

Oulton Primary School

Green Lea, Oulton, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS26 8NT

Inspection dates 3–4 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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 school is led well by the headteacher with effective support from senior leaders and the governing body. This has resulted in improvements in pupils' behaviour, achievement and the quality of teaching since the previous inspection.
- The curriculum engages pupils and makes a positive contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Attendance has improved significantly and the number of persistent absentees has declined since the previous inspection.
- Pupils' achievement is good. At the end of Year 6 in 2014, a higher proportion of pupils than those nationally made expected progress in writing and mathematics. The majority of pupils in current cohorts are making good progress from their starting points because teaching is good.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1 have risen for the past two years and are now broadly in line with the national average.
- Learning activities for children in the early years are varied and enthuse the children so that they make a good start to their school life.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved and is now good. Pupils are proud of their school and they want to succeed in their learning. They are respectful to adults and each other.
- Pupils say they feel safe in the school and they enjoy coming to school.
- The governors know the school well and offer a good balance of both challenge and support.
- The school is well placed to improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Work is not always set at the right level in lessons to ensure that pupils, especially disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and the most-able pupils, make the very best progress that they can.
- The senior and middle leaders do not look closely enough at pupils' work in books to see if it matches information about how well they are doing, especially for the different groups of pupils.
- The quality of teachers' marking varies. In lower Key Stage 2, it does not always show pupils what they must do to improve their work or give them the opportunity to respond to the next steps for learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 25 part-lessons. Five of these observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with a member of the governing body, two representatives of the local authority, senior and middle leaders. A telephone conversation was held with the Chair of Governors.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation including: teachers' planning; the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses; information on pupils' attainment and progress; records of behaviour and safety; monitoring of teaching and performance management; minutes of the governing body meetings and safeguarding documents.
- A discussion was held with a group of pupils, as well as informal conversations with them during lessons and at break times. Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about the books they enjoy.
- Inspectors took account of 46 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) and spoke with parents at the start of the school day. An email from a parent was also considered.
- The inspectors also looked at 37 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Julie Harrison, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Barbara Harrold	Additional Inspector
Doreen Davenport	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, or who are looked after by the local authority) is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are both well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further, so that it is consistently good or better to raise pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that the work is pitched at the correct level in lessons for the disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, so that they can understand the task and make good or better progress
 - ensuring that there is sufficient challenge throughout the lesson for the most-able pupils, so that they make the very best progress that they can
 - ensuring that the best practice in marking is used consistently across the school, especially in lower Key Stage 2, to show pupils how to improve their work and provide them with enough time to respond
 - sharing the good practice already evident in the school to improve teachers' skills.
- Strengthen the leadership and management by ensuring that the senior and middle leaders look closely at pupils' work in books to see if it matches information about how well they are doing, especially for the different groups of pupils in the school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, staff and governors have high aspirations for this improving school. There has been a clear focus on improving pupils' behaviour, achievement and the quality of teaching. Planning for improvement is detailed and contains the correct priorities, including raising the achievement for the most-able pupils and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The senior and middle leaders are in a good position to make further improvements and the headteacher knows how to make this happen.
- The quality of teaching is improving and this is central to the school's drive to eradicate the previous underachievement and to raise pupils' achievement further. The quality of teaching and learning and pupils' progress are checked on regularly by senior and middle leaders. However, they do not rigorously compare the work in pupils' books with how well they are doing, especially for the different groups within the school; enabling areas for improvement to be identified more quickly.
- Effective systems are in place to assess the performance of teachers. This ensures that teachers are held to account for the progress of pupils in their class. Professional development is well planned for all staff and morale is high. Performance management ensures that the middle leaders are more accountable for the progress pupils make in their areas of responsibility.
- Good leadership of the early years is bringing about year-on-year improvements in the achievements of the youngest children. The outside provision is now a vibrant learning environment.
- There is a particular focus on English and mathematics, which are key priorities for the school. The topics within the school's curriculum are planned to provide rich learning experiences, such as Spanish lessons and playing the steel or samba drums. The curriculum has a positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which prepares them well for life in modern Britain. The school is at the early stages of identifying its preferred approach to assessment, following the removal of National Curriculum levels.
- Pupil premium funding has enabled the school to be organised into smaller single-aged classes from Reception to Year 4. This re-organisation, along with various targeted interventions, is enabling current disadvantaged pupils to make good progress, similar to that of other pupils in the school.
- Good use is made of the primary sport funding. It has enabled new resources to be purchased and staff to improve their skills, so that they are more confident in their teaching of physical education and sporting activities. Pupils say they enjoy running the 'golden mile'.
- Attendance has significantly improved from below national in 2012 to above national in 2014, due to the conscientious work of the senior leadership team and the attendance officer.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity and all pupils, whatever their needs, are fully involved in the life of the school.
- The local authority has provided valuable support and challenge to leaders since the last inspection, enabling an improvement in leadership and management skills. Leaders are now well prepared to move the school forward with light touch support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance of the school is good. Governors are knowledgeable and have high expectations for the school. They have formed a joint review group which has aided them to understand how the school performs against national averages and ask pertinent questions about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. The governors carry out a range of visits and meet senior and middle leaders regularly. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have a clear overview of teachers' performance management. They ensure that teachers' pay awards are dependent on pupils' progress and teachers meeting their targets. The governing body ensures that all statutory responsibilities are met, especially those related to safeguarding. It checks that the school is helping pupils to understand tolerance and respect for different faiths and cultures. Members of the governing body have a range of experience and expertise and have just completed training on analysing the information published nationally about how well pupils achieve. Governors scrutinise the finances well and ensure that the pupil premium funding and primary sport grant are spent effectively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They enjoy coming to school and form good relationships with other

pupils and staff members. They are proud of their school.

- The pupils have positive attitudes to learning, which contributes to their good progress. They are keen to take part in all activities. They work well with others and willingly share their ideas.
- Around the school pupils are polite to staff and visitors. At break times most pupils in Key Stage 2 usually play well together, devising their own games as there are no playtime resources.
- Pupils' attendance has increased significantly from 92.7% in 2012 to 96.4% currently. The number of persistent absentees has decreased and these pupils now want to come to school because they enjoy learning. The attendance officer works closely with outside agencies to support pupils' attendance.
- The school integrates pupils from the Pupil Referral Unit into the school well; clear procedures enable these pupils to improve their behaviour, which improves their attitudes to learning.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All relevant policies and procedures for ensuring pupils' health, safety and well-being are in place. Safeguarding issues are logged accurately and followed through effectively.
- Pupils feel confident that any concerns will be dealt with quickly by an adult. They feel safe and state that 'teachers are really kind and help us learn'.
- Pupils are aware of various forms of bullying through their activities during 'anti-bullying week'. The School Council devised a popular competition for anti-bullying posters and chose the winners and the prizes. The pupils have an understanding of how to be safe on the Internet.
- Parental responses to the online questionnaire and discussions with the inspectors show positive support for the school's behaviour and safety strategies. School staff and governors state that behaviour has improved over time.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is good overall, but there is some inconsistency in lower Key Stage 2, especially in terms of using effective marking to improve pupils' learning.
- Teachers usually have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pace of work. They have good subject knowledge, especially the teachers in the mixed Years 5 and 6 classes, which is enabling pupils to produce work of a high standard in their books. Teachers in these classes use questioning well to extend pupils' learning.
- Teachers prepare lessons that engage and interest pupils, but sometimes the learning is pitched too high for the pupils who have disabilities and special educational needs, so that they do not fully understand the task. Additionally, sometimes, the most-able pupils are given work which is not hard enough and this slows their progress.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and willingly discuss what they are doing. They work well together, sharing their ideas in pairs or groups. They listen to and respect each other's views.
- The school provides a great range of intervention strategies outside the classroom for pupils who need additional support, including those eligible for pupil premium funding and those who have disabilities and special educational needs. These interventions are building up pupils' confidence and enable them to make good progress in their targeted activities.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and sounds they make) is taught well across the early years and Key Stage 1 through targeted groups. Good support from teachers and teaching assistants enables pupils to make good progress. The pupils then use this knowledge to help them read and spell unfamiliar words. Pupils across the school enjoy reading either independently or within guided reading groups.
- Teachers support pupils' writing well, enabling them to write independently. The Year 2 pupils made good progress writing sentences using inverted commas correctly to show speech in their work on the Great Fire of London. At the same time they had to think of other words for 'said' such as 'mumbled' and 'yelled'. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils worked collaboratively comparing formal and informal language, before starting to write a formal letter of complaint.
- Teachers make mathematics interesting so that pupils enjoy their mathematics activities. Year 3 pupils enjoyed making groups with their friends to show their understanding of Roman numerals. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils used a strategy of a train leaving and arriving at a station to aid their understanding of how to round numbers with two decimal places to the nearest tenth and used function machines as an introduction to algebra.

- Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils who require intervention strategies, including the disabled and those with special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils, ethnic minority pupils and pupils who are in the early stages of learning English. However, within the classroom when teaching is not pitched at the right level for these pupils, the teaching assistants are less effective.
- The quality of marking and feedback varies across the school. The best practice shows pupils what they have done well and how to improve their work. Pupils also have time to respond to teachers' comments to improve their learning. This is highly effective in the Year 2 and the mixed Year 5 and Year 6 classes. English and mathematics learning walls are used to support pupils' learning during lessons.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start in the Nursery with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age and they make good progress. However, some of these children do not move into the Reception classes, while others start from different providers, making the attainment on entry to Reception variable, with some children having the skills typical for their age and others who do not. Children in Reception classes make good progress from their starting points. The proportion of children who have achieved a good level of development, which is the expected standard has improved year on year to above national figures. The good level of development for the current Reception children is predicted to rise to 80% in 2015 from 66% in 2014.
- The results for the Year 1 phonics screening check declined significantly in 2014 to well below the national figure. However, this decline has been halted due to well-planned phonics sessions. The Year 1 pupils are already at a higher standard than the previous cohort. Additionally, the present Year 2 pupils are at a higher standard than would be expected from their low 2014 Year 1 phonics results, because they are making faster progress.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics improved from significantly below national in 2013 to broadly in line in 2014. This rising trend is set to continue as current pupils are making good progress due to good teaching.
- Over time standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have varied due to the previous weaker teaching and underachievement, which have now been eradicated. In 2014, standards in reading and mathematics were below those in 2013, but writing improved slightly. The school predicts that this decline will be halted in 2015. The proportion of pupils who make expected progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 shows a much stronger picture. In 2014, the proportion of pupils who made expected progress for writing and mathematics was above national figures and reading was similar to national. The current Year 6 pupils are showing good progress in their English and mathematics work in their books.
- Pupils enjoy reading and Year 2 and Year 6 pupils read confidently with expression at a level appropriate for their age. They read fiction and non-fiction books with understanding and their skills are improving.
- Raising the achievement of the most-able pupils is a priority in the school development plan, because these pupils do not always reach the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. They are not always sufficiently challenged during lessons for them to make the best possible progress of which they are capable.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, ethnic minority pupils and those at the early stages of learning English make good progress during targeted intervention strategies from their various starting points. However, occasionally they are given tasks that are too difficult for them to grasp without smaller steps in their learning.
- In 2014 at the end of Year 6, all disadvantaged pupils made expected progress in writing and mathematics, which was better than all pupils nationally and their classmates, but they made less than expected progress in reading. However, they did not do as well as their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics standards at the end of Year 6. In reading, their attainment was two terms behind that of their classmates, in writing they were over one and a half terms behind and in mathematics they were one term behind. In comparison with all pupils nationally, the difference was nearly three terms behind in reading, two terms behind in writing and one and a half terms behind in mathematics. Teachers are focusing on closing these gaps through the wide range of targeted intervention support for all year groups, which is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress.

The early years provision

is good

- Provision in the early years is led and managed well. The children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress from their various starting points. They work and play well together and the Reception pupils who were previously in the Nursery are good role models for new arrivals.
- The children are taught well and engage in a variety of interesting activities covering all areas of learning, which prepares them well for Year 1. In the Reception classes many activities are focused on a theme to reinforce pupils' learning. The activities based on 'stickman' within the classroom included writing labels, ordering stickman characters by height and making a stickman from twigs and play dough; outside activities included listening to the relevant story, writing a postcard and counting in tens with bundles of twigs. These activities gave the children opportunities to develop their skills in an exciting way.
- The early years children share resources and listen to each other well. The Reception children wrapped up presents for Santa's sack, sharing the scissors, paper and sellotape. They used their imagination to describe what was inside the presents.
- Staff focus on speaking and listening skills. Some Nursery children listened carefully to the story of the Nativity and the teacher encouraged the children to answer questions in complete sentences.
- Both the indoor and outside areas provide a vibrant, safe learning environment. Resources are easily accessible to the children. There is a balance of teacher-led activities and opportunities for children to explore for themselves, so that they can practise the skills they learn as they play. The children follow routines and behaviour is good.
- Children make good progress in their learning and development. Those with special educational needs and those for whom the school receives additional funding are supported well and make similar progress to that of others. Assessment of progress is recorded by internet communication technology and is based on accurate observations of what the children can do.
- The school has good relationships with parents who are informed about their children's learning through internet communication technology.
- All safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented consistently.

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	107842
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	442220

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	353
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Roberts
Headteacher	Joanne Smithson
Date of previous school inspection	5 December 2012
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