

Oakley Vale Primary School

Cheltenham Road, Corby, NN18 8RH

Inspection dates 28–29 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Leadership and management require improvement because recent improvements to the academy have not yet had time to show their impact in consistently good achievement.
- Although it is improving, the quality of teaching is not yet consistently good. The most-able pupils are not always given work that is difficult enough. They have too few chances to apply their mathematical problem-solving skills or to read challenging books.
- Teachers' marking, although regular and detailed, does not always show pupils how they can improve their work. Teachers do not always check that pupils have responded to the advice they are given.
- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is variable across different year groups. In 2014, too few pupils made the progress they should in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils do not all know how well they are doing or what they should aim to achieve.
- Pupils' standards of presentation are better in some subjects than others.
- Some groups of pupils, including boys and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, do not make consistently good progress.
- Parents do not feel well informed about the progress their children are making or about the improvements that are being made to the academy.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and the leadership team are making a positive impact on improving the academy. They are well supported by an effective governing body, and receive valuable oversight and advice from the academy trust.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years because they are well taught.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning are rigorous. Expectations of teachers are high. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and continues to rise.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, behave well, work hard and want to do well.
- Pupils feel safe in school because staff look after them well.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed through well-planned activities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 25 lessons, several of which were jointly observed with academy leaders.
- Inspectors evaluated the work in a sample of pupils' books, and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with: the headteacher; other leaders, including teachers in charge of subjects; members of the governing body; and representatives from the academy trust.
- Inspectors held meetings with three groups of pupils. They also had a number of informal discussions with pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 53 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to parents at the start and end of the school day. Account was also taken of the 36 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including: the academy's own information about pupils' progress; plans for improvement; records of pupils' behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Michael Phipps, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Westall	Additional Inspector
Jatinder Virk	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Oakley Vale Primary School converted to become an academy on 1 September 2013. When its predecessor school, also called Oakley Vale Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to require improvement.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2014.
- The academy is part of the Brooke Weston Trust group of schools.
- Oakley Vale Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The early years provision comprises two Reception classes for children who all attend full time.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than average. The largest groups are pupils from African or Any Other White backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is around half the national average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for disadvantaged pupils; those who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- In 2014, the academy met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- On site is the Acorn breakfast and after-school club which provides childcare at the start and end of the school day. This setting is not managed by the school and receives its own inspection report, which is published on the Ofsted website.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by making sure that:
 - teachers consistently set work for the most-able pupils which is difficult enough to make them think hard for themselves
 - teachers' marking in all subjects gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work, and teachers check that pupils have acted on this advice
 - pupils know how well they are doing, what they should aim to achieve, and how to raise their attainment
 - teachers encourage pupils to present their work neatly in all subjects.
- Raise the achievement of all pupils, but especially boys, the most able, and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, by making sure that:
 - extra help given to pupils who find learning more difficult is consistently effective
 - the most-able pupils have more chances to use their mathematical skills to solve problems for themselves
 - all pupils, especially boys, have more chances to develop their writing skills in extended pieces in different subjects
 - the most-able pupils have opportunities to read and understand more challenging books.
- Communicate more effectively with parents about:
 - the improvements that are being made to the academy
 - the progress that their children are making.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The changes introduced by school leaders have not yet had time to improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or to raise pupils' achievement to a consistently good level. However, leaders have now created a positive learning environment in which good teaching and good behaviour can flourish.
- Attention is paid to making sure that pupils from all backgrounds and starting points have an equal opportunity to succeed, and that there is no discrimination. Leaders check pupils' progress frequently and accurately. Teachers are held to account for pupils' progress. If any pupils fall behind, a range of extra help is quickly provided to help them catch up. Until recently, however, not all of this extra help was effective.
- Many parents who responded to the questionnaire did not feel they receive sufficient information about the progress their children are making. Parents who spoke to inspectors felt they were not well informed about the changes that have been made to the school since it became an academy.
- The academy provides pupils with a broad and rich range of lessons and topics which have been revised in light of the new primary national curriculum. Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs, activities, trips, visitors and special events which develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well.
- Pupils are well prepared to live in modern Britain. Pupils learn about different faiths, and are respectful of others' beliefs and values. There are many opportunities for pupils to explore British history, and the traditions and cultures represented in British society.
- Extra funds from the pupil premium are spent on a family support worker who works extensively with the parents of disadvantaged pupils, and on extra teachers and teaching assistants to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of eligible pupils. As a result, the gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others are narrowing.
- Additional sport funding is being used well to develop a wider range of activities, to give pupils the chance to train as sports leaders, and to boost pupils' participation in local sports competitions. As a result, more pupils are now taking part in sports such as archery, dance, gymnastics, cricket and hockey.
- The academy meets all requirements for keeping pupils safe, including employment checks and child protection policies and procedures. These are effectively implemented.
- The headteacher introduced regular checks on teaching as soon as she joined the academy. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving. Teachers are set targets that are based on pupils' progress. Any underperformance in teaching is tackled rigorously, and all inadequate teaching has been eradicated.
- Subject and other middle leaders are effective in improving the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility, checking pupils' progress and arranging extra help where it is needed.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the academy's strengths and those areas it still needs to improve. Plans for improvement are well organised, and concentrate on the right areas.
- The academy receives valuable help and support from the academy trust. Representatives from the trust have been regular visitors to the academy, especially when the headteacher was newly appointed. The trust has provided subject expertise that has improved the practice of teachers and subject leaders, and has strengthened governance.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is now increasingly effective. Governors visit the academy regularly, and many are linked to specific areas of the academy’s work. In this way, they obtain a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses, and gain a good understanding of the quality of teaching.
- Governors make sure that teachers’ salary progression is based on pupils’ progress, and they know how underperformance in teaching is tackled.
- Members of the governing body have a growing strength in understanding what data on pupils’ performance tells them about how well the academy is doing. They now receive high-quality data in good time before pupils’ performance is discussed. This means they now effectively challenge academy leaders when necessary.
- Although ultimate responsibility for the academy’s finances rests with the academy trust, members of the governing body make sure that funds, including those from the pupil premium, are spent appropriately in order to raise pupils’ achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are friendly, confident and articulate. They behave sensibly around the academy site, between lessons, and at breaks and lunchtimes. They follow the academy’s rules on uniform well, and do not drop litter around the site.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy taking part in lessons, contributing their views, and answering questions. They work hard and they cooperate with each other well in lessons. Disruption to learning caused by poor pupil behaviour is rare.
- Parents have few concerns about pupils’ behaviour or safety. Academy records show that there are few significant behavioural incidents, and exclusions are rare.
- Pupils’ attendance is above average and continues to improve. Pupils understand the importance of regular attendance. The academy has efficient systems to make sure that pupils attend regularly.
- When the quality of teaching is not good enough to engage their attention fully, a small number of pupils sometimes lose concentration and make slower progress.
- Pupils do not all take enough care over the neat presentation of their work.

Safety

- The academy’s work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The academy site is secure. There are good procedures to check visitors to the academy and all necessary checks are carried out on staff before they are appointed.
- Risk assessments are thorough and safeguarding procedures are understood fully by all staff.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They are taught to keep themselves safe. They have a good understanding, for example, of how to stay safe when using the internet.
- Pupils understand what bullying is but say it is not a problem in this school. Academy records confirm this view. Different groups of pupils get on well together and racism is almost unknown.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Although the quality of teaching is improving, it is not yet typically good or better. As a result, the learning and achievement of pupils in literacy, reading and mathematics is not yet good.
- The academy’s most-able pupils are not always given work that is difficult enough for them or which

makes them think for themselves. Teachers often give pupils a choice of tasks but do not always check that the most-able pupils choose the most challenging work. Able pupils have too few chances to apply their skills to work out how to tackle mathematical problems and they are not routinely encouraged to read more challenging books.

- Teachers' marking is regular and detailed, but it does not always give pupils clear and specific guidance on how to improve their work. Sometimes, comments just confirm what pupils have achieved or give very general advice on how to do better. Teachers do not always check that pupils have responded to the advice they are given.
- Pupils do not always know how well they are doing in each subject or what level or standards they should aim to achieve. They found it difficult to explain to inspectors what they need to do in order to reach their full potential.
- Teachers do not always encourage pupils to achieve high standards of presentation. As a result, pupils present their work more neatly in some subjects than in others. For instance, they take more pride in their written work in their English books than when writing in other books.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are warm and positive. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. Teachers know their pupils well.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well by teachers and provide effective support for pupils who need extra help in class.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children start in the early years with experiences and skills that are broadly typical of those expected for their age. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 6, their attainment is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Their progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 varies too widely in different subjects from year to year. In 2014, for example, not enough pupils made the progress they should, especially in reading and mathematics. In 2013, by contrast, pupils' progress in mathematics was better than average. Boys achieve less well than girls in many year groups and subjects.
- The attainment of the most-able pupils varies. In 2014, a higher than average proportion of pupils in Year 6 reached the higher Level 5 in writing, but these proportions were well below average in reading and mathematics. Teachers do not consistently set work for the most-able pupils that is sufficiently challenging.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, like that of their classmates, is variable. The extra support that these pupils receive is not always effective in ensuring that they make good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium make progress that is in line with that of other pupils. In 2014, they were almost three terms behind other pupils in the academy in mathematics and reading, but were only half a term behind in writing. Compared with other pupils nationally, they were four terms behind in mathematics and reading, but one term ahead in writing. The gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others narrowed significantly between 2013 and 2014.
- Pupils learn to read well in Key Stage 1. Phonics (the sounds that letter make) is taught effectively. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 in 2014 was above the national average. Standards of reading by the end of Key Stage 1 are high. Pupils enjoy reading, and speak with enthusiasm about their favourite books and authors. However, too few pupils made good progress in reading in Key Stage 2 in 2014. More-able readers are not always encouraged to read challenging books regularly. Recent actions taken by academy leaders mean that more pupils are on track to reach the higher levels in reading in 2015.

- Pupils' basic mathematical skills are developed well, including their knowledge of times tables and their calculation skills. However pupils, especially the most able, have too few chances to use and apply these skills in practical situations, or to work out for themselves what approaches to use in solving mathematical problems.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to that of other pupils.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1 has risen since the academy was formed; in 2014, it was above average.
- Pupils develop their writing skills well because they have chances to write for different purposes across different subjects. The proportions both making and exceeding the progress expected of them in writing in 2014 were above average.

The early years provision

is good

- Good and improving teaching ensures that children's learning gets off to a good start. Children start at the academy with skills and knowledge that are broadly in line with those typical for their age. Staff have an astute awareness of how young children learn. They provide a rich range of opportunities to promote children's personal development and their early literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, children make good progress and are well prepared to start Key Stage 1. The proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development was above average in 2014. Improved teaching means that children's standards are on track to rise further in 2015.
- Staff plan effectively to develop all areas of children's learning. They provide many opportunities for children to discover things for themselves and to learn, both in the classroom and in the outdoor area. Teaching is stimulating and captures children's interest. Adults usually judge well when to stand back and let children learn by themselves, and when to intervene. Just occasionally, children make slower progress than they could because adults do not get involved quickly enough to ask children questions about their learning.
- Relationships between adults and children are warm and supportive, and children are kept safe. As a result, children love coming to school, behave well and are developing well as happy and confident learners. All welfare and safety regulations for the early years are fully met.
- The leadership and management of early years are good. The early years leader has an accurate view of the strengths and areas for development of the provision, and good plans to improve it further. Staff work together well as a team, so all make a valuable contribution to children's learning. Adults have a good understanding of each child's individual learning needs, and record children's achievements carefully so they can plan the next steps in children's learning. There are strong relationships with parents. Staff visit all children and their parents at home before they start school.

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	140120
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	461993

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Cuddihy
Headteacher	Emma Goodwin
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	01536 461 199
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