

# Oaklands Primary School

Oaklands Lane, Biggin Hill, Westerham, Kent TN16 3DN

**Inspection dates** 11–12 March 2014

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils' progress is not yet rapid enough to compensate for a drop in attainment since the last inspection, particularly for older pupils.
- Pupils' progress and achievement vary between year groups. Their ability to apply their mathematical or information and communication technology (ICT) skills are not developed sufficiently in some of the older year groups.
- Not enough pupils spell or punctuate their writing carefully, particularly when writing in other subjects.
- Progress for pupils with special educational needs varies between year groups and is not always rapid enough.
- Pupils who are entitled to extra funding, called the pupil premium, lag behind others in their understanding and pace of learning.
- While pupils are keen to talk to adults or visitors, their responses are quite brief and their answers lack detail.
- Teaching does not consistently draw out the best from all pupils, despite their good behaviour, particularly for the more able, to help accelerate their learning.
- Senior leaders have too many responsibilities and not enough time to take the action necessary to improve or give help to improve teaching more quickly.

### The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders, including governors, have identified the right areas of focus to continue the recent rise in results for older pupils.
- Staff morale is high. Moves to review teachers' roles and responsibilities are laying the right foundations for increasing pupils' achievement over time.
- Pupils continue to behave well, say they enjoy activities such as art, World Book Day and the increased number of clubs, particularly those promoting their physical well-being through specialist sports coaching.
- Nearly all parents who responded to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire indicated they would recommend the school to others and believe it keeps their children safe.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes, along with small group activities around the school. They visited 26 lessons or part lessons. Three were observed jointly with senior leaders. Activities also seen related to the teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- The inspectors held meetings with the Vice Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor, and staff, and had a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority. They looked at documents, including the school plans for improvement, safeguarding information, assessment records, attendance information and the school's checks and information on pupils' progress.
- Inspectors met with a representative group of pupils, heard pupils read in Year 2 and Year 6, observed lunchtimes, playtimes and two assemblies. They looked at the past work of pupils in Years 2 and 6, as well as other work during lesson observations.
- Pupils were also observed while attending breakfast, lunchtime and after-school clubs.
- Account was taken of the responses in questionnaires completed by 44 members of staff and 45 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View).

## Inspection team

Kevin Hodge, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sara Benn

Additional Inspector

Joanna Franklin

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average primary school. A privately-managed nursery operates within part of the premises and is not managed by the governing body. This provision will be inspected separately. The headteacher joined the school shortly after the last inspection.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding (additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, are in the care of the local authority or from other eligible groups) is below average. There is a very small number of pupils at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is slightly above average, as is the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs.

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

- Improve teaching, particularly in Years 3 to 6, so that it is at least good by:
  - ensuring all teachers have the highest expectations of what all pupils can achieve
  - ensuring that all pupils are challenged and motivated by their work, particularly the most able, in order to boost their learning
  - ensuring pupils are supported in applying their number skills in different situations
  - ensuring that all pupils have more opportunities to develop and apply their communication and technology skills.
- Raise standards and strengthen pupils' achievement, particularly in Years 3 to 6, so that more learn at a faster rate, ensuring that:
  - pupils' achievement over time is consistently good, leading to higher standards
  - pupils speak with greater confidence, using a wider vocabulary, about what they are doing
  - pupils develop their writing skills, using accurate spelling and punctuation, particularly in their topic work.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that senior management responsibilities are shared more widely to increase the pace of improvement in teaching and pupils' achievement
  - ensuring that teaching motivates pupils to learn.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because too few of them reach better than expected levels and the most able are not fully stretched in their learning. Although it is improving, pupils are not consistently good at applying their mathematical or writing skills to other work.
- The achievement of those who need extra help with their learning, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, also requires improvement. There is a good range of adult helpers to support them, but not all guidance is effective in drawing out the best from pupils.
- Too many pupils still do not spell accurately or use a wide vocabulary when they write. In subjects other than English, writing is often short and has more mistakes. In contrast, more able Year 6 pupils, particularly boys, wrote some thought-provoking poetry connected to captive tigers, reflecting their increasing motivation.
- Pupils respond with enthusiasm to questions from teachers or visitors, but older pupils find it difficult to give long or detailed answers.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium funding were, until recently, up to a year behind others. However, gaps in both English and mathematics have narrowed so they are just one or two terms behind, reflecting the school's more intense focus on their needs.
- Children in the Reception classes make good progress from starting points that are lower than typically expected. They play together well and loved the story of *Elmer*, the multicoloured elephant, which prompted a good range of number activities, art work, discussion and writing. Children develop secure speaking and early writing skills.
- Pupils reached the national level in the phonics screening check (the sounds that letters and combinations of letters make), improving on the previous year. Pupils' knowledge and skills in reading unfamiliar words are starting to work and, by Years 2 and 6, they reach the levels expected. Older and younger pupils alike generally read accurately, if not always widely.
- Pupils benefit from regular physical education (PE) lessons and active playtimes. Some lessons are taught by an external sports coach, who also is helping staff to develop their skills in teaching PE. Pupils like using computers, but use them only occasionally in some year groups, so their skills are not extended.
- The very few pupils at the early stages of speaking English are supported appropriately within lessons but, like others, their progress also varies and requires improvement.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement. Not enough of it is consistently good over time, particularly in Years 3 to 6, to accelerate pupils' progress. This is particularly true for the most able pupils who are capable of harder work. They are not always challenged to do the very best they can, despite being enthusiastic to learn. In Reception, and Years 1 and 2, effective teaching helps pupils gain skills in writing, reading and number.
- Pupils eligible for extra funding benefit from more direct teaching and support. They were identified as lagging behind others but, along with all pupils, they are not always stretched sufficiently by the pace of the work.
- Project themes, such as 'Mission to Mars', are potentially exciting, but in reality do not often motivate pupils or fully extend their skills. Recent initiatives to boost pupils' writing skills are starting to work, particularly for the most able, but not within topic work. Teacher-led assemblies help weave aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development into day-to-day activities well.
- Some very effective specialist teaching in mathematics is starting to boost pupils' learning more quickly.
- The help given to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supports their social

needs, but is not as consistent in meeting their academic needs. Additional adult support varies in its effectiveness.

- Audio visual technology aids learning effectively in some classes. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils used laptop computers to quickly work out what coins were needed in an imaginary supermarket. In contrast, older pupils could not readily access the internet to do research for their topic.
- Displays in both parts of the school show pupils cover a wide range of work, and the Year 6 'excellence' board has examples of high-quality work. Staff mark pupils' work regularly and give them praise and helpful pointers to improve it.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils say that it has got even better since the arrival of the new headteacher. Pupils like their school and, particularly, try to stick to the five 'R' values, such as 'respect' and 'resilience', which they say are helping them to improve their learning.
- In lessons, and around the school, pupils are enthusiastic to learn, arrive promptly and settle quickly to work. Sometimes teaching does not always capitalise on this enthusiasm to draw out the best from pupils. Pupils like being responsible, such as organising and promoting the morning 'healthy' tuck shop. Specialist sports coaching and class-based activities on healthy eating are developing pupils' attitudes to healthy lifestyles well.
- Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare, although admit it does occur occasionally. They are confident that their teachers listen to them and act upon any dips in behaviour. Attendance has improved recently to average levels since the school tackled the irregular attendance of a small group of pupils.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils insist they are looked after well, and visits beyond school, such as taking part in singing festivals or sporting events, are well organised and potential safety concerns addressed. Pupils are clear that, when they use internet-based devices, they do so carefully and with due regard to avoiding any inappropriate websites or contacts.
- Pupils who find it hard to learn are cared for particularly well through a nurture group, and pupils readily explained why it was called the 'snug'. 'It makes me feel safe and secure.' One-to-one support and links with parents are generally good, so that their children are more confident to learn.

### **The leadership and management require improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement because senior leaders and governors have not made enough effective changes to maintain pupils' good learning or improve it to become outstanding since the school was last inspected. The headteacher has not been able to share fully her current high number of tasks and responsibilities in order to increase the pace of improvement.
- However, the day-to-day running of the school has been maintained well. Staff are complimentary about the way their new headteacher is trying to make changes. A refined leadership structure, where middle managers (those responsible for age groups or subjects) have more time to observe and help others to improve, is currently being consulted on, with a view to implementing it at the beginning of September.
- The range of subjects taught is broad and balanced, but some activities do not always motivate the pupils to learn. Recent revisions to increase pupils' skills in writing and reading are starting to work, but these are comparatively new. Some pupils find it hard to access ICT to enhance their learning in different subjects.
- Links with other very effective schools have led to better teaching through the school, but it is not consistently good or outstanding. It has helped to confirm to staff that salary progression is

tied to the improved performance of the pupils they teach.

■ Parents are enthusiastic about the school and the way that the headteacher leads the school. 'We love the school.' 'My child is doing well.' These were typical comments shared with inspectors. Parents who attended a phonics workshop during the inspection said they found it very helpful.

■ The local authority has led training on how to improve the teaching of phonics, but recognises increased support is needed if the school is to improve faster.

■ **The governance of the school:**

– Governors have recently reviewed their routines and ways of supporting the school. With the new headteacher, this has resulted in the development of a clear ethos and vision. They are aware of how the school compares to others and realise that its performance has slipped. In response, they have changed their structures and the way they challenge leaders, but some of these changes are relatively new, such as how they visit the school to gauge progress. The way this is recorded sometimes varies in its usefulness. However, they ensure that pupils' safety, safeguarding, checks on staff and well-being are catered for well. Governors do not tolerate any discrimination and ensure equal opportunities for all where possible. They have benefited from external training and support, particularly in helping the headteacher review management structures. This has given governors an understanding of procedures for dealing with any inadequate teaching and the opportunity to ensure that salary levels and proposed posts of responsibility are matched and distributed effectively. Teachers' pay increases are clearly linked to their pupils' performance. Governors are also aware of how the extra pupil premium funding is used and the specific impact it is having in English and mathematics in helping to reduce the attainment gap. They have already identified areas to improve. They have ensured that additional sports-based funding is providing effective specialist sports coaching through the school.

## 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>	101637
<b>Local authority</b>	Bromley
<b>Inspection number</b>	440948

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>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	445
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Black
<b>Headteacher</b>	Becky Sharp
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9–10 December 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01959 573963
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