

Oakhill Primary School

Rookery Lane, Oakhill, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST4 5NS

Inspection dates

13–14 January 2015

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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils have made very rapid progress from their low starting points to reach standards in reading, and mathematics that are above national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the highest possible levels in mathematics by the end of Year 6 is well above the national average.
- By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils eligible for pupil premium funding did better than all pupils nationally in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils behave well in school and show a good attitude to learning. They are kept safe in school and the extent to which they are cared for and looked after is exceptional.
- All leaders, including governors, have set very high expectations for the school and with the extensive support of the local authority are continually seeking to improve further.
- Teachers plan lessons to make sure most pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make as much progress as they can.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment and progress in writing is not as high as it is in mathematics and reading. Pupils do not always have sufficient challenge or time to complete written tasks. Pupils do not have enough access to information and communication technology (ICT) to support their writing.
- Opportunities for pupils to study music and ICT are not as well developed as they are in other subjects.
- There are occasional instances of low-level disruption in lessons when a few individual pupils have switched off from their learning.
- The Early Years provision requires improvement because teaching is not always consistently good. Some assessments are not accurate and so subsequent activities are not always planned to take account of the next relevant steps for these children. The outdoor environment is not used sufficiently to promote literacy and numeracy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, of which two were observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons and other activities.
- Inspectors heard pupils read during lessons and looked at work in their writing and mathematics books in lessons.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, a group of parents, members of staff including senior leaders, three members of the governing body and the school’s improvement partner from the local authority.
- There were 44 responses for inspectors to take account of through the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors took account of a questionnaire completed by 38 members of staff.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and scrutinised a number of documents, including the school’s own self-evaluation, improvement plan, data on pupils’ recent attainment and progress, behaviour and attendance logs, policies and procedures including pupil premium, safeguarding, health and safety and anti-bullying.
- Inspectors also took account of recent local authority and external reviews of the school.
- One of the two assistant headteachers, the Chair and Vice Chair of the governing body were unavailable to meet with inspectors during the inspection.

Inspection team

Mark Sims, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Sheila Loughlin

Additional Inspector

Terry Bond

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils come from a White British background. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very small.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (pupils for whom the school receives additional funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is at 50.9%, well above the national average of 26.6%.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is at 6.7%, below the national average of 7.7%. The proportion of pupils supported through school action is at 8.5%, close to the national average of 8.9%.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The rate of pupil stability is slightly below the national average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision in the Early Years by making sure that:
 - teaching is consistently good
 - assessments on entry and departure from the Early Years Foundation Stage are always accurate and have been thoroughly checked
 - activities are planned according to identified next steps in each child's learning
 - more use is made of the outdoor environment for literacy and numeracy activities.
- Make sure pupils make as much progress in writing as they do in reading and mathematics by:
 - providing more challenging writing tasks to enable more pupils to reach at least the expected level in writing by the end of Key Stage 2
 - providing pupils more time in lessons to complete their writing tasks
 - making more use of ICT to develop pupils' writing skills.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders are highly committed to improving all aspects of the school. They are outward looking and strive to identify the best leadership locally and nationally. The school has sought local authority and external verification of their work in order to improve further. Consequently there have been significant improvements in teaching and pupil achievement.
- School leaders at all levels know the strengths and areas for improvement well. They have been quick to address previous weaknesses in teaching in Year 1 and to make changes to the leadership in the Early Years provision.
- Teaching in the school has improved which has led to higher outcomes for pupils including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, most able pupils and pupils eligible for free school meals.
- Procedures to manage the performance of teachers are rigorous. Through book scrutinies, analysis of data and classroom observations leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. There is a clear connection between teachers' pay awards and the quality of their teaching.
- Leaders track the progress of all groups of pupils and individuals regularly so that any who fall behind are quickly identified and supported. Leadership for pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs is effective. Pupils are given targeted additional support to enable them to catch up with their peers.
- Teacher assessments are checked to ensure that they are accurate at Key Stages 1 and 2. The school is continuing to use levels and sublevels following the removal of National Curriculum levels.
- The most able pupils have received targeted coaching and this has contributed to a significant proportion gaining the highest possible levels, especially in mathematics, but also in reading and writing.
- Leaders spend pupil premium funding well to ensure that pupils known to be eligible for free school meals have exceeded national expectations in attainment by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6. The fund also supports pupils' wider emotional needs through the contribution of learning mentors and provides additional enrichment activities and resources to enable pupils to participate fully in school life. The school has appointed a pupil premium champion to ensure that this is achieved.
- Leaders have taken effective steps to introduce a new curriculum and ensured that there is a wide range of subjects on offer. The curriculum encourages an enquiry-based approach to learning, for example in a Key Stage 2 science lesson, pupils regularly conduct investigations on questions such as 'What happens to the water when a puddle dries up?' Most subjects are well established, although music and ICT are less well developed compared to other subjects.
- The curriculum is backed up well by an extensive range of clubs before and after school. The primary sports funding is used to support additional sports clubs and pupils thrive in their roles as team captains.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well. For example, tracking ensures that the participation of girls in after-school activities has significantly improved when it was previously found that they were underrepresented in uptake of activities. The small number of pupils learning English as an additional language are integrated well into lessons.
- Leaders are ensuring that British values are promoted well through subjects in the curriculum, assemblies and more widely through the effective promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have gained a good understanding of diversity in the United Kingdom and are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Close partnerships with the local authority have enabled leaders and teachers to look outwards to develop their skills with a local outstanding school. This has strengthened the school's capacity in leadership and led to improvements in the quality of teaching. The local authority has also supported the school well through literacy workshops and held the school to account through reviews and the setting of challenging targets.
- School leaders ensure that all safeguarding procedures are in place and that the school meets all its requirements. Designated staff are well trained for their role. The extent to which the school ensures that all pupils are looked after well is exceptional. Dedicated staff work tirelessly with identified pupils to ensure they are ready to learn when they are at school.
- All staff who responded to the staff survey were unanimously positive. They all felt proud to be part of the school. One respondent representing the views of others stated that the child's emotional well-being is the school's highest priority.
- The large majority of the small number of parents who expressed an opinion through Parent View agreed that the school is led and managed well. A small minority disagreed but inspectors were unable to substantiate this. Those parents spoken to were overwhelmingly positive about school leaders and staff

who they said “go the extra mile” to not only support their children but the parents as well. Communication with parents has significantly improved, although governors recognised there was further to do to gather parents’ views.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has responded well to the challenge of a review that recommended they gain more first-hand evidence to enable them to evaluate the effectiveness of the school. They now have a good understanding of how well the school is doing. They know how well different groups of pupils are performing and their outcomes in different subjects.
- Governors know the strengths and areas for development in teaching which enables them to make informed decisions about teachers’ pay awards. They are fully involved in the recruitment of staff.
- Governors have been supported well by the local authority through training and through working in partnership with the school improvement team on school reviews. This has led to them conducting joint observations of lessons, book scrutinies, learning walks and analysis of data. They have been fully involved in compiling recommendations arising from reviews. They have responded swiftly to recommendations arising from external reviews.
- They know how well funding such as the pupil premium is used and where it is most effective. They know the extent of impact this has had on the achievement of pupils eligible for free school meals.
- Governors are ambitious for more improvement. They are keen to build on the successes in mathematics to ensure that performance of pupils in writing is equally strong.
- Governors are well trained to carry their role to hold the school to account for fulfilling its statutory duties for safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and courteous in and around the school. They are compliant in lessons and work well as partners and in larger groups. They are also self-motivated to work on their own when they are not being supported.
- Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Older pupils act as ambassadors and team captains and, through the school council, pupils contribute ideas and suggestions. Pupils take initiatives. For example, on one occasion they approached the headteacher successfully to request a fund-raising activity to support endangered species.
- The extent of family support is strong and the role of two learning mentors, partly funded by the pupil premium, has been crucial in the school continuing to engage with harder-to-reach families and where children have previously been at risk of exclusion. The rate of exclusions has fallen significantly since their appointment.
- The rate of attendance has improved for all pupils over time and the current level compares favourably with the national average including that for pupils who are eligible for free school meals.
- Occasionally a very small number of pupils get distracted if they find the work too easy or hard. In most instances teachers are alert to this and ensure that pupils are set to work again quickly.
- The large majority of the small number of parents who expressed an opinion said that the school makes sure their children are well behaved.

Safety

- The school’s work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils spoken to were positive about all aspects of school life. They said they feel safe and would know what to do to keep themselves safe if there were a problem.
- They know about potentially dangerous situations but are less secure about the harmful effects of drugs.
- Pupils are aware of different kinds of bullying including racist, cyber and homophobic bullying.
- Older pupils act as anti-bullying ambassadors. Assemblies focus on preventing bullying. Although pupils and parents said incidents do occur from time to time, staff respond swiftly and effectively to deal with issues and prevent repeat occurrences.
- The school’s policies and procedures for visitors ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- The very large majority of the small number of parents who expressed an opinion said that their children are happy and feel safe in school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good because teachers expect high standards of behaviour and attitude to work in lessons.
- Most work is planned to take account of what pupils have already learnt and what they need to do next. Adults check regularly how pupils are doing and that they are ready to move to the next stage in their learning. In one Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson, assessment was used highly effectively when outcomes from a starter activity were taken into account to determine at what level of work the pupil should move to next. Where necessary a small group received additional reinforcement from the class teacher before moving on to their exercises.
- The presentation of pupils' written work in their books is of a very high standard. All groups of pupils, whatever their ability, are expected to present work neatly and older pupils are expected to write with a clear cursive handwriting which is modelled well by adults. In most lessons pupils at all levels of ability are expected to write freely. On a few occasions pupils do not have enough time to complete written tasks and the level of challenge is not as high as it is in reading and mathematics. Pupils' writing skills using IT are underdeveloped.
- Most additional adults are deployed well to support different groups and individuals with their work, both for most able pupils as well as those who find learning hard. Questioning is used effectively to challenge pupils in their thinking.
- Marking is used effectively to inform pupils how they can improve. Pupils mark their own as well as others' work, in addition to teacher marking. Extension tasks in marking give pupils an opportunity to develop their thinking further.
- The large majority of the small number of parents who expressed an opinion agreed that their children were taught well.
- Occasionally, additional support is not deployed effectively when the teacher is talking with the whole class. On a few occasions pupils found their work too challenging or too easy.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils have made good progress from their low starting points. Those pupils who left Year 6 at the end of the most recent tests made exceptional progress in reading and mathematics and good progress in writing from their below average starting points at the end of Key Stage 1. Standards in reading and mathematics were above the national averages and in writing broadly average at the end of Key Stage 2.
- There has been a three-year rising trend in attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. In 2012 results were significantly below average overall and in mathematics.
- The proportion of most able pupils who gained the highest possible levels in reading, writing and mathematics in recent tests was above the national average and exceptionally high in mathematics.
- Standards for pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium were above the national average for all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics in the most recent tests at the end of Key Stage 2. They were exactly in line with their peers within the school. These pupils did better in reading and mathematics than they did in writing.
- Standards were below the national average for the small proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who were in Year 6 last year. These pupils have made good progress from their very low starting points. School data indicate that the large majority of pupils on the special educational needs register are making at least expected progress in each year group.
- According to school data pupils are making at least good progress in most year groups and classes. Regular tracking quickly identifies pupils who are at risk from falling behind. Additional support, including an intervention group in Key Stage 2 is making sure these pupils catch up. Staff act as reading champions to support the reading of any child whose reading age is below age-related expectations.
- In lessons seen, most pupils make good progress because work is usually set at the right level and is suitably challenging. In a small minority of lessons a few pupils either got stuck or finished their work quickly and were left waiting before they could move on to the next stage in their learning.
- The percentage of pupils in Year 1 achieving the expected level in the most recently validated phonics check was below average. This was because girls in Year 1 did not do as well as their peers nationally.
- The large majority of the small number of parents who expressed an opinion agreed that their children were making good progress.

The early years provision**requires improvement**

- Provision in Early Years requires improvement. Teaching is not always good and some assessments of children are inaccurate. Activities are not always purposefully linked to identify next steps of pupils' learning. The outdoor environment is underutilised for promoting literacy and numeracy.
- When children join the Nursery the majority of them have skills below typical for their age. By the time they leave Reception the proportion in line with their age-related band in speaking, listening and mathematics is lower when compared to the national picture.
- The newly appointed leadership is highly experienced and knowledgeable. A recent review identified where there were weaknesses in provision and leaders are now taking rapid action to secure improvements. The extent of checking on provision and support for teaching and assessment has been enhanced.
- The recent change in leadership is bringing about rapid improvements, but it is too early to see the full impact of the actions taken in such a short time.
- Children's behaviour is good. They play well with each other, taking turns and sharing. They can sustain their concentration on activities over a longer period of time.
- Children listen well to stories. They enjoy hearing them and join in well with the refrains.
- Relationships are positive between adults and children. Additional adults intervene appropriately to enhance children's learning.

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	124000
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	455373

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	388
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Newman
Headteacher	Lyn Paxton
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2013
Telephone number	01782 235238
Fax number	01782 236564
Email address	oakhill@sgfl.org.uk

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