

# Orchard Meadow Primary School

Wesley Close, Oxford, OX4 6BG

## Inspection dates

11–12 March 2015

| Overall effectiveness          | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------|
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Inadequate</b>        | <b>4</b> |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Requires improvement     | 3        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Requires improvement     | 3        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Inadequate               | 4        |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Inadequate               | 4        |
| Early years provision          |                      | Requires improvement     | 3        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Pupils' achievement is inadequate. In most year groups, standards are well below average. Over time, inadequate teaching has meant that most pupils have not developed their skills in reading, writing and mathematics well enough.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils varies too much. Extra government funding has not been used well enough to direct teaching for them.
- Children in the early years do not make good progress. They do not have enough stimulating opportunities to extend their learning in the outdoor area.
- Reading skills are not taught well in Key Stage 1. Pupils of all ages do not have good enough opportunities to develop their thinking and problem-solving skills in mathematics.
- Teachers' expectations for pupils' progress are not consistently high. Teachers do not always set the most-able pupils suitably challenging work.
- Teachers do not consistently question pupils well or provide them with good opportunities to acquire knowledge quickly and to practise new learning.
- Teachers do not make the most effective use of teaching assistants to help them manage pupils and to speed up their learning.
- In spite of recent improvements, pupils' behaviour is not yet good enough.
- Leaders have not checked rigorously the impact of some actions they have taken. This includes the changes they have made to teaching phonics (the sounds that letters make), and the support programmes for raising the achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Long-term plans for the early years and the roles of some governors are underdeveloped.
- Too little time is given to subjects other than English and mathematics.

### The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders demonstrate the capacity to drive improvement. They have taken actions to raise the quality of teaching, although these measures have only recently had a positive impact on improving standards.
- Senior leaders have a realistic understanding of the academy's performance and know what needs to be done to raise pupils' achievement.
- Work in pupils' books reflects recent improvements in teaching.
- Rates of progress are improving, especially in Years 3 and 4, where pupils are working close to the levels expected of them. Pupils of Black African heritage make good progress.
- Links between the Trust academies are proving increasingly effective in improving provision.
- Systems for ensuring pupils' safety in the academy are good. Pupils feel safe in the academy and know how to stay safe. Their attendance is above average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching during visits to classrooms to check on pupils' learning. On two visits, they were accompanied by the assistant headteachers.
- They heard some pupils in Year 2 reading and, together with an assistant headteacher, looked in detail at samples of pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with academy staff, a group of pupils and three members (trustees) of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the 32 responses to a questionnaire completed by staff and the 23 responses made by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. An inspector spoke informally to some parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors checked a range of evidence including: monitoring records; a consultant's report; the academy improvement plans; the academy's own data on pupils' attainment and progress; and policies, procedures and practice relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

|                              |                      |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Derek Aitken, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Nikki Hill                   | Additional Inspector |
| Kate Robertson               | Additional Inspector |

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.*

- The academy opened on 1 August 2013 as part of the Blackbird Academy Trust, which oversees the work of three academies. The headteacher took up her post in September 2013. Most of the teaching staff have similarly been in post for 18 months or less.
- Children attend the Nursery on a part-time basis either in the mornings or the afternoons. Reception children attend on a full-time basis.
- The academy is larger than the average-sized primary school. The number of pupils is increasing.
- Half of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The remaining pupils are from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, of which pupils of African heritage form the largest group.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care, is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

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

- Improve teaching and enhance pupils' attitudes to learning by ensuring that all teachers:
  - have high expectations for pupils, especially the most able, and set them suitably challenging work
  - question pupils well to deepen learning
  - use classroom activities that enable all groups of pupils to build quickly on what they have learned and can do
  - make good use of teaching assistants to manage pupils and to speed up their learning.
- Raise pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
  - early years children have good opportunities to develop their imagination and curiosity in the outdoor area
  - the books which Key Stage 1 pupils read are closely matched to their reading levels
  - the effectiveness of phonics teaching is rigorously checked
  - pupils are provided with good opportunities to develop their thinking and problem-solving skills in mathematics.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - leaders and governors carefully check the impact of strategies used to raise the achievement of potentially vulnerable groups, including disadvantaged pupils
  - the work of the Local Advisory Board is fully developed to enable all governors to hold senior leaders rigorously to account
  - more time and attention is paid to subjects beyond English and mathematics
  - a suitably detailed, robust plan is implemented for raising standards in the early years.

An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the academy's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management

### require improvement

- Leaders had little impact on raising pupils' achievement last year. Most of their energies were devoted to improving pupils' well-being in the academy, tackling the most pressing areas of weakness in pupils' learning and in teaching.
- Expectations for pupils are higher but until this year have not been high enough. The academy has not ensured equal opportunities for all pupils to succeed. Until this year, pupils' achievement, including that of potentially vulnerable groups, has not been checked closely, so underperformance has not received due attention.
- Previous weaknesses in assessment procedures have meant that staff, over time, have not used this information well enough to plan teaching and to ensure continuity in pupils' learning. The academy is in the early stages of working towards its preferred approach to assessment, following withdrawal of National Curriculum levels.
- Arrangements for tracking the performance of all groups of pupils have improved considerably this year, so that leaders, including staff with allocated responsibilities for key stages and subjects, have an up-to-date, accurate knowledge of how well pupils are achieving. However, pupil premium funding has not been used in well-planned ways to ensure that gaps in attainment are closed quickly. Actions taken as part of support programmes for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have not been monitored closely to check whether they are having the intended impact on raising achievement.
- The academy's range of subjects and activities is not broad or well balanced. In order to raise attainment in key subjects, the teaching timetable is heavily weighted towards reading, writing and mathematics. For example, Year 6 pupils are following an intensive programme of 'catch-up' lessons in the afternoon to improve their basic skills. While this is having a positive impact in raising standards in these subjects, it limits opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and to develop new skills in other subjects. Staff are following a new scheme for teaching mathematics, but do not use it flexibly enough to plan the next steps in pupils' learning carefully.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures they have suitable opportunities to find out about British values through theme days such as Democracy Day and follow-up workshops. Each class decides its rules after discussion and pupils demonstrate their concern for others, such as through financial contributions to ebola research. However, pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures is underdeveloped.
- The primary school sports funding has been spent in appropriate ways, for example to improve the range of sports activities, and to engage the expertise of outside sports providers. However, leaders have not yet checked closely the impact of this expenditure on pupils' health or skill levels.
- Several improvements have been made in the academy's work and this process has accelerated since September 2014. Members of the senior leadership team have reversed the tide of underachievement in Key Stage 2. They have tackled staff underperformance robustly and sought to recruit good new staff. Links between the Trust academies are proving increasingly effective. This is enabling best practice in teaching to be shared and is helping new teachers to receive skilled coaching. Senior leaders provide teachers with useful feedback, based on individual action plans, to improve the quality of pupils' learning. Procedures for managing teachers' performance have tightened up.
- Senior leaders have a realistic view of the academy's current performance. This is reflected in the well-considered, and suitably ambitious, long-term plan for raising pupils' achievement in Years 1 to 6.
- Leaders, including governors, ensure that current government safeguarding requirements are fully met and that arrangements are effective.

### ■ The governance of the school:

- Key governors have much expertise in educational matters. The three organisations represented on the Trust make distinctive and complementary contributions to the academy's work. Their representatives, and the Chair of the Local Advisory Board, understand the journey the academy has taken in the last 18 months. They are aware of the academy's strengths and can pinpoint areas of weakness in pupils' achievement and in aspects of teaching. They know about initiatives staff have taken to tackle these shortfalls. The Chair of the Local Advisory Board has undertaken visits to lessons and examined pupils' books to check on how well pupils are learning. Valid comparisons have been made with the quality of teaching in the other academies within the Trust.
- The Chair of the Local Advisory Board knows whether and where gaps in the performance of different groups of pupils are reducing, including for pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, and can identify

some of the actions the academy has taken to raise achievement for vulnerable groups.

- The Chair is well aware that the roles of other members of the Local Advisory Board are under-developed and that an external review is required to improve this aspect of governance.
- Governors are appropriately involved in managing staff's performance and take suitable steps to ensure any salary increases are merited.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

## require improvement

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Sometimes, teaching does not inspire pupils to develop a deep enjoyment of learning. In lessons, pupils mostly relate well to each other and to staff. Occasionally, learning slows when some pupils, more commonly in Key Stage 1, become distracted while listening to the teacher's instructions or their classmates' answers. Additional adults sometimes do not step in quickly enough to refocus pupils' attention on their work.
- In public areas, such as the playground or in the corridors, pupils observe routines, mix freely with each other and mostly treat each other kindly. They are polite and friendly to visitors. When behaviour slips, it is usually as a result of a thoughtless action, such as kicking a ball too high out of reach to annoy another pupil. On a few occasions, while playing team games, behaviour on the playground is a little boisterous.
- Pupils understand the importance of teamwork. They participate in shared musical performances with the other Trust academies. They recognise the contributions of their classmates by nominating them for reward certificates and work together to look after the academy's chickens.
- Pupils say that they enjoy being at the academy and this is reflected in their above average attendance.

### Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff, wearing high-visibility jackets, supervise pupils well as they enter and exit from the playground. Year 6 mentors help staff at break-times to ensure good order. There are clear signing-in procedures for visitors and key access points are securely locked. Visitors are routinely informed about child protection procedures.
- Procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety in the academy are observed and leaders follow up the outcomes of safety audits appropriately. Staff with leading roles for safeguarding have undergone statutory training and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Risk assessments are carried out for educational activities.
- Staff refer to risk assessments which are regularly updated for individual pupils who have difficulty in managing their behaviour. They receive regular training to help them support pupils with specific medical needs such as asthma and diabetes.
- Case studies show that the academy has clear systems for reporting on, and supporting, vulnerable pupils. Any issues are followed up promptly and effectively with staff from outside agencies. The academy has established useful 'focus' and 'safe' rooms for distressed pupils and uses 'home-school links' workers to provide extra support for pupils and their parents.
- Pupils feel safe in the academy. They know about 'stranger danger', road safety and e-safety. They have a good understanding of the dangers of bullying and racist behaviour. They report that adults step in quickly to help them as necessary. Behaviour records show a steady decline in behavioural incidents and fixed-term exclusions over time.

## The quality of teaching

## requires improvement

- Teaching is not yet ensuring good progress for all pupils. Although there have been improvements since September, lesson activities are not always precisely focused on the skills that pupils need to acquire or to practise next, and so pupils are not moved on quickly enough to more challenging work. In some lessons in Key Stage 1, staff are slow to intervene when pupils lose concentration or become restless.
- Lessons often get off to a brisk start and pupils apply themselves enthusiastically to their tasks. However, when pupils spend too long on one activity, the interest of the most-able pupils wanes. Their learning is not always closely directed and they mark time waiting for their classmates to catch up, when they have completed tasks.
- Misconceptions and weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding are not always identified by teachers and sometimes persist. When teachers choose to use strategies such as questioning, they do not always do so with sufficient skill to check what pupils know. This was noted in a Key Stage 2 lesson when pupils confused the properties of squares and rectangles.

- The teaching of reading skills is less effective in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. Teachers do not check pupils' verbal and written responses closely, so that time is wasted in phonics lessons dealing with the errors which pupils repeat.
- Mathematical skills are not taught well enough. Teachers do not develop pupils' reasoning skills well. Pupils are not introduced to an appropriately wide range of strategies to undertake calculations or to solve problems. They do not develop the skill to think flexibly for themselves when they encounter difficulties.
- The teaching of writing skills has improved this year. This was demonstrated in a Key Stage 2 lesson, where the teacher's high expectations for pupils' progress and clear guidance enabled pupils to formulate their thinking and to make sensible choices from a 'word-bank' in preparation for their writing task.
- Pupils at an early stage of learning English benefit from skilled, specialist teaching. This helps them to build up their technical knowledge, such as phonic blends and verb tenses, securely. It also enables them to expand their command of expressive vocabulary quickly.

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- Standards at the end of Year 6 in 2014 were low and all groups of pupils, except those of Black African heritage made inadequate progress across Key Stage 2. Only half the boys attained the nationally expected Level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics, while no girls attained the higher Level 5 in writing.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 were working about one term ahead of their classmates in mathematics. They were about one term behind in writing, but the attainment of both groups was identical in reading. Compared to all pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils were five terms behind in mathematics and reading, and six terms behind in writing. Across the academy, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils varies. In spite of some recent improvements, these pupils are not yet making expected progress over a sustained period of time.
- Overall, disabled pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs underachieve, although some pupils with statements of special educational needs are now making good progress. Last year, previous weaknesses in teaching undermined the effectiveness of support for these pupils.
- The most-able pupils also underachieve. Teaching has not been good enough to deepen these pupils' knowledge and skills systematically, to set them harder work, and to enable them to work at suitably challenging levels.
- Pupils' attainment when they join Year 1 is below average. Standards at the end of Year 2 were below average in 2014 and significant numbers of pupils failed to make the progress expected of them, especially in Year 1. Weaknesses in teaching and assessment underpinned pupils' underachievement and this legacy continues to depress standards in the current Year 2 classes, especially in reading and writing.
- Results in the Year 1 screening check for phonics were well below the national average in 2014. The academy has recently adapted its scheme for teaching phonics but has not yet checked the impact of this changed approach. Staff do not consistently ensure that books are closely matched to pupils' reading levels in Year 2. While pupils understand the techniques of sounding out words, they sometimes read with little fluency because the texts are too hard for them.
- Attainment in upper Key Stage 2 is weakest in mathematics. Some Year 6 pupils' knowledge of number facts is insecure and they often find it difficult to work with fractions and percentages. Their lack of confidence in their calculation and problem-solving skills slows their progress.
- Recent improvements in provision are accelerating rates of progress. Year 6 pupils are working six months ahead of their counterparts last year. Since September 2014, most pupils in Years 3 and 4 have made at least the progress expected of them. This pattern of improvement is not yet consistent enough across Key Stage 2 to enable pupils in Years 5 and 6 to close gaps in attainment with the levels expected nationally for them. Improvement is most evident in writing where a new initiative to provide pupils with opportunities to write at length is successfully raising standards.

### The early years provision

### requires improvement

- The knowledge and skills of most children are well below those typical for their age on entry to Nursery. The percentage of Reception children who reached a good level of development was below the national average in 2014. This means that about one half of children are not fully prepared to meet the challenges of Year 1.
- Lesson activities and staff's questioning do not always ensure continuity or rapid development of children's skills. Some children dwell too long on tasks, before being moved on to new work. Children usually respond well to the activities provided for them. On a few occasions, they do not listen closely enough to instructions and this affects their ability to carry out tasks successfully. These factors, in combination, slow their progress.
- Children enjoy working and playing both indoors and outdoors, where they develop their physical skills

well. Although the outdoor area is extensive, it offers few resources which excite children's imagination and curiosity. This limits opportunities for children to explore fully the interesting themes, such as 'growing,' that are introduced indoors.

- In contrast, children make good progress indoors when working in small, adult-led focus groups. Staff use resources and questioning expertly to capture children's interest, to encourage them to sustain their efforts, and to reinforce their understanding of concepts, such as weights.
- Children mostly work contentedly without needing undue adult intervention. They trust adults and get on well with each other. They behave safely, for example while riding their tricycles. Children handle larger pieces of equipment confidently, but are less assured when working with smaller items, such as pencils and paintbrushes. This hampers their handwriting skills and the accuracy with which they complete drawing templates.
- The early years is currently led by an experienced teacher, pending a new appointment. He has an adequate overview of provision, but is aware that there is more work needed to plan long-term improvements for the setting.



## 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> | 139257      |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Oxfordshire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 449883      |

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>                     | Academy sponsor-led                        |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4–11                                       |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                      |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 403  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                         |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Chris Jones (Chair of the Executive Board) |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Donna Roberts                              |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | Not previously inspected                   |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01865 778609                               |
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