

Oldfields Hall Middle School

Stone Road, Uttoxeter, ST14 7PL

Inspection dates 6–7 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils do not make enough progress compared to other pupils nationally in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Some disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who are eligible for the pupil premium are currently not making as much progress as other pupils.
- Teaching is not consistently good. Some staff do not recognise when more-able pupils need to do more difficult work or less-able pupils need extra help.
- In some lessons, pupils do not know what to do because the work has not been properly explained to them.
- Teachers' marking in books does not always give pupils clear guidance about what they need to do to improve their work.
- While grammar, punctuation and spelling are improving, pupils do not always make corrections or learn from their mistakes.
- Information on pupils' attainment and progress is not shared enough with subject leaders or the governing body. As a result, the school has an optimistic view of its performance and its improvement plans are not fully effective.

The school has the following strengths

- New leaders in English and mathematics have helped to improve the progress of pupils currently in the school, and are working well with the headteacher and senior leaders to raise standards.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 3.
- Behaviour is good and pupils say they enjoy coming to school. Safety requirements are met. Attendance is above average.
- Pupils have very good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 21 lessons, four of which were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors heard a small group of pupils reading and observed an assembly. They also looked at pupils' books and their work around the school.
- Discussions were held with two groups of pupils, parents, staff, members of the governing body, senior and subject leaders and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked the school's data on pupils' previous and current progress, records relating to safeguarding, teachers' performance and safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors took account of 60 responses from parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Mary Myatt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Mary Hinds	Additional Inspector
Geoffrey Marston	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Oldfields Hall Middle School is of average size compared to other middle schools.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for pupils who are in the care of the local authority, known to be eligible for free school meals or have a parent in the armed services, is below average.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- All pupils are educated on the school site.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out minimum expectations for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school hosts training sessions and collaborates with colleagues across the Uttoxeter Schools Partnership.
- The school has undergone some staff turnover since the previous inspection and a new head of English and specialist teachers in mathematics were appointed during the Autumn term 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching consistently good or better to increase achievement for all pupils in Key Stage 2, by:
 - making sure pupils of all abilities are given work at the right level of difficulty and are clear about what is expected of them
 - using marking effectively so that pupils are clear about how they can improve their work
 - checking that pupils respond to the feedback given
 - providing further training for staff to improve pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling skills.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
 - focusing school improvement planning, including training for teachers, on the achievement of different groups of pupils
 - making sure all leaders and the governing body have accurate information about pupils' achievement to track their progress and quickly support any in danger of falling behind.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The school's assessments show that pupils join Year 5 with lower attainment than that expected for their age. In 2013, attainment at the end of Year 6 was significantly below the national average in mathematics and below average in reading, spelling, punctuation and grammar. Given pupils' starting points, this reflected broadly expected progress in reading, spelling, punctuation and grammar but not enough progress in mathematics. In writing, attainment was above average and shows that they made good progress.
- Pupils' low achievement in mathematics in Key Stage 2 was partly due to disruption to staffing. However, as a result of better teaching since September 2013, pupils are now making better progress. They are making good progress in Key Stage 3 in mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress in English in Key Stage 3 as a result of good teaching. Teachers show high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Newly appointed leaders in English and mathematics have secured better progress in these subjects since the start of the academic year. For example, the proportion of boys who make more-than-expected progress in reading has been lower than that of the girls. The school has addressed this by giving boys books which are more interesting. The English department has introduced a 'big spelling scheme' to practise spellings and is asking parents to encourage their children to read every day.
- Pupils supported through pupil premium funding made slightly better progress than others in the school in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013. However, in mathematics the eligible pupils in Year 6 are not currently making as much progress as others and are on average approximately one term behind in their learning.
- The Year 7 'catch up' funding is used to help pupils who have the weakest skills in English and mathematics. The support for these pupils is more effective in English than in mathematics, although the school is now addressing this through using specialist staff. As a result, they are beginning to catch up with their classmates.
- Achievement for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is varied. They are making good progress in reading because the school has provided good support for them, and it is improving in mathematics.
- Staff are working hard to improve pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar. However, pupils' books still show too many spelling mistakes. Where these have been corrected, pupils have not always been expected to show that they can now spell correctly.
- Literacy is promoted across the curriculum. In English, science and music lessons, pupils were seen using specialist vocabulary and developing their extended writing skills.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has been better in Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 2. The school began to address this at the start of the current academic year. Teaching overall is improving but in some lessons teachers do not plan and provide work which is suited to the full range of pupils' abilities. Sometimes all pupils are given the same work to do. This means that neither the most

able nor the least able make good progress, because the work is either too easy or difficult for them.

- In some English and mathematics lessons, teachers are not checking that less-able pupils understand what they are doing. This means that some pupils do not know how to do basic calculations and are not provided with work which consolidates their mathematical understanding. Less-able pupils in Year 6 English are not always clear about how to make sentences more interesting.
- In English and mathematics there is much good and some outstanding teaching where teachers show high expectations, give clear instructions, build on what pupils can already do and provide opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their knowledge and skills.
- Pupils made very good progress in information and communication technology (ICT), English, science, music, art and mathematics lessons where teachers showed that they had high expectations of what pupils could do. In these lessons, teachers provided plenty of opportunities for pupils to show what they had learnt and kept a close check on pupils' understanding.
- In an English lesson, for example, pupils discussed the motives of characters in *Macbeth* and then analysed answers to identify the elements of a high quality response. This meant that they had a clear idea of how to improve their own answers.
- Less-able pupils are often helped well by teaching support staff in classrooms. They provide additional support through effective questioning and explanations. They work with small groups of pupils on specific work to accelerate their progress.
- Pupils' work is usually marked regularly and helpful examples were seen in English and history. However, the feedback is variable and is better for more-able pupils and those in Key Stage 3. Pupils are not always clear about what they should do to reach their personal targets. They are not always expected to make improvements based on the teacher's comments, so they do not give enough attention to improving their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils work well together and are very supportive of one another. They enjoy coming to school and say, 'This school is firm but fair.' They arrive punctually to lessons, bring the right equipment and have the correct school uniform.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. In most lessons, they listen carefully to the teacher and work well together. Occasionally, where pupils are not clear about what they are expected to do, they do not pay enough attention.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and are aware of e-safety, for example. They say there is little bullying and if it does occur, it is dealt with swiftly. Younger pupils say that they value the older 'peer counsellors' who they can talk to if they have a problem. They appreciate the way the school helps them to settle in when they first arrive.
- The promotion of Oldfields Hall as a 'rights respecting school' develops pupils' moral and social awareness well. There is a group of 'rights champions' who make sure that these are put into practice. As a result, pupils lead on a number of school plans including the development of a playground charter.

- Attendance is above average for all groups, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils supported through the pupil premium. The number of exclusions is very low.
- Parents and carers agree that the school provides very good support for their children.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not had an accurate understanding of the school's performance in the last two years. This is now being addressed and the deputy headteacher is working to make sure all leaders, including governors and middle managers, use information on attainment and progress to identify where pupils might be falling behind.
- School development planning identifies the main areas needing improvement, but these have not been linked sufficiently to the achievement of different groups of pupils.
- Subject leaders are clear about their roles and are committed to developing literacy and numeracy in their subjects. However, they have not had detailed enough information about the progress of pupils, particularly in English and mathematics.
- The performance management of staff is related to whole-school priorities but targets for staff have not been sufficiently linked to pupils' achievement.
- The headteacher and senior leaders provide very good support for pupils and staff and this was reflected in interviews with pupils, parents and staff.
- The appointment of new leaders in mathematics and English is improving the quality of teaching. Subject specialist teachers are now working in Key Stage 2 and this means that pupils are making more progress.
- The curriculum includes regular themed days to reinforce the links between subjects. These help pupils to develop their knowledge and skills to prepare them to live in a diverse society. For example, pupils across all year groups recently spent a weekend practising music together and giving a concert.
- The school has achieved 'Dyslexia Friendly' status and pupils appreciate that this is helping them with their learning.
- Pupil premium funding has been used for additional teaching staff and to pay for pupils to attend events outside the school. However, its impact has not been carefully monitored.
- Sports funding has been used to extend opportunities in rugby, table tennis and an equestrian initiative. Partnerships with other schools have also been extended and participation rates have increased. Pupils spoke very highly of the range of sporting opportunities provided for them and how this is improving their levels of fitness.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has significantly improved opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It has made links with schools with pupils from different backgrounds, and its work on linking art and religious education has been recognised nationally.

- The local authority is working with the school to improve standards and this is beginning to have a positive impact on the achievement of pupils in mathematics.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors know about the school's strengths and areas for improvement but have not received enough detailed information about the achievement of different groups of pupils. They have recently had additional training in order to develop this aspect of their role. Governors are involved in the life of the school and teachers value their support. They know about the support provided for those eligible for the pupil premium, and are aware that it is not having enough impact on their achievement. They are aware of how teachers' performance is managed and the plans to link this more closely to pupils' achievement. The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met, including those for keeping pupils safe. Staff are suitably trained and the procedures for child protection and risk assessment are good.

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	124429
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	440612

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	521
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rodger Mann
Headteacher	Nicholas Brown
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2011
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