into place to improve pupils' reading skills.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher's leadership is exceptionally strong and clearly focused. Together with the school's senior leaders and governors she has ensured that most teaching is good and standards for pupils currently in the school are rising.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium make good progress and by the end of Year 6 their attainment in mathematics is significantly above average.
- Those pupils who receive additional support through the school's specialist resource units make good progress, and benefit from highly skilled and well-trained teachers.
- Over the last three years, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have improved at a faster rate than nationally.
- Behaviour is good and is very well managed. Teachers consistently apply the school rules and pupils know exactly what is expected of them.
- Over the last year, governors have been more closely involved in the life of the school and in checking its performance.
- The vast majority of parents are positive about the school. They appreciate its caring ethos and the safety it provides for their children.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons, including parts of lessons. They also looked at the teaching of small groups of pupils and sessions aimed at helping pupils to learn to read through understanding the links between letters and the sounds they make (phonics).
- Inspectors listened to pupils read from Years 2, 3, 4 and 5, and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised during lessons, and separately with the headteacher.
- Inspectors took account of 16 responses to Parent View, as well as the school's own surveys of parents' views, and held informal discussions with parents at the beginning of the school day. Consideration was given to the responses from 28 members of staff who completed the inspection questionnaire.
- A meeting took place with a representative from the local authority school improvement service, and a senior professional development tutor from Hope University.
- A meeting was held with five governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Various school documents were examined. These included data on pupils' progress, external school evaluations, records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching, minutes of the governing body's meetings, the school's development plan and review of its own performance, records of pupils' attendance, behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Lenford White, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Clare Nash	Additional Inspector
Hilary Ward	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school receives additional funding through the pupil premium for the vast majority of its pupils. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority.
- The school has a very small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Since the last inspection the school has appointed a new headteacher and a number of teachers, including three newly qualified teachers. The school's senior leadership team has been reorganised and four new governors have been appointed.
- The school runs a breakfast club and a range of after-school activities.
- The school has two resource bases for pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties and associated behaviours. Their specific focus is on working with pupils to develop their speech, language and communication skills.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement so that it is at least in line with the levels expected nationally in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - making sure that teachers consistently check that pupils correct and improve their work as a result of the written advice they give them when marking their books
 - making sure that work is always challenging for pupils , particularly the most able
 - providing pupils with as many opportunities as possible to apply their reading, writing and mathematical skills across the curriculum
 - fully evaluating the effectiveness of initiatives which have been put into place aiming to improve pupils' reading skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The school admits pupils at various times during the year, many of whom have significantly delayed development of their speech, language and communication skills.
- Although overall attainment is improving, especially at Key Stage 1, overall pupils' achievement is below expected levels by the time they leave Year 6.
- Children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities which are well below those expected for their age in most areas of learning. They learn in a much-improved, stimulating, caring and well-planned environment. Although only 40% of the children enter Year 1 having attained a good level of development, this is much higher than in previous years.
- Good phonics teaching (that is, teaching about letters and linking them with the sounds they make) is helping to ensure that pupils' reading skills are rapidly improving over time. The school has done much to develop pupils' interest in reading, and its current data show that progress in this subject is rapidly improving. For example over half of the current Year 6 are attaining above the nationally expected standards for their age in this subject. The school's newly re-developed library and the introduction of a completely new stock of books have helped to fire pupils' imaginations and develop a greater interest in reading.
- The school is working hard to ensure that all pupils are given an equal chance of achieving. For example, although boys' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 was below that of girls in 2013, the school's current data indicate that gaps between the performance of boys and girls are narrowing.
- Teachers' focus on taking mathematics out of the classroom through their practical mathematics programme has captured the interest of all pupils, particularly boys, and this is helping them to make better progress.
- Pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium, including those eligible for free school meals, make good progress and achieve well. In 2013, their attainment in mathematics was significantly above the national average. The school's current data show that their performance in reading and writing and mathematics is at least in line with their classmates.
- Through regular pupil progress meetings, all teachers take responsibility for identifying how well pupils are doing. Any pupils who are falling behind, are provided with immediate support to ensure that they quickly catch up. As a result of regular checks, pupils' progress is improving strongly.
- There were no pupils from minority ethnic groups nor any with English as an additional language at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013. The few currently in school are achieving at least as well as their classmates.
- Effective 'booster sessions' and small-group teaching activities are provided for pupils of all abilities, including the most able. In addition to this, the most able pupils are involved in the 'iMovie' club, and take responsibility for producing the school newspaper. The school's records of pupils' performance show that these activities are helping improve attainment, particularly in writing and mathematics, and that an increasing proportion of pupils are on track to secure the higher levels at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2.
- From their very low starting points, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. The standards that they reached at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2013, for example, were at least in line with average standards for similar groups of pupils nationally.
- Pupils who receive additional support through the school's specialist resource units benefit from highly skilled and well-trained teachers. As a result, they make good progress from carefully planned activities and a well-thought-out curriculum.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- Over the last year the actions taken by senior leaders and governors have dramatically improved the quality of teaching, which is now mainly good. The good impact of teaching is evident not only in good learning for the majority of pupils in lessons but also in improvements being made to pupils' achievement over longer periods of time. All teachers know that they are responsible and accountable for helping pupils achieve to the best of their abilities.
- Teachers set exceptionally high standards in relation to how pupils should behave, and what they are capable of achieving. Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and are very enthusiastic about their work. They are all well trained and show good subject knowledge.
- Good mutual respect between teachers and pupils helps pupils to enjoy their lessons and want to do their best. This was exemplified at the end of an effective Year 6 English lesson. Hereafter pupils were 'hot-seating' and putting themselves in the shoes of a character from the text they were reading, the teacher thanked pupils for their hard work and then gave them the opportunity to evaluate what they had learned and ask questions.
- Most teachers ensure that work is set at just the right level to stretch pupils in their thinking and in their activities during lessons. However, occasionally pupils' full abilities are not put to the test, and some, especially those of the highest ability, say that their work could be a bit harder.
- Pupils work exceptionally well together and enjoy lessons most when they are fully challenged to think hard and work things out for themselves. This was the case in a very practical hands-on lesson in the Key Stage 2 resource base, where pupils took great delight in describing the shape and properties of three dimensional objects to blind-folded classmates. One pupil described a cylinder as having 'a circle at each end and a curved side'.
- Teachers are very experienced in helping pupils to use their skills in word processing, and information and communication technology. They regularly set 'on-line' homework for pupils, and give immediate feedback. This was the case in a very technical Year 4 English class focusing on non-chronological writing and the structure of language. After listening carefully to what their teacher wanted them to do, pupils opened their electronic notebooks, looked at their teacher's comments, immediately corrected them and then added more text to their work.
- The overwhelming majority of teachers take the time to write detailed comments in pupils' books, advising them on how to make their work better. However, teachers do not always check to see if they have made any necessary improvements in view of their comments. In addition to this, the most able pupils do not always have the opportunity to produce longer pieces of writing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**are good**

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good. They enjoy learning and have very positive attitudes towards their teachers and each other. Exceptionally strong and consistent class room management ensures that even those pupils who might otherwise find it difficult to maintain full concentration during lessons are always engaged. The impact of teaching on pupils' attitudes and behaviour is a strong factor in their overall good learning in lessons.
- Pupils move around the school with a minimum of fuss and are very proud to wear their school uniform. Older pupils enjoy taking on additional responsibilities through the school's various councils. Years 5 and 6 pupils take on their role of looking after Reception and Year 1 pupils at lunch time very seriously and execute their duties in a mature manner. Attendance and punctuality are improving, helped by the school's very popular breakfast club, meetings with parents where there is concern over absence, and rewards for pupils with 100% attendance.
- Pupils say that the best things about their school include the outside equipment and drawing facilities that 'helps us to keep calm', their computers, hot dinners and the 'loads of nice (learning) choices'.
- Older pupils who spoke to inspectors were adamant that behaviour was almost always good. Younger pupils were not as clear, but all said that if they had any problems that they would always talk to an adult or put a message in the 'worry box'. Either way, all were confident that

they would always be listened to.

- The majority of parents and staff agree with pupils that behaviour is almost always good. Inspectors are of this view too, having observed good behaviour around the school and in lessons.
- The school's work to ensure that pupils are safe and secure is good. Older pupils have a well-developed understanding of how to stay safe while using the internet. They say that they have all had training on how to use their electronic notebooks properly and know that these cannot be used for anything other than school work.
- Pupils are acutely aware of bullying, because this has been an important topic in personal, social and health education lessons. When asked to define bullying one pupil commented, 'It's when someone is not nice to you all the time, it can be verbal, physical or emotional or it can be done on-line.'
- Pupils are aware of the dangers of prejudice-based bullying. Older pupils can define it and said that they would always report it, as one pupil noted, 'We know not to be bystanders.'
- Various visitors come to the school to talk to pupils about staying safe. Pupils say they learn about first aid, the danger of fires, the importance of road safety and, with the help of Widnes Vikings rugby team, the dangers of drugs and smoking.

The leadership and management

are good

- The school's leadership is exceptionally strong and clearly focused. New and improved ways of working have enabled it to take decisive action to rapidly improve the quality of teaching. As a result good improvements are being made in achievement and behaviour.
- The headteacher knows exactly what needs to be done to secure improvements. Supported by governors and her senior leadership team, she ensures that there are regular pupil progress meetings, provides support for teachers to help them reach their targets and insists on the consistently good management of pupils' behaviour.
- The senior leadership team and staff are focused and well motivated. Those who completed the inspection questionnaire said that they were proud to be a member of staff and that they were fully supportive of the school in its ambitions.
- The school's newly qualified teachers say that they are valued members of a progressive team. They are appreciative of the professional development opportunities that they have received and are especially complimentary about the mentoring support given by the deputy headteacher.
- The school's arrangements to check the performance of teachers have improved significantly over the last year. All teachers have challenging targets which are linked to raising levels of achievement for pupils. No teacher is awarded a pay increase or offered promotion unless there is good evidence that achievement is improving strongly.
- The role of middle managers is developing. They are fully involved in planning and checking the effectiveness of their specific areas of responsibility and are becoming increasingly involved in checking the quality of teaching.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Older pupils have a good understanding of world faiths, and all pupils are provided with a wide range of opportunities to enhance their cultural experience, through dance, drama, choir performances and residential opportunities for Years 4 and 6.
- The school provides opportunities for pupils to engage in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including music, multi-skills and athletics. 'Booster' sessions in phonics and mathematics during lunch time and after school are also helping to raise levels of attainment.
- The local authority has worked with the school in a number of areas. Its most recent advice and support have related to the Early Years Foundation Stage. School evidence indicates that this has helped to improve provision and children's progress.
- Safeguarding procedures are followed closely and meet requirements.
- The school has used its physical education and sports fund in a number of ways, for example, to create two 'Trim Trail' climbing frames, and to train staff in teaching 'multi-skills' and provide a

wider range of sport activities for pupils.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors' general knowledge of the school is good. They set the headteacher challenging targets and have taken decisive action to ensure that all teaching is at least good, and that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. Governors know that the performance of pupils needs to improve, and that the work that the school does to meet the specific, and sometimes complex, educational needs of pupils with special educational needs is of a very high quality. However, they are less secure in their understanding of the school's performance in relation to that of similar schools.
- Governors ensure that the pupil premium makes a difference for entitled pupils, and know that the early intervention teaching that it supports is improving outcomes for them. They have authorised the use of spending to enrich the lives of all pupils and are determined to ensure that no pupil is disadvantaged because of their family background.
- Governors keep themselves up-to-date with their training. The Chair of Governors knows that the quality of teaching is good because he regularly comes into school and meets with teachers and pupils. Parent governors know that the quality of teaching is good because of the positive school experiences that their children share with them.

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	133322
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	439778

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	325
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr E Burke
Headteacher	Mrs C Khan
Date of previous school inspection	27 April 2011
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