

# Oakfield School

Hospital Lane, Blaby, Leicester, LE8 4FE

**Inspection dates** 7–8 May 2014

|                                |                      |             |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Inadequate  | 4        |
|                                | 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 high expectations, positive atmosphere and very clear routines at Oakfield help pupils to settle very quickly and to improve their behaviour and their learning.
- The good teaching quickly starts to fill gaps in pupils' previous learning. Pupils make good progress with their reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- Pupils make good and often excellent improvements in their behaviour. Pupils focus very well on their learning and show great pride in their work. They treat each other and staff with respect.
- Staff are a close-knit team who are dedicated to making sure that pupils achieve the best they can.
- The headteacher's leadership has been a key factor in the school's considerable improvement. She is ably supported by the acting deputy headteacher. Both have very high expectations for what pupils can achieve.
- The management committee has worked very effectively with the school and the local authority to help the school to improve. Senior leaders and the management committee have taken effective actions to improve the quality of teaching.
- The school has very positive relationships with parents. Parents receive a very good range and quality of support from the family support workers.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally teaching is not good and there is not yet enough that is outstanding.
- In mathematics, number is taught frequently but for a few pupils this is not often enough to make up for gaps in their learning really quickly.
- Staff sometimes use mathematical terms in a way that confuses pupils.
- The best marking is excellent but this is not consistent across all classes. Marking in mathematics does not always pick up when pupils have not understood something.
- At times, teaching assistants do not have the subject knowledge to be able to correct pupils' mistakes in English and mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- Oakfield School was placed in special measures in May 2012. Since then, it has received five visits from Her Majesty's Inspectors to monitor its progress.
- The inspector observed four lessons and parts of four other lessons, three of which were observed jointly with the headteacher or acting deputy headteacher. During these lessons the inspector talked to pupils about their work and looked at their books.
- The inspector observed break and lunchtimes, and talked to pupils about their experiences of school.
- The inspector looked at a number of documents, including the school's information about pupils' progress, analysis relating to behaviour and attendance, records of senior leaders' monitoring of the work across the school, documents relating to safeguarding, and records of the management committee's meetings. The inspector looked at work from pupils' in each class and age-group, and across the curriculum.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, acting deputy headteacher, two family support workers, the Chair of the Management Committee, a member of the management committee and a representative of the local authority. Brief discussions were held with teachers about their work and the support they receive from leaders.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents and carers (Parent View). The inspector took account of 14 responses to the questionnaire that the school sent to parents and carers the day before the inspection.
- The inspector took into account responses from 15 staff questionnaires, representing almost all of the staff.

## Inspection team

Sue Morris-King, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.*

### Information about this school

- Oakfield caters for pupils who have experienced behavioural, emotional or social difficulties at their mainstream schools. Many pupils also have learning difficulties or specific difficulties with literacy.
- Until recently, and at the time of the previous inspection, Oakfield took pupils in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. Since April 2014, it caters only for Key Stage 1 and 2.
- Around three quarters of the pupils are in Key Stage 2.
- Around a third of the pupils have been permanently excluded from mainstream school. Most other pupils are still on the roll of their mainstream school but attend Oakfield full time. Occasionally, pupils attend Oakfield part time and another school for the rest of the time.
- The length of time that pupils remain at Oakfield varies. On average, pupils stay for three or four terms, though some return to a mainstream school or move onto a special school within a term.
- Typically, the vast majority of the pupils at Oakfield are boys. At the time of the inspection there were no girls on roll.
- The school receives primary school sport funding.
- Around a fifth of the pupils have a statement of special educational need.
- The majority of the pupils are White British.
- A very small number of pupils are looked after by the local authority.
- The school serves the whole of Leicestershire so pupils often have long journeys to school.
- Around a third of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. This is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority. However, the school has not yet received any pupil premium funding in the past. They will be receiving it from this term onwards.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics, so that it is always good and frequently outstanding in order to enable pupils to make outstanding progress by:
  - ensuring that all marking is as informative and helpful as the best, and that marking in mathematics picks up pupils' errors and misconceptions in order to inform planning for the next steps
  - ensuring that number is taught frequently enough to build up pupils' knowledge and understanding week-by-week
  - developing a policy for the way in which mathematics, particularly calculation, is taught, to include a focus on the way in which adults use mathematical language
  - training and supporting teaching assistants in the subjects in which they need further development.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress with their reading, writing and mathematical skills. Since September 2013, many pupils are progressing at a faster rate than that expected nationally. Some pupils are on track to make a whole National Curriculum level of progress by the end of the summer term in reading, writing, mathematics, or all three.
- It is common for pupils to make quite a slow start with their learning when they join the school. They quickly settle into classroom routines, but often do not have the learning skills or the confidence to be able to make quick progress with their academic work. However, once pupils have been at the school for a short time they begin to thrive on the success they are starting to experience.
- Typically, in the second half term after they join the school, pupils' progress accelerates. At this point, they begin to learn many of the skills they need for the future, such as being able to read. Pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 read daily. Older pupils and more fluent readers have some time to read independently. Pupils enjoy reading and can talk about why they chose certain books. A good range of interesting books helps to motivate them.
- Pupils' phonics (the sounds letters make) skills develop well. Pupils apply their phonics strategies well when writing, for example sounding out a word they want to spell, or recalling a strategy to remember an irregular word.
- Pupils who join the school with few reading and writing skills, including those who have a statement of special educational needs, make good progress. Equally, higher attaining pupils progress well.
- Pupils of all ages who are at the early stages of learning mathematics do not always have frequent enough opportunities to practise their number skills. This means that they sometimes forget what they have learnt.
- Work in pupils' books and on display indicates that they achieve well in other areas of the curriculum, such as science and humanities.
- There are no differences between the achievement of different groups in the school, such as different ethnicities and pupils eligible for the pupil premium.
- Pupils are benefiting from the swimming lessons they are having, paid for by the primary sports funding. Some have never swum before and this is giving them the opportunity to learn to swim safely, under the supervision of the school.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers plan lessons carefully, starting with what they know about each pupil and their particular needs. Pupils have often missed learning at their previous schools, so teachers find out where the gaps are and plan accordingly. It is this precision that enables so many pupils to make good progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively together and teachers plan well to use all

the staff to good effect. In a reading lesson, for example, pupils in one class were divided into four different groups, all working at the level that suited their needs, with the appropriate resources.

- Lessons concentrate very well on basic skills, such as learning to read, but are interesting and engaging at the same time. Teachers frequently capture pupils' imaginations, which motivates them to work well. In one lesson, for example, pupils were writing a diary as anyone they wanted to be. A particularly imaginative entry was 'from' Alfie the dog, who wrote that he had been hunting in the forest for squirrels with his friend Charlie the cat, and had come home to eat slugs and snails with bread and gravy.
- Teachers think carefully about what will help pupils to remember tricky new concepts. Some pupils learning the spellings of irregular words, for example, were searching for them in sand then reading them to a friend, others were writing them in red paint on the table while spelling them aloud. This was backed up by techniques to help them remember, such as 'there's a 'hen' in 'when'".
- Excellent classroom routines help pupils to understand exactly what is expected of them. This enables teachers to make a smooth transition from one lesson to the next, with no time wasted on managing behaviour.
- The best classrooms are excellent learning environments – vibrant and exciting, with pupils' work carefully displayed.
- The best marking gives clear details about what the pupil has achieved and pertinent, encouraging comments to the pupil. This is not consistent across each class.
- Occasionally, the quality of teaching dips. This is because the work is not quite at the right level for the pupils or the activity does not allow the pupils to achieve what the teacher was aiming for them to achieve.
- In mathematics lessons, the language that teachers use to describe what pupils are doing is not always accurate or is confusing, such as using 'sharing' and 'grouping' when pupils are learning division.
- Teaching assistants focus very well on pupils' learning, rather than their behaviour, and are often skilled at helping pupils with their work. When they are working with small groups they are not always sure how to teach or reinforce a particular concept, such as a letter sound or a calculation.

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

- Pupils' behaviour is good. The school's positive and rewarding culture helps pupils to manage their own behaviour. Many make considerable improvements. Parents recognise and appreciate these changes.
- The start to each day sets the right tone. Pupils go straight to their classroom where they spend a short time sitting around a table eating breakfast with staff. This relaxes them after their often long taxi journeys to school.
- Once pupils have been at the school for a short time, many develop very positive attitudes to

learning. Typically, all pupils spend all day in lessons. They make great efforts to concentrate well.

- Pupils are very clear about what is expected of them. Many enjoy showing their work to adults and being praised for what they have achieved. Pupils enjoy working towards whole-class rewards and earning the opportunity to choose activities.
- There have been no fixed-term exclusions this academic year.
- The school's actions to keep the pupils safe and secure are good.
- Behaviour around the school site is usually calm and sensible. Lunchtimes are orderly and pleasant. Pupils and staff eat and chat together.
- Staff use a range of appropriate strategies if pupils' behaviour is challenging or volatile. These are effective in calming pupils down quickly.
- Journeys to school, a time when pupils can feel insecure, are carefully monitored to make sure that pupils feel safe and are safe.
- Bullying is very infrequent. Occasionally pupils upset or tease each other. Staff are almost always with pupils and they model how pupils should behave towards each other. Pupils say that most of the time they get on well with each other.
- Attendance is in line with the national average for primary schools. Over a third of pupils have high attendance. There is no persistent absence.

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

- The headteacher and senior leaders know each pupil and their families very well. Leaders set high standards. They expect every pupil to come to school every day, to work hard and to achieve. At the same time, they are determined to give pupils as much support as they can to be successful.
- Over the last two terms, staff have formed a cohesive team. They have responded well to the drive to improve teaching, and to the support they have received. Staff are very positive about the headteacher's leadership.
- Staffing levels are high but used to very good effect. All staff focus closely on pupils' learning. Leaders constantly strive to improve the outcomes for individuals. For example, Year 6 pupils have recently been placed in a separate 'transition class' to receive intensive preparation for the national tests and for their forthcoming move to secondary school.
- Leaders have developed a comprehensive system to assess and track pupils' progress. All pupils have challenging targets for mathematics, reading and writing, which are reviewed half termly. If pupils are not progressing, leaders talk with teachers about the 'sticking points' and form precise plans for action. The same rigorous method is used to check how well pupils are progressing with their behavioural, emotional and social skills.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the school's work is good. The headteacher and acting deputy

headteacher frequently visit classrooms, look at pupils' books, and consider assessment information in order to support and challenge teachers. Arrangements for the performance management of teachers are effective.

- The family support work team provide valuable support to parents and are a key part of the school's success. They are involved from the outset, helping parents to accept the need for their child to attend a specialist provision and explaining the expectations for good attendance. They continue to provide support throughout each pupil's time at Oakfield, carefully tailored to each family's need.
- Parents' views of the school are very positive. One parent commented on the 'amazing communication between home and school'. Another's recommendation was 'just keep up the great work'. Other comments were similarly positive.
- The local authority supports and monitors the school well. The responsible officer has a very good knowledge of the school and has played a key part in its improvement.

■ **The governance of the school:**

Governance is strong. The Chair of the Management Committee has organised the committee well. Sub-committees scrutinise different aspects of the school's work closely, then feed back key messages to the full committee. Members have a range of relevant skills and expertise, and provide a good link to schools across Leicestershire. This has helped to ensure that there are clear procedures for admitting pupils to the school and reintegrating them as appropriate. The management committee has a good knowledge of the quality of teaching and has challenged senior leaders where there have been weaknesses in teaching. The school has not received any pupil premium funding because of confusion among schools and the local authority about how this should be allocated to a pupil referral unit. The local authority, school and management committee have worked together to resolve the issue and the school is due to receive the funding for eligible pupils from this term onwards.

## 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> | 136754         |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Leicestershire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 424912         |

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

|  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Pupil referral unit         |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Pupil referral unit         |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 5–11                        |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                       |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 26                          |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The local authority         |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Christine Horsfall          |
| <b>Select</b>                              | Alison Bradley              |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 9 May 2012                  |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 0116 275 9150               |
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