

# Oakmeadow Church of England Primary and Nursery School

Long Meadow, Bayston Hill, Shrewsbury, SY3 0NU

**Inspection dates** 1–2 April 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		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- In the past there has been a lack of challenge in learning and not enough pupils were achieving expected standards, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their rich vocabulary in their writing.
- Teachers do not pay enough attention to correcting misspellings.
- Pupils do not have enough chances to use their mathematical skills in different subjects.
- Marking does not consistently show pupils how to improve their work and they are not always given the time they need to act upon the advice they receive.
- Teachers do not always use information on individual progress effectively. As a result sometimes they do not focus enough on meeting individual pupils' needs.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher, with good governor support, has brought about very rapid and significant improvements to the school since her appointment.
- Current information on pupils' progress shows rapid improvement, with many more pupils reaching the levels of which they are capable.
- Teachers are far more accountable for the progress of pupils in their classes and much more aware of the progress made by each individual pupil.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils is good. The headteacher has made the site secure.
- Support for professional development has improved effectiveness and raised the quality of teaching.
- There is a commitment to raising standards. Effective leadership and governance is enabling this to happen in an improving school.

## Information about this inspection

- A total of 14 lessons were observed by inspectors, three of them undertaken jointly with the headteacher. Shorter visits were also made to classrooms to see the work of teaching assistants and to observe pupils' behaviour.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other school leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- The views of parents were gathered from the 31 responses to the online Parent View survey, from a letter received and from meeting parents who were bringing their children into school.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils and from talking to as many pupils as possible throughout the inspection in order to gather their views about the school.
- Staff views were gathered from their responses to the staff questionnaire and from conversations throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work while they were in lessons and also took a detailed look at a range of work produced by pupils from across the school. They also listened to groups of pupils reading.
- A range of documentation was looked at, including evidence on the progress being made by pupils, teachers' planning and assessment, the school's evaluation of its own performance and its improvement planning, and a range of policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Patrick Walsh

Additional Inspector

Carol Deakin

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, who are in the care of the local authority, or who have a parent in the armed services) is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is below average, while the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- Nearly all pupils are from a White British background.
- The school currently meets the government's present floor standards, which represent the minimum expectations for progress and attainment in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher took up her post in January 2013.

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

- Raise standards in writing and mathematics so they match those already found in reading by:
  - extending opportunities for writing in all lessons in a variety of ways, so pupils have more opportunities to use their rich vocabulary in the writing they undertake
  - ensuring misspellings are corrected regularly and helping pupils understand how they have made mistakes in their writing to help them improve their skills
  - seeking opportunities to promote mathematical skills in a range of other subjects, ensuring that work is fully challenging for the whole range of ability in each class.
- Ensure that all teachers become as effective as the best in supporting good learning through:
  - using the school's marking and assessment policy in a consistent way that includes advice for how work might be further improved, with time allowed for correction
  - helping all to become equally confident and skilled in using assessment information, for example in ensuring that the needs of identified groups as well as those of individuals are always addressed.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because there has been a pattern of underachievement, particularly in writing and mathematics, although standards in reading are high. This lack of challenge means pupils do not always reach their full potential and so are not fully prepared for entering secondary education.
- Pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage after joining the school with skill levels a little below those generally found, and this continues so that by the end of Key Stage 1 standards are above those found nationally. However, progress has not been sustained through Key Stage 2. Here the gap between pupils nationally and that of the attainment of pupils in the school has steadily narrowed and improvements seen nationally have not been mirrored in the progress of pupils in the school.
- Even in Key Stage 1 not all groups of pupils have done equally well. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and those supported by the pupil premium, for example, have not achieved as well as other pupils from their individual starting points.
- However, the progress currently being made by pupils across the school shows that following changes introduced by the new headteacher, who arrived fifteen months ago, progress and achievement are improving rapidly. Currently the proportion on track to meet or exceed expected progress in English and mathematics is above that found nationally.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has also improved significantly. Considerable numbers have been removed from the special needs register after weak teaching, not learning difficulties, had been identified as the main issue. This has allowed more focused support for those who really do have special educational needs. Current data shows this group is making accelerated progress and starting to narrow the gap in their attainment compared with other pupils.
- The same is true for pupils who receive support through the pupil premium which is now being very well targeted. This is supporting pupils' significant progress so that they are currently no more than a term behind the rest in reading, writing and mathematics and have sometimes closed the gap in attainment completely.
- Support for the most able has also been enhanced. This includes developing opportunities for them to work with specialist teachers and to take advantage of facilities at local secondary schools and to be challenged in ways that stretches them, as teachers better understand the levels at which they can work.
- Reading is a strength in the school and preparation for this starts with effective phonics teaching (the understanding of letters and their sounds) in the Reception class. Standards have always been above those found nationally and pupils develop a rich vocabulary that is reflected in their speech. However, previous weak teaching has meant that this is not always reflected in their writing.
- The additional funding currently available to promote sport and physical education is being well used. Professional coaches work with pupils and alongside teachers to help them refine their skills and grow in confidence. It has seen a significant increase in levels of participation in sporting events, such as the recent chance for Year 3 and 4 pupils to participate at a gymnastic

event, as well as rising standards.

### **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because over time teachers have not always helped pupils make the most of their ability or challenged them fully. It is only since the arrival of the new headteacher that teachers have been held directly accountable for pupils' learning by using the progress data on their class. They are now starting to understand better what pupils have done and what they need to do to improve, planning lessons to help them achieve this.
- Teachers found it hard to make full use of progress information because it used to be collected centrally and focused on the progress of year groups rather than on that of individual pupils within a class. The most effective teachers now use the information to plan lessons that challenge pupils at the right level, although teachers' confidence in making the fullest use of the data varies.
- The ability to use the information to help different groups of pupils, such as those who benefit from the pupil premium, to make good progress also varies as some teachers seek to further develop their skills. It leads to some continuing variation in the effectiveness in challenging and inspiring pupils, and in the quality of teaching, including that in English and mathematics.
- Teachers are now uploading progress information on a termly basis, leading to termly pupil progress meetings with the headteacher. Pupils not making sufficient progress are given additional support by teaching assistants, who, with the teachers, make effective class teams. Pupils doing better than expected are given enhanced targets to accelerate learning. Pupils told inspectors that teaching had improved and that lessons are now more enjoyable and help them to learn better.
- Teachers' expectations are rising as they gain a better understanding of the capabilities of each pupil, which is also supported by their effective questioning skills. Pupils' answers not only reflect their understanding but also promote discussion and help them explore ideas.
- Adherence to the marking policy is not yet fully consistent. The expectation is that marking will contain advice on how to improve a piece of work and that teachers will correct misspellings and errors in written work to help raise standards in writing, as well as allow time for corrections and additions. The effectiveness with which this is done varies, as do the ways in which teachers seek out opportunities to use writing and number work across all subjects and so raise standards.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. It has improved as learning has become more engaging and it strongly supports the rising standards that are now clearly apparent throughout the school. Behaviour in lessons is consistently good and promotes effective learning.
- Behaviour around the school is equally positive and pupils get on very well with each other and with adults. There is a mutual respect between everyone in the school and this promotes a strong rapport and very positive relationships. Pupils enjoy coming to school, so attendance is currently above average, and they are proud of their new school with all it has to offer.
- Links being developed with schools in Africa and inner London help pupils place their own school

and community into a wider context, supporting their effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They also illustrate a commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and the tackling of inequality within the school's Christian context.

- Some pupils first arrive with particularly challenging behaviour since the school has an agreement with the local authority that sees it admit a small number of pupils who have been permanently excluded from other mainstream schools. Strong support and consistent expectations enable these pupils to be successful and to re-engage with effective learning. The mother of one wrote 'My son was extremely challenging when he first started. He is a different child now. His teaching assistant has been fantastic and his progress is ongoing'. This success is even more praiseworthy because the pupils are admitted to the school, rather than into a unit attached to the school, and they are in class with everyone else.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Standards of safeguarding have risen, nowhere better illustrated than in the action taken by the new headteacher on her arrival to make the site safe by closing gates during the day to prevent the previous, potentially dangerous, situation of open access for anybody to the whole site.
- Pupils are aware of what constitutes bullying and they have covered it in lessons and assemblies. They say that because everyone gets on well together bullying does not occur in school, but when incidents of any kind do occur they are dealt with effectively by adults.

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

- The headteacher has set about transforming the school to one where all pupils are challenged to do their very best. Within 15 months she has had a remarkable impact, in large part securing the support of staff, and the achievement of pupils is now rising strongly.
- She is supported well by other senior leaders, who value the fact that they have clear roles and responsibilities as senior strategic leaders. Other teachers and staff who have specific leadership roles are also determined to play a full part in creating a school that aspires to become outstanding.
- As one teacher put it, 'The school is clearly moving forward. We are starting to see the impact of new teaching and learning initiatives on the progress of the children...they can see their learning journeys much more clearly and are engaged and motivated to learn'.
- The checking of classrooms, planning and marking is rigorous and feeds into the effective system that has been put into place for managing the performance of staff. Teachers are given challenging annual objectives that are in part focused on helping the school meet its identified improvement priorities and in part support the professional development of individual staff, which is seen as key to raising the effectiveness of provision in the school.
- Teachers understand the direct link between their performance and any pay enhancement and the clear pay policy is fully in line with legal requirements. Those teachers who receive enhanced pay willingly accept greater responsibilities in return.
- The school now knows itself well since so much has been done in such a short time to raise standards so effectively. This has enabled it to identify key priorities as the unrelenting focus on school improvement is at the heart of school life.
- The school is working hard to build positive relationships with parents and with many has been

very successful. Some however are unhappy with changes that have been introduced and the speed with which they has occurred. Inspection evidence suggests strongly that such views are wrong and that the school is improving rapidly.

- Links with other professionals and agencies are effective in supporting pupils and their families, sometimes covering wider social and emotional support, including safeguarding. Links with the local authority are strong, especially in its support for the new headteacher since her appointment.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- A considerable number of changes to the governing body has seen it increase its expertise in several key areas, including education and finance. It is therefore in a good position to carry out its legal duties, including those for safeguarding. Links between individual governors and specific subject areas enable the governing body to find out at first-hand what is happening in school, supported by effective training that has enabled it to gain a good understanding of the school's progress data. Governors have had a realistic view of the challenges the school has faced and the progress it is making, being able to compare it with other schools. The pay policy they have adopted is fully in line with the new regulations for teachers' pay and they understand the process for dealing with any inadequate teaching. Challenging performance targets are set for the headteacher and she is held to account effectively, together with other senior leaders. Finance is monitored effectively and the deficit budget inherited following amalgamation of the two predecessor schools is being reduced well. Additional funding such as the pupil premium is monitored well and there is a clear understanding of its effectiveness in raising standards for the pupils who receive it.

## 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>	135787
<b>Local authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	443842

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	369
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gary Felton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carla Whelan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 May 2011
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