

Oxspring Primary School

Sheffield Road, Oxspring, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S36 8YW

Inspection dates 11–12 February 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The issues identified as requiring improvement at the time of the last inspection have been addressed. Leaders, governors and staff have worked tirelessly to improve key aspects of the school's work significantly.
- Achievement has improved. Children get off to a good start to their learning in the early years and clearly really enjoy many of the activities on offer.
- The quality of teaching has improved because of the strong leadership of teaching and learning. Most teaching is now good and sometimes it is even better.
- Pupils achieve well from their individual starting points. They usually make the best progress in reading and writing.
- Standards have risen at Key Stage 1 and continue to do so. At Key Stage 2 standards are above average in reading and writing and in 2014 all pupils reached the age-expected level in mathematics.
- Attendance rates are high. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and feel safe in school.
- The headteacher is very well regarded by pupils, staff, parents and governors alike. The whole staff team are very hard working and committed. Many have developed key leadership roles.
- Governors have considerable expertise and keep a regular and careful check on the work of the school.
- The school is developing an interesting curriculum that makes pupils want to learn. Pupils say they enjoy the weekly 'Oxspring University' sessions. In these, they choose from a range of activities that are both educational and fun, such as baking, sewing and karate, as well as having the opportunity to hone their computer skills.
- Many parents say they particularly appreciate the 'family atmosphere' at Oxspring and comment that the school is very much 'at the heart of the local community'. Pupils frequently take part in activities in the locality, such as planting a herb garden for all to use and singing at community events.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some of the most able pupils do not reach their full potential, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- Occasionally, learning activities do not interest, inspire or challenge pupils enough to produce their very best written work.
- Progress in mathematics is a little slower than in other subjects. Not all aspects of the mathematics curriculum are covered in sufficient depth.
- Some parents say they are not kept well enough informed about the work of the school and their child's progress. The school's website requires some updating.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine part-lessons and made several other short visits to lessons to observe teaching and learning. All lessons were observed jointly with the acting headteacher.
- The inspector held meetings with governors, senior and middle leaders, and staff.
- The inspector talked on the telephone with a representative from the local authority and met with a national leader in education (NLE) currently working with the school.
- Discussions were held with pupils from Key Stage 2. The inspector listened to some pupils read, observed break times and spoke with many pupils from every year group.
- A number of documents were examined. They included leaders' views of the school's performance, records of the checks made on teaching and learning, the school improvement plan, information about pupils' progress and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents through many informal discussions with parents and analysis of the school's own questionnaires to parents. The 38 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were also scrutinised.
- The inspector analysed the 17 responses from staff to the inspection questionnaire about the school.

Inspection team

Fiona Gowers, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Children start school on a full-time basis in a mixed class of Reception-aged and Year 1 pupils.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding that the school receives for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. Very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- At the time of the inspection the school was led on a temporary basis by a senior leader from a local school, supported by the NLE, in the unforeseen short-term absence of the substantive school leaders.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding, so the proportion of pupils attaining high standards continues to rise in every class, particularly in mathematics and writing by:
 - ensuring pupils have more opportunities to write about themes that really interest and inspire them to produce their very best written work
 - ensuring all aspects of the mathematics curriculum are covered in sufficient depth in all year groups and that that the most able pupils are always moved quickly on to more challenging work when they are ready.
- Ensure the school's website is kept up to date and continues to meet statutory requirements and that parents are kept well informed about the work of the school and their children's progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Although the headteacher was not at school during the two days of the inspection, parents, pupils and staff alike expressed great appreciation for her leadership and management. Parents typically commented 'the school is going from strength to strength.' Staff consider the headteacher has very much motivated the staff team very well and provides very clear vision and focus for future improvement.
- Good relations are fostered throughout school. The school endeavours to ensure that discrimination is not tolerated and that all pupils have equal opportunity to succeed.
- The management of the school is efficient. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and has continued to do so during the temporary short-term absence of senior leaders. The acting headteacher, well supported by the NLE, has been warmly welcomed by staff and parents and is helping to maintain the pace and direction of school improvement.
- The commitment of the whole staff team is evident in the way everyone has pulled together and very willingly taken on additional responsibilities during this period. Staff agreed that 'we want to do the very best for our pupils.' Indeed staff responses to the inspection questionnaire about the school were all entirely positive.
- Strong leadership of teaching and learning has significantly improved the quality and consistency of classroom practice and the school environment. However, some aspects of the teaching of reading and writing are not as effective as they could be.
- Numerous visits to other schools to see good practice have paid dividends. School visits have a very clear focus. Staff look carefully at particular aspects of teaching in other schools, such as the quality of marking or how well each school caters for the wide range of needs in each class. Staff then work together to evaluate what they have observed in each school to see if there are any aspects that can be developed to meet the needs of pupils at Oxspring.
- Arrangements to check the performance of teachers are used well to promote good quality teaching and increase teachers' accountability for the progress made by pupils in their class. The system has led to many members of staff developing key leadership roles in school.
- Middle leaders have grown in confidence since the previous inspection. The good impact of their work can be seen in the significantly improved early years provision, more sharply- focused leadership of special educational needs and more consistent teaching of reading, writing and mathematics, for example.
- The school keeps a sharp check on the progress each individual pupil makes. More rigorous procedures enable leaders, including governors, to quickly identify any pupil not doing quite as well as expected. The school carefully checks that pupil premium funding is helping pupils learn at a faster rate.
- The curriculum is improving and provides many enriching opportunities. Music and the performing arts are given high priority. All Year 4 pupils have the chance to play the cello and pupils enjoy taking part in regular school productions. The school choir is vibrant and attended by almost half of the pupils in Key Stage 2. Pupils gain a lot from gardening-related projects in the school and the locality. In recognition of these achievements the school has been awarded a national horticultural award for the third year in a row.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. They get first-hand experience of how democratic processes work when they elect their own school council representatives and house captains. They also cover themes such as democracy, civil responsibility, equality and different faiths and cultures in lessons.
- Most parents, who made their views known to the inspector, are overwhelmingly supportive of school and fully satisfied with almost all aspects of its work. Nevertheless, some parents think they are not kept well enough informed about the school's work or their child's progress. The school is currently in the process of updating its website to ensure all policies and procedures incorporated are fully up to date and parents are kept well informed about the impact of pupil premium funding, for example.
- Primary school sports funding is helping to improve pupils' fitness levels and increase participation in physical education. Pupils enjoy a wider range of sporting activities on a weekly basis, as well as special events. For instance, the whole school ran a mile for charity and enjoyed recent success in local cross-country championships.
- The local authority has played a fundamental role in developing the work of the governing body and also helped secure the support of the acting headteacher during the temporary absence of senior leaders. Their external evaluation of the school's work has been welcomed and has helped accelerate the pace of school improvement.

■ The governance of the school:

- Following the previous inspection, governors worked closely with the local authority to evaluate the effectiveness of the governing body and carried out a detailed audit of their own skills. The school benefits from a wide range of professional expertise amongst governors in areas such as education, health and safety, and finance.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the quality of teaching in school and about what is done to reward good teaching and tackle underperformance. They keep a careful check on how well different groups of pupils achieve, including those who are disadvantaged.
- Governors know the school well. They are supportive and are regularly involved with school life on a daily basis. They ensure that they are not just reliant on senior leaders for information. They look at pupils' work for themselves and actively seek external evaluations of the school's work, for example.
- A strategy group of governors meets very regularly. They frequently ask searching questions to challenge the school and to check pupils benefit from any new developments.
- Governors have the expertise and training to ensure safeguarding procedures meet current requirements and to monitor the effectiveness of the arrangements.
- Following the significant improvements already made, governors are now looking to develop an open parents' forum group and a governors' newsletter to help keep parents better informed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Many pupils conduct themselves extremely well. They are polite and friendly. Older pupils readily help to look after younger ones in the playground or hold doors open for adults, for example.
- Pupils play a significant part in ensuring the smooth day-to-day running of their school. They conduct a wide range of jobs in school with maturity, such as that of school councillor, house captain, class monitor, door monitor and sports leader.
- A scrutiny of work throughout school and observations during the inspection confirm that many pupils take a pride in their work and work very hard. Nevertheless, at times, some pupils tend sit back a little in lessons and do not always concentrate well enough or complete as much work as they might. This is particularly the case when the work set does not interest them as much or when it is a little too easy.
- Pupils respond well to the school's behaviour policy. School rules and expectations are clear and pupils are praised for working hard and behaving well. For example, children in the early years are clearly thrilled when their achievements are celebrated when they have their name placed on the class rainbow. Older pupils are rewarded with a green card for working hard and behaving well. Indeed a group of pupils agreed that 'most pupils stay on green most of the time'.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Attendance is given a high priority. A very careful check is kept on how regularly each pupil attends and any unexplained absence is rigorously followed up. It is a mark of the effectiveness of the school's procedures and pupils' enjoyment of school life that attendance has been consistently high for a sustained period.
- The many pupils who spoke with the inspector said they feel safe in school and that they would have someone to turn to if they had any concerns or problems. They say that if they have any worries then they put a note in the class 'worry box' and an adult in the school will help.
- Most of the 38 parents, who responded to Parent View, agree their children are safe and well looked after in school. The vast majority of parents who spoke with the inspector were also very positive about the level of care provided. However, a small minority of parents who made their views known to the inspector and approximately one quarter of the parents who responded to Parent View expressed some concern with how effectively the school deals with bullying. These concerns were explored thoroughly during the inspection.
- The many pupils who spoke with the inspector think bullying is rare in school, but that a few pupils do occasionally resort to immature behaviour, such as silly name calling. Pupils say that they think such behaviour is generally an attempt to try and annoy others and is not usually nasty or persistent. A group of pupils were confident that if they have any disagreements or 'fallings out' then these are 'usually sorted out by the end of the day'.
- The school curriculum and events such as 'anti-bullying week' are helping pupils develop a good awareness of the different types of bullying. The school council are currently in the process of establishing

an anti-bullying code to help ensure pupils know what behaviour is unacceptable and what to do if they think they are being bullied.

- Pupils have a good awareness of cyber bullying and a clear view of how to avoid potential risks when using the internet and mobile phones. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are currently designing posters and making videos to help instruct younger pupils about matters of e-safety.
- Although many aspects of the school's work to keep pupils safe are good, some aspects of record keeping have required improvement. The school recognised that their records of the isolated incidents of poorer behaviour were not always detailed enough. Stringent steps have been subsequently taken to tighten up procedures.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Most teaching is good and it is sometimes outstanding. A scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's own records confirm this is now typical.
- Notable strengths in teaching are in the early years and in upper Key Stage 2.
- Relationships are positive throughout school. Adults in school show high levels of care of and respect for their pupils and the pupils in turn usually model this behaviour.
- All classes are mixed-year groups. However, teachers now skilfully tailor their approach and the work provided to help the very wide spread of differing abilities make good progress.
- Probing questioning gets pupils thinking hard and helps teachers check pupils' level of understanding. This helps staff address any misconceptions or misunderstandings that might arise.
- The quality of marking has improved. Pupils are not only given more specific feedback, but also time to act upon it. The focus is usually to improve one thing at a time. This approach encourages pupils to work hard because they can see their work is improving for themselves. This in turn is helping them learn more quickly.
- A structured approach to the teaching of reading enables pupils to systematically build on their skills as they progress from class to class. Most pupils become fluent and confident readers by the end of Year 6, reading with great enthusiasm and expression.
- The correct usage of mathematical language is reinforced well and helps pupils understand their work. A greater emphasis on practical activities and investigations is helping some pupils make better progress in mathematics.
- For example, pupils in lower Key Stage 2 successfully sorted irregular shapes according to the number of right angles they could spot and some pupils used protractors to check if any angles were acute or obtuse. A class of Year 4 and 5 pupils decided they would like to have a healthy tuck shop at school. They canvassed the preferences of pupils from each class and then presented their findings on block graphs, pictograms and pie charts.
- The teaching of writing has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils are helped to improve the structure of their writing, in particular. For example, in Key Stage 1 some pupils decided to improve their stories by adding more adjectives or adverbs and others decided to check they had put the capital letters in the right place in each sentence.
- Although expectations are higher in most classrooms, the most able pupils do not always reach their full potential. This is particularly the case in mathematics and writing.
- The most able pupils are generally given more difficult work to do in mathematics lessons. However, some pupils say it is still sometimes too easy. A scrutiny of mathematics books from some classes shows that not all aspects of the mathematics curriculum are covered in sufficient depth and it is not uncommon for the most able pupils to complete almost all of their work correctly. This indicates that they could cope with an even greater level of challenge.
- Pupils are sometimes really inspired to produce their very best written work because they are really motivated by the work set. For example, in the youngest class, pupils were fully engaged in writing some 'Wanted' posters for Blackbeard the pirate and strove to use some imaginative language, such as, 'The pirates beard curls like snakes.' Likewise in upper Key Stage 2, the oldest class were engrossed in some research on rainforests. They discovered why particular creatures in the rain forest were endangered and then considered if there was evidence to show that 'man was at fault'. However, pupils are not so interested in the work set in some lessons and so fail to produce their very best written work.
- Teaching assistants make a very significant contribution to pupils' learning throughout school. They work well in partnership with the class teachers. They very much 'lead the learning' in their allotted group. They are also very flexible and adaptable in their approach and readily notice pupils in need of some additional

support during a lesson or those who can be stretched a bit further.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children get off to a good start to their learning in the early years and achieve well. They go on to make good progress, relative to their starting points, in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Since the previous inspection, attainment at Key Stage 1 has been broadly average. However, standards have risen in reading, writing and mathematics and continue to do so.
- In 2014, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics test (letters and the sounds they make) was a little lower than that found nationally. Nevertheless, the school took swift action to improve provision in phonics. More systematic and consistent teaching is already helping pupils make much faster progress. Pupils now readily use their phonics knowledge to help them read and write unfamiliar words.
- Comparisons from year to year are difficult because of the fairly small numbers in each year group. Fluctuations in attainment from year to year are sometimes due to the specific characteristics in each class.
- At the end of Key Stage 2, standards in 2014 rose to just above average in writing and reading. However, standards in mathematics fell somewhat to broadly average. Although all pupils made expected rates of progress and attained average standards, only one fifth of the pupils made better than expected progress. Nevertheless, work in pupils' books shows that many pupils are now doing much better in mathematics.
- In 2014 by the end of Year 6 three-fifths of pupils reached above-average attainment in reading and almost half of the pupils reached above-average attainment in writing. However, fewer pupils did so in mathematics. The work in pupils' books and the school's own records show that some of the most able pupils do not always reach the standards they are capable of in some classes, particularly in mathematics and writing. This is because expectations of what they can achieve are not always high enough. Nevertheless, in upper Key Stage 2 many of the brightest pupils do make better progress. In 2013, almost a third attained a level much higher than that expected for their age and almost as many are expected to do so this year.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported in school. Pupils commented that adults in school 'are really patient and help us'. Staff get to know individual pupils well and adapt the approach used to suit each pupil.
- The pupil premium funding is used well. The school keeps a careful check on the progress made by each individual pupil. Appropriate support is provided, where necessary, to help pupils eligible for the funding do as well as other pupils in school, relative to their starting points. There are very few disadvantaged pupils in each year group. This means that any comparison between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils in school and nationally is statistically unreliable.

The early years provision is good

- Most children start school with knowledge and skills that are typical for their age in most areas of learning. However, this can vary significantly from year to year because of the small numbers starting in some years.
- Children make good progress, relative to their individual starting points and some are beginning to do even better.
- In 2014 the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level at the end of the Reception Year was a little greater than that found nationally. This was an improvement on the children's achievements in 2013.
- Children generally do particularly well in communication and language, physical development and in their personal, social and emotional development. They often achieve above the typical levels for their age in these areas of learning. Although still making good progress, children do not always do quite as well in their early writing and mathematics skills.
- Leadership of the early years is strong. Staff work tirelessly as a team to provide a really positive start to children's school life. Indeed many parents say they are delighted with their child's start to school. A warm, relaxed atmosphere permeates the setting. Relationships are very positive and expectations are clear. Children respond very well to the well-established routines and procedures. They often readily select their own equipment and tidy things away without the need for adult prompting.
- The school has actively sort specialist consultant support and as a result, provision in the early years has

improved significantly since the previous inspection. Staff have successfully improved the organisation of the setting and the quality of many learning activities. As a result children are interested and engaged learners.

- During the inspection children really enjoyed a group of activities around the theme of pirates. They were outraged to receive a letter from Blackbeard the pirate to say that he had taken Max, their class dog. This motivated them to work with great gusto. They set about writing 'Wanted' posters, testing which materials would float and sink, drawing their own treasure maps and going on a 'treasure hunt' in an attempt to track Max down!
- Staff have a keen desire to improve the setting still further. They are currently involved in a project to encourage boys in particular to write and to provide even more opportunities for children to improve their early writing and numeracy skills independently.
- Working in a class alongside pupils in Year 1 helps bring on many of the youngest children and prepares them well for the transition into Key Stage 1.

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	106584
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	442178

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	132
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Taylor
Headteacher	Sharon Irwin
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2013
Telephone number	01226 763020
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Email address	r.laslett@barnsley.org

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