

# Oak Tree Primary School

Jubilee Way North, Oak Tree Lane Estate, Mansfield, NG18 3PJ

**Inspection dates** 11–12 February 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 headteacher, supported by the governors, has tackled underperformance in teaching and increased its effectiveness throughout the school.
- Extra money from the government has been used well to make small classes and provide a great deal of one-to-one and small-group teaching. This is a key reason for improvements in these pupils' progress.
- Another reason that pupils who are currently at the school make good progress is that the teaching is interesting and effective.
- Teaching assistants provide well-focused additional teaching, support and guidance, particularly for less-able pupils.
- The headteacher says there can be 'no excuses' for pupils not doing well. Her plans for continuing improvement are very clear and detailed.
- Recent refurbishment of the school has transformed corridors and classrooms. Pupils look after their classrooms, which are bright and well organised.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and say they enjoy lessons. They behave well, listen carefully and work hard.
- The school takes care to make sure that the pupils feel safe.
- The school runs many clubs and after-school activities that the pupils appreciate and enjoy.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards are below average overall.
- Occasionally, the most able pupils are not made to think hard about applying what they have learned in mathematics to solve problems.
- The drive to 'take care' with their handwriting has brought improvements to many, but not yet all, pupils' work.
- Spelling is not taught as effectively in some classes as others.
- Not as many parents are working with the school to accelerate their child's progress in reading as there could be.
- The school website does not contain all the information it should.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 19 lessons. Six of these were carried out jointly with the headteacher. The inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons, heard some of them read, and held a meeting with a group of older pupils.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school’s plans for improvement, and policies about keeping pupils safe. They also examined the work in pupils’ books, and a range of data about their progress.
- The inspectors held discussions with teachers, the headteacher, three members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.
- The views of parents were analysed using a survey carried out by the school, because there were very few responses on the Parent View website during the inspection. In addition, the views of parents who spoke to inspectors were considered.

## Inspection team

Christopher Parker, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Lawley

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school has an average number of pupils for a school of this type.
- Almost all of the pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs at school action (pupils who need extra support with their learning) is double the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- Eight out of 10 pupils are supported through the pupil premium. This is very high compared to the national average. This extra government funding supports those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those children who are looked after by the local authority, and pupils who have a parent serving in the armed services.
- Far more pupils leave and join the school at different times in the year than do so in most schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher was appointed to the post in September 2012, following a period where she had been supporting the school in her role as a national leader in education.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics so they are at least in line with national averages by:
  - making sure that the most able pupils are made to think hard and use their mathematical skills in different situations
  - ensuring that spelling is taught equally effectively in all classes
  - insisting on the same high expectations of handwriting and presentation throughout the school
  - extending links with parents, so that even more of them are involved in helping their child to make good progress in reading.
- Ensure that the school website contains all of the information it should do, so that parents have access to a full range of documents and links to other websites.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- A wave of improvement is flowing through the school. Pupils are making good progress in lessons, and this is reflected in their workbooks and in the attractive wall displays. The school records and analyses pupils' progress in considerable detail, and this shows that pupils currently at the school made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics last year.
- Very few children start school with the knowledge and skills expected of that age. Many of them have poorly developed speech and social skills. The children are making good progress in both the Nursery and Reception Years because a high priority is given to speaking, early reading and writing. However, attainment, although improving, is still below average at the start of Year 1.
- The good progress seen in lessons and evident in the school's own data is not reflected in the national test results for pupils at the end of Year 6, which were below average overall in 2013. The pupils who took the test last year contained a number whose starting points were very low and several who joined the school during Key Stage 2.
- Results show that the pupils made good progress in mathematics and writing between Year 3 and the end of Year 6. Their progress in reading was weaker. The school's records show they made good progress in all three subjects during Year 6. At the end of Year 2 there was a marked improvement in results, although standards remained below average. Standards are rising through the school.
- The school's detailed analysis of last year's spelling, grammar and punctuation tests revealed a weakness in spelling. The school has acted quickly to bring improvements. However, there are inconsistencies in the teaching of spelling. Progress in some classes is not as fast as in others. Nevertheless, pupils' work over the last year shows that they are making fewer mistakes.
- The most able pupils are often set work that makes them think hard. They are set targets to stretch them. For example, in Year 6 the pupils are frequently reminded what they have to do to reach the higher levels. Occasionally, the work they are set in some classes does not contain enough variety to cause them to apply their mathematical skills to different situations.
- Pupils achieve well in a range of subjects. The pupils do particularly well in art. There are many examples of good-quality work in the style of artists such as Picasso and Andy Warhol. Considerable achievement in sport, notably becoming national Kwik Cricket champions, reflects the marked improvements in the pupils' skills made through both lessons and sports clubs.
- Extra money from the government pays for smaller classes and a great deal of one-to-one and small-group teaching for pupils supported by these funds. As a result they are making good progress. Last year there were too few pupils who were not supported by these funds to make a meaningful comparison. The gap is closing quickly in current Year 5 and 6 classes.
- Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Discussion with parents highlighted the extensive support given to both pupil and parents. The progress made by these pupils is frequently reviewed so that extra support can be withdrawn as soon as it is no longer required, or, conversely, so that additional support can be planned.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Teachers plan lessons that interest the pupils. Often they use an exciting start to lessons to grab the pupils' attention. This was the case in a highly effective Year 6 writing lesson about myths, which began in the dark with dramatic music playing. The teacher used this to generate words and phrases, by torchlight, which pupils could use to enhance their writing.
- In the same lesson the teacher capitalised on the pupils' enthusiasm, using their suggestions to turn a dull sentence into one which would captivate the reader. The most able pupils benefitted considerably from this short teaching input and edited their writing to include interesting openers to their often complex sentences.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, good learning takes place both inside and outside the classroom. The adults question and prompt very effectively to promote the children's speaking and listening skills. They also provide the children with a wide range of activities that encourage them to share and take turns and so develop their personal and social skills.
- The teachers create vibrant classrooms. Wall displays are colourful and show that high-quality work is valued. Displays which contain prompts to help the pupils, and targets to remind them what they are aiming to achieve, feature prominently in lessons. Teachers use these prompts very well to identify for pupils what they need to learn next.
- The sounds that letters make are taught systematically. These sessions are lively, and pupils make good progress. Younger pupils use their knowledge of the sounds that letters make to tackle unfamiliar words. Older pupils have been taught to read with intonation and expression. Many older pupils read for enjoyment and talk enthusiastically about the books they have read.
- The marking of pupils' work is focused well on helping them to improve and to reach higher standards. The teachers use their subject knowledge skilfully to identify what the pupils need to do to improve. The refurbished and enhanced computer facilities are used well for pupils to find information about topics, such as the coast – currently the focus of work in Year 5.
- There is an infectious enthusiasm that is evident in all classrooms. The headteacher's high expectations of both staff and pupils are evident throughout the school. The 'take care' drive to improve pupils' presentation and handwriting has brought improvements, although not all pupils are yet taking as much care as they could.

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

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that bullying does not happen very often. They know about the forms that bullying can take and know how to stay safe when using the internet. The school's survey of parents' views indicates that all of those who replied agreed that their children feel safe at school.
- Attendance has improved markedly and is now better than the national average. It has improved because the school constantly reminds pupils and their parents of the importance of full attendance to doing well at school. The number of pupils who are frequently absent is now less than half what it was a year ago.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils say that behaviour is usually good in the playground and around the school. Pupils are proud of their school and are eager to 'show off' the recent redecoration and refurbishment. Classrooms are very well organised. Books and the resources

that pupils need are easily at hand. Pupils look after them and put things back in the right places.

- Pupils develop positive attitudes to learning. Most concentrate on their work because it is interesting, although a few occasionally lose focus towards the end of a lesson. Pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, say they enjoy learning. They are praised and rewarded when they do well, which builds their confidence to try even harder.
- In lessons pupils listen carefully and most respond quickly to their teacher's instructions. The smaller class sizes allow the pupils to receive a great deal of small-group and one-to-one teaching. This is particularly beneficial to less-able pupils. One Year 2 pupil, who was making considerable strides forward in learning his times tables while working with a teaching assistant, exclaimed, 'I'm on fire – this is fun!'
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about the wide range of sporting opportunities that the school offers. For example, groups of pupils practise Kwik Cricket every lunchtime, learning how to pick up a ball on the run and throw accurately at the stumps. They also benefit from a wide range of clubs, including a homework club, which many of them attend.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher has generated an enthusiasm for learning which has infected staff and pupils alike. She has developed a culture of 'no excuses' and teamwork that has resulted in pupils throughout the school making faster progress. These improvements can be seen in lessons and in the pupils' work, but are not yet reflected in test results.
- The headteacher's rigorous checking of the quality of teaching has both tackled underperformance and enhanced good practice. Training, coaching and focused staff meetings have developed consistent approaches, for example, to marking and setting targets for pupils. However, expectations of handwriting and approaches to spelling are not yet the same in all classes.
- The checking of each teacher's work is playing a central role in improving the school and in individual teachers' effectiveness. Teachers are set targets closely linked to the school's priorities, and these are regularly reviewed. Additional pay awards are dependent on successful teaching which leads to faster progress for pupils.
- The school's plans for improvement are sharply focused on raising standards in all subjects over a three-year period. Clear evidence of success can be seen in the increases in pupils' progress and, for example, in rising standards in art through the Artsmark Gold award. Plans are comprehensive and include clear criteria against which success can be measured.
- Leaders who have responsibility for subjects say that the headteacher has given them the support to make changes and try new approaches. Subject leaders check that the teachers plan their lessons carefully and teach effectively, and that pupils' work is marked in way that helps them to improve. They take action where there is any weakness.
- The school has developed an exciting curriculum for the pupils. This is well illustrated by the discovery, during the inspection, of dragon eggs in the school courtyard and the arrival of a senior officer from the army's Dragon Egg Response Unit, who were on standby in case the eggs hatched! This event stimulated a wide range of speaking, listening, writing and art activities.

- The school promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. 'Please' and 'thank you' are expected of even the youngest children. As a result, older pupils are polite and well mannered. Art is given a high priority throughout the school, and successfully broadens pupils' cultural horizons.
- Discussions with parents indicate that they are very pleased with the school, and particularly the many developments that have taken place over the last two years. Parents are sent frequent text messages to keep them well informed, and many – but by no means all – are working in partnership with the school to improve their child's progress, particularly in reading.
- Extra funding has been used to reduce class sizes and increase the number of pupils who are taught either in small groups or on their own. This is proving successful in rapidly increasing the progress that those pupils make. Their progress is frequently checked and carefully analysed so that they receive the teaching and support they need.
- The local authority visited the school to investigate the dip in results in 2013, but deemed that no further support was required. The school uses the services of consultants to provide an impartial view of what is working well and where there is scope to make further improvements. They also evaluate the quality of teaching and how it can be improved further.
- Funding to provide more sport for pupils has been used well to extend the range of opportunities that the school offers. Most of the money has been spent on providing 'Speed, Agility and Quickness' sessions for younger pupils. This is benefiting both their physical development and their readiness to learn.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governors want the school to improve and become outstanding. They see this as important for the whole of the local community.
  - The governors know how well the school is performing. They are working closely with the headteacher set high expectations for all. They also challenge the headteacher and other leaders to explain how well pupils are doing. They have fully supported the headteacher in tackling underperformance in teaching.
  - All new governors attend induction training, and others have completed training so they are, for example, able to check that all aspects of the school's safeguarding arrangements are up to date. Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
  - The governors keep a careful watch on the, currently healthy, financial situation. They know what the pupil premium funds are spent on, and question the school about its impact.
  - The school has an attractive website, but it does not contain all the information that it should.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	133276
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	440640

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	245
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David French
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Moore
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 June 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01623 458261
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