

# The Oaks Primary School

Bells Lane, Druids Heath, Birmingham, B14 5RY

**Inspection dates** 9–10 October 2014

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher has built a strong senior leadership team which has a clear focus on improving the school. They have tackled any weaknesses effectively and the school has improved since its previous inspection.
- Governance has improved greatly. Governors challenge senior leaders effectively and ensure a good quality of education for all pupils.
- Robust systems for checking the quality of teaching have improved it; good teaching enables pupils to achieve well at all stages of the school.
- Pupils behave well in and around school. They find lessons interesting and enjoy learning.
- Safeguarding is outstanding. Pupils are kept exceptionally safe. They say they feel safe and are able to recognise any potential risks.
- Excellent provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures their very responsible attitudes to school, to others and to their place as citizens in modern British democratic society.
- Children get a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage and progress well.
- Pupils continue to make good progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. By the end of Year 6, they reach broadly average standards from very low starting points on entry.
- The curriculum helps pupils to develop good learning skills, use them to extend their knowledge and understanding and to recognise a purpose to what they learn.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not check frequently enough how well pupils are learning so that work is always challenging, including for the most-able pupils.
- Some marking does not tell pupils exactly what they need to do to improve.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are often below average at the end of the Reception Year, and learning opportunities in Year 1 do not meet all learning needs.

### Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons and scrutinised pupils’ work books. All observations were held jointly with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors checked the impact of many changes in leadership, governance and staff since the previous inspection.
- An inspector heard pupils read.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders and pupils. A meeting was held with the executive headteacher of the Colmore Teaching School Alliance, commissioned by the local authority to monitor the school’s effectiveness and improvement.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school’s own judgements on its strengths and weaknesses, and the data it collects on pupils’ progress. Documents detailing the school’s arrangements for safeguarding were reviewed.
- Questionnaire responses from 30 members of staff were analysed.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for them to be published. The inspectors looked at the results of the school’s recent questionnaire giving parents’ views.

### Inspection team

David Speakman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janet Ross	Additional Inspector
Jenny Edgington	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is an average-size primary school.
- The numbers of pupils are increasing. There are two classes in Reception and Year 1. All other year groups have one class. Children join the Nursery soon after their third birthday. Many pupils join the Reception classes without any Nursery experience.
- Children attend full time in Nursery and Reception.
- The majority of pupils are White British. A below-average proportion speaks English as an additional language.
- A very high proportion of pupils are disadvantaged and eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in care).
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There has been a high level of staff turnover since the school was last inspected. Five new teachers have been appointed. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader have also joined the school.
- A breakfast club is run by the school and was part of this inspection.

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

- Continue the improvements made to teaching by:
  - teachers frequently checking pupils' understanding and progress so that work is consistently challenging, including for the most-able pupils
  - marking work with precise individual feedback to pupils so they know exactly how to improve its quality.
- Develop learning opportunities in Year 1 to better provide for the needs of pupils who have not achieved the standards expected by the end of the Reception Year, and still fully provide for pupils capable of working within Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and the senior leadership team provide strong leadership. The headteacher has built an effective team which has improved the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Subject and other leaders do their jobs well. They work closely with the senior team and contribute actively to the improvement of teaching and achievement. Leadership of the early years provision is effective in helping children to make good progress from very low starting points on entry.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching are very effective in improving its quality. Regular lesson observations, close monitoring of pupils' progress and checks on pupils' books enable leaders to provide development points for staff. Consequently, teaching is good and some exceptional practice promotes excellent learning.
- Leaders set rigorous targets for the work of all adults. These have directed teachers' work effectively. Similar robust checks are made on pupils' progress. While National Curriculum levels are still used to monitor progress, leaders are well on the way to developing new assessment procedures for a revised curriculum.
- The school's development planning is securely based in accurate and thorough self-evaluation. Planning for improvement is detailed and clear in its targets.
- Learning opportunities are planned carefully to engage pupils' interest and meet their needs. Literacy and mathematics are priorities from the outset. However, learning opportunities in Year 1 do not fully meet the wide range of pupils' abilities. Some pupils require extra work from early years provision, while others cope well with Key Stage 1 work.
- Subjects are well coordinated to give pupils memorable experiences and personal skills. The curriculum contributes to pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Creative aspects are well provided through music and drama. For example, pupils play musical instruments and take part in Shakespeare in theatrical productions.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. It supports the strong provision for inclusion and equality. Pupils expand their understanding of cultural diversity well. They develop a strong moral code through 'peer mediation' and respecting the school's code of conduct. Pupils develop an understanding of British values and democracy through democratic processes at classroom and school level, such as the election of a school council.
- The pupil premium funding is spent to close any differences in achievement between pupils and ensure an inclusive school. Adults provide mentoring, coaching and additional group tuition for pupils who are not achieving their challenging targets. Disadvantaged pupils are supported to take part in music and sporting activities and trips. There is a free breakfast club to help attendance, and a partnership worker to support families.
- The school has made exceptional arrangements for spending the primary sports funding to improve and widen sporting opportunities on offer. Better equipment and activities for sport, including after-school clubs and competitions, are made available. Teachers' expertise has improved from training. Ten Year 4 pupils are trained play-leaders. Careful monitoring of the impact of this spending demonstrates success, for example, in the large majority of pupils engaging regularly in extra-curricular sports opportunities.
- Local authority support has helped senior leaders to develop their skills. The executive headteacher of the Colmore Partnership Teaching School Alliance is providing helpful support and evaluating progress.

### ■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body has improved the impact of its work. Governors commissioned a National Leader of Governance to conduct a review of their performance. They acted decisively on the outcomes, reformed and replaced key roles, including that of the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Governors systematically challenge senior leaders over the school's effectiveness. They support leaders fully in tackling weaknesses in teaching.
- Governors visit the school regularly to check how well it is doing. They know at first hand how effective teachers are, as well as through discussions with senior staff.
- Through training, governors understand data on progress and attainment so they know how well the school compares with other schools.
- Governors set clear targets in managing the performance of the headteacher and staff, making sure that teachers' pay increases link to pupils' progress.
- The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They have positive attitudes to learning and approach it with enthusiasm. Their books are neat and tidy. They appreciate the importance of learning and value the support given to them by teachers and teaching assistants, although some rely much on adult support.
- Pupils speak highly of their school. They say staff listen to them, talk to them and help them deal with any problems should they require help. Pupils report no problems at break times. They understand rewards and sanctions and these have a positive impact on behaviour and achievement. Inspectors observed no unsatisfactory behaviour.
- Attendance is improving term by term from more effective strategies to reduce absence. Most pupils attend regularly. The small number of pupils who are persistently absent has fallen. Pupils are generally punctual to school and lessons.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. School leaders ensure safety is the highest priority. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and feel very secure at school. They have a thorough understanding of the different types of bullying and know what to do if they ever need help. They have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe while using the internet.
- Vulnerable pupils are cared for exceptionally well. In this area of high need, child protection processes are fully applied and very effective. Senior staff are highly skilled in implementing child protection procedures at all levels. School premises are kept secure and staff are rigorously checked prior to appointment. Training for staff and governors is up to date.
- Pupils are very well cared for in the well-attended breakfast club. This provision is having a positive impact on pupils' health and nutrition, their ability to socialise and their attendance and punctuality.
- All parents who responded to the school's questionnaire, based on Parent View, say their children are kept safe and are well looked after. Most feel the school deals well with any unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views.

## The quality of teaching is good

- Leaders have worked successfully to overcome weaknesses in teaching with the full support of the governing body. Consequently, teaching is good from the early years provision onwards and ensures pupils' equally good progress.
- Teachers make learning interesting. They engage pupils' interest effectively, such as when Captain

Blackbeard introduced the 'code of conduct' for the pirates on board his ship. This stimulated pupils to write their own lists, using 'clue' words. The activity was effective in developing a range of key literacy skills.

- Pupils are given many opportunities to use and apply their literacy and mathematics skills. For example, Year 6 devised their own strategies to solve problems in mathematics. All pupils gain secure skills for learning in the next stage of their education.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They provide clear explanations and answer pupils' questions well. Teachers and teaching assistants challenge pupils with questions to make them think things out.
- Teaching assistants support pupils' learning well. They support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs effectively so they make the same good progress as others. These pupils are fully included in all learning activities.
- Teachers expect much of pupils' learning. Pupils of different levels of ability are mostly challenged to think hard and move their learning forward. However, in Year 1, learning opportunities do not fully meet the needs of those struggling with the Key Stage 1 curriculum and those who find the work easy.
- Very occasionally, teachers do not check pupils' understanding and progress in lessons well enough, or adjust their teaching in response to quicken progress. On these occasions, pupils, including the most able, do not progress as rapidly as they could.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly. While marking generally supports good progress, some comments are too general and do not provide precise individual feedback to pupils so they know exactly how to improve their work.

### **The achievement of pupils is good**

- Since the school was last inspected, pupils' achievement has improved and standards have risen. The improvement is due to improved teaching, detailed checking on pupils' progress and support for pupils identified at risk of underachieving.
- In the early years provision, children achieve well. Many struggle to reach the standards of most children, nationally, on entry to Year 1 because of their very low starting points on entry.
- In 2013, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 improved. It was broadly average in reading and mathematics but, although improved, lower in writing. The 2014 teacher assessments show improved standards and progress in all subjects.
- Achievement at Key Stage 2 is improving and standards at the end of Year 6 are rising. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was average in 2013, indicating good achievement given pupils' starting points. School data for 2014 show further improvement. Achievement has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Pupils have made good progress over the last two years in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils currently in school are making good progress in all year groups in reading, writing and mathematics. This is shown by the school's own checks on pupils' progress, the work in pupils' books and inspectors' lesson observations.
- From a young age, pupils produce legible, good-quality extended writing and build steadily on what they have previously learned. They show an improving vocabulary as they move through the school and write interesting descriptions.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. The results of the Year 1 screening check in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) were just below average in 2013 and results were similar in 2014. Pupils who did

not reach the required standard in Year 1 and who are now in Year 2 have made good progress. They have a better knowledge of letter sounds, but still stumble over some more complex sounds but persevere in reading new words by themselves. Progress in developing reading skills throughout Key Stage 2 is good. Year 6 pupils cope competently with their study of *Macbeth*.

- Pupils have good number skills and accurately work out calculations, both mentally and using a variety of written methods. They cope well with the rapid pace at which their 'big maths' sessions are conducted. They get to know a lot about number and simultaneously develop their problem-solving skills.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics through effective and targeted support.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well. Through effective and well-directed support, they quickly learn enough English to access the full curriculum and make good progress.
- Progress made by disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is good and similar to that of their classmates. In 2013, Year 6 disadvantaged pupils' attainment in mathematics was two years ahead of others in the school but two terms behind all pupils nationally. In reading, it was a term and a half ahead of others but a term behind pupils nationally. In writing, disadvantaged pupils were two and a half terms ahead of others but two terms behind pupils nationally.
- The most-able pupils achieve well. Occasionally, limited challenge in some lessons prevents them reaching the higher levels. However, the latest national test results and teacher assessments show much higher proportions of pupils achieving the higher levels in writing and grammar, punctuation and spelling. Recently, an increased number of pupils achieved the very highest Level 6.

### **The early years provision is good**

- Children start early years provision with attainment that is very low compared to what is expected nationally. They make good progress in the Nursery but few reach the levels expected. Many join Reception with low attainment. Some children join Reception who have no previous experience of school. Attainment on entry to Reception is, therefore, still low.
- Children achieve well but, by the time they move into Year 1, attainment is below average. It is broadly average in physical and in personal, social and emotional development. In reading and writing, less than half attain the Early Learning Goals, and number and communication skills are well-below average.
- When children choose their own activities, adults talk purposefully with them to extend learning and encourage curiosity. Consequently, children's speech develops well, but due to very low starting points, they do not become fully confident speakers.
- Children's use of imagination develops well under careful adult guidance. They respond enthusiastically to the wide range of interesting learning opportunities. Children interact exceptionally well with adults and begin to make choices. Reception children who attended Nursery are noticeably more advanced than others. They respond quickly to adult direction and engage in purposeful learning while others lack focus.
- Staff are effective. They are fully aware of each child's learning needs and meet them well. Consequently the most able and those who struggle do well in developing early literacy and number skills and other areas of learning.
- Children behave well. They get on well with each other and work purposefully together. They quickly respond to adults' requests, listening politely to adults and each other. Adults are vigilant in regard to safety; children are safe and secure during all activities.

- Leadership of the early years' provision has ensured much improvement since the previous inspection. Children's achievements are accurately assessed and indoor and outside learning environments have greatly improved.



## 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>	103165
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	442521

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	265
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Phill Allen
<b>Headteacher</b>	James Hill
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 October 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 464 6272
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