

The Oaks Community Primary School

Rochester Drive, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH65 9EX

Inspection dates 25–26 March 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides outstanding, passionate and determined leadership. She is extremely strongly supported by all leaders and a very effective governing body. Consequently, significant improvements have been made to several aspects of pupils' achievement since the last inspection and the school continues to develop strongly.
- Children make an excellent start to their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are extremely curious, hard working and very well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils of all abilities make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the rest of the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make outstanding progress from their starting points. They respond very well to the high expectations and robust support from the staff.
- The quality of teaching is good, with some that is outstanding. Pupils are motivated and engaged by the use of stimulating resources including information and communication technology (ICT), role play and through real-life problem-solving activities. Pupils remember information well and increase their understanding because teachers and teaching assistants ask thought-provoking questions.
- Pupils are extremely well behaved and considerate to others. They feel very safe and well cared for.
- Pupils' health and well-being and personal development are promoted very well. Exciting themes and visits develop their understanding of themselves and their world. They regularly participate in an excellent range of artistic, musical and sporting activities.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' recorded work in English and mathematics is not always of sufficient length and depth to firmly secure their achievement.
- Pupils' writing in different subjects does not always reflect the standard they reach in their literacy work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in nine lessons or parts of lessons, including joint observations with the headteacher. The inspector also made a number of shorter visits to classrooms, looked at pupils' work and listened to them reading.
- Discussions were held with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, a representative of the local authority and an independent education consultant. The inspector also spoke to members of staff, including senior leaders and other leaders with particular responsibilities.
- The inspector took account of the 20 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View), the results from the school's own regular consultations and several discussions with parents. The inspector also considered responses from questionnaires for staff.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including information on pupils' current progress, the school's plans for improvement, the management of teachers' performance, the use of the pupil premium funding, as well as documentation and records relating to pupils' behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Andrew Clark, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The number of pupils on roll has increased by almost a quarter since the last inspection.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is well above average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive the pupil premium funding is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children that are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are from White British families. A small proportion of pupils are of minority ethnic heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- A higher proportion of pupils than usual join the school in year groups other than Reception or leave before Year 6.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Several teachers are new to the school since the previous inspection, including some new to the profession.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement and rates of progress further by:
 - ensuring pupils' recorded work in English and mathematics is of sufficient depth and length to fully embed and develop the skills they are learning
 - making sure that pupils' written work in all subjects is always to the highest standard they are known to be capable of.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are generally well below those typical for their age. There is an excellent trend of rising standards and children make outstanding progress overall. This is a significant improvement from the previous inspection. In particular, the early stages of reading and numeracy are very rapidly established and provide a secure basis for later learning. As a result, children are very inquisitive, work well together and eager to learn.
- Pupils of all abilities make good progress through the rest of the school. Standards are average by the time pupils leave in Year 6 and rising. This is reflected in the results of national tests, which show a rising trend at both Year 2 and Year 6 for reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium funding achieve well and make at least good progress. In 2013, the results of national tests for English and mathematics in Year 6 for these pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, were approximately a term below the results of other pupils overall and in line in reading.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make outstanding progress from their starting points. The strong focus given to communication skills such as speaking, reading and writing, sometimes with specialist support, ensures pupils make their thoughts and ideas clear. Skilfully worded questions from all staff build pupils' confidence and enable them to make decisions about their learning and participate fully in all subjects.
- The most able pupils achieve well and are increasingly working at high levels. They take good levels of responsibility for organising and managing their own work. By Year 6, they show very good recall of key facts in writing and mathematics and apply them well, for example in calculating areas of triangles and irregular shapes. They are analytical and persistent in solving problems.
- The few pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress. They often make speedy progress in establishing reading skills well and developing their spoken and written vocabulary.
- Pupils' reading skills are well developed. Early readers understand the link between letters and their sounds and use this to identify unfamiliar words. This is reflected in the scores they achieve in national checks of these skills at Year 1 and 2. By Year 6, pupils show a good understanding of different genres and talk knowledgeably of the writing styles of different authors from Shakespeare to J K Rowling. They make good use of the school's excellent library.
- Pupils increasingly make good progress in writing. They develop a good understanding of grammatical structure, spell accurately and present their work well. This is evident in results of national tests for these features by Year 6. Pupils understand how to use language to create a range of effects. For example, they create emotional and melodramatic paragraphs in response to their studies of the story of King Kong.
- Pupils' mental and written calculation skills have continued to improve since the last inspection and pupils apply them well. They tackle mathematical problems logically and systematically.
- Pupils achieve well in many other subjects, particularly art and music.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Children are extremely keen and eager learners in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Highly attractive and stimulating activities engage children and provide outstanding opportunities for practising literacy and numeracy skills indoors and out. For example, well-planned role play and the excellent use of ICT entice the children, particularly the most able, to write their own exciting accounts of *Mr Gumpy's Outing*.
- Throughout the school, pupils are ambitious and aim high. There are high expectations of all pupils. Pupils' learning skills, such as persistence, are promoted well. This boosts the

achievement of all groups of pupils, including the most able and those who find learning difficult.

- Pupils are systematic and accurate in most of their work because classrooms are well organised, orderly and attractive.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive excellent support from teachers and teaching assistants through outstanding use of frequent assessments of their academic, physical, emotional and social development and extremely well matched activities to develop skills. Timely and extremely carefully planned literacy and numeracy sessions increase achievement for pupils who are falling behind or who find it difficult to learn new skills and concepts.
- Pupils who are new to English and those who start school at other than the usual times also often learn well in response to speedy assessment of their needs, sometimes in their heritage language, and skilled support.
- The most able pupils often make good progress because staff ensure such pupils can quickly engage in work that fully challenges them.
- Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are speedily and effectively established. Structured ICT programmes, brief well-planned sessions for learning new skills and regular opportunities to apply them in real-life situations ensure pupils of all abilities make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is complemented by the good use of homework and training opportunities for parents so they can provide high-quality support.
- The vocabulary pupils use in different subjects and their deeper understanding of new ideas are well developed in response to teachers' thoughtful and incisive questioning. Teachers rarely accept anything less than full and thoughtful answers spoken clearly.
- Pupils increasingly successfully improve their own work because of the clear guidance provided through regular marking and feedback. Pupils have a thorough understanding of the next steps they need to take and often assess their own achievement against precise criteria for success.
- Sometimes, pupils do not have enough opportunity to work at length and build on the skills they are learning. For example, by using erasable whiteboards too often or worksheets that require only short answers, opportunities to practise, embed and reflect on new skills are limited.
- The written work pupils do in different subjects does not always match the standard of work they are producing in English.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Relationships between pupils and with adults are excellent. They are marked by mutual respect and consideration. Pupils are polite and considerate towards each other because of the very good example all adults set for them.
- Pupils eagerly take on many roles and responsibilities and fulfil them extremely well. The school council and play leader roles make an excellent contribution to orderly and busy breaks and lunchtimes. Pupils' pride in their school is evident in their smart appearance and the careful presentation of their work and tidy books.
- Pupils are keen to come to school, and are punctual and well prepared for the day's learning. Attendance is increasingly above average. The school works closely with parents to encourage the best levels of attendance and school readiness.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel very safe and well looked after. Parents are fully confident that their children receive the highest levels of care.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how their behaviour affects others and know that they should be kind and considerate. Staff make very good use of a wide range of stories, songs and rhymes to reinforce positive attitudes and to promote excellent social skills. Consequently, pupils have a very clear knowledge of potential bullying situations, including racial and homophobic concerns. However, they are fully convinced that very little takes place and any incidents are rapidly and successfully addressed. This is confirmed by the school's meticulous record-keeping procedures and outcomes.
- Pupils learn to take appropriate risks and to keep themselves safe. They relish adventure on

residential and other visits but know the dangers and how to stay safe. Regular visits from the emergency services and links with secondary schools reinforce pupils' preparedness for their future well-being.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's enthusiasm, clarity of purpose and determination are central to the school's strong trajectory of improvement. She has established a highly effective leadership team, despite staff changes, which is driving forward achievement in all areas. There is a continuous pursuit of high standards in all aspects of the school's work. This has led to significant improvements to the achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and is raising standards overall. Staff morale is very high and built upon self-developing teamwork.
- Senior leaders act as excellent models for other staff through their own teaching and their skills in improving the work of others. There are rigorous procedures to measure and analyse pupils' progress and other aspects of the school's work. This is used extremely well to plan for future improvements.
- All subject leaders are very clear and effective in their roles. They produce high-quality reports to keep staff and the governing body very well informed and the school is consequently well prepared for national changes to the school curriculum. There are excellent procedures to ensure that staff receive the training and support they need to fulfil their roles to the highest levels.
- The impact of the leaders' approach to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils is reflected in the good and often outstanding progress made by all pupils. There is no evidence of discrimination in the school.
- Staff are held accountable for the progress their pupils make and they have to meet stringent criteria in order to achieve the next salary level.
- The school receives appropriate 'light-touch' support from the local authority. Representatives from the local authority make regular visits to discuss many aspects of the school's performance and provide many training opportunities for staff and the governing body. The school enhances this through commissioning its own training and support.
- The curriculum is rich and exciting and promotes all aspects of literacy and numeracy extremely well. Pupils' physical, health and well-being are especially well promoted through the many visits and visitors all pupils benefit from. Topics and themes build learning on exciting real-life experiences. Thrilling art and musical experiences strongly promote pupils' cultural awareness.
- The school makes very good use of the new primary school sport funding to improve teachers' skills and support pupils' sporting and other achievements. This has already contributed to the development of teachers' skills in physical education, increased participation in clubs and secured significant success in inter-school competitions.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is exceedingly well led and managed. It is fully informed through detailed headteacher's reports, its own frequent systematic checks on the school's work and very precise analysis of children's progress and the quality of teaching. Governors undertake a regular review of their role to ensure they meet the school's needs and use their own skills to maximum effect. They ensure that safeguarding requirements are met in full and supported by excellent record keeping. The governing body manages finances very well by ensuring the budget is used to promote the highest standards of children's achievement, evident in the effective use of the pupil premium funding. Governors are involved in decisions as to whether teachers and staff should be rewarded with salary increases and review targets for the headteacher.

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	134249
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	439617

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	135
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tracey Norton
Headteacher	Susan Evans
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2009
Telephone number	0151 338 2111
Fax number	0151 357 4156
Email address	admin@theoaks.cheshire.sch.uk

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