

The Oaks Primary School

Loppets Road, Tilgate, Crawley, RH10 5DP

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	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.

- Leaders, governors and the academy trust responded quickly and robustly to a dip in mathematics standards at the end of Year 6 in 2014.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Effective teaching ensures pupils' attainment is in line with national averages by the end of Year 6.
- Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, and provide good support for any pupils who are falling behind. Their prompt action has ensured the school is on track to reverse the dip and raise standards this year.
- Good-quality teaching is a consistent feature across the school. Teachers work together as a team to develop and improve their practice.
- Teaching assistants provide consistently strong support for pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- The inclusion leader plays a central role in the school's work. She makes sure that pupils' varying needs are identified as early as possible so that they quickly benefit from extra help. As a result, these pupils make the same good progress as their classmates.
- Pupils confidently report that they feel very safe in school. They enjoy learning and behave well.
- The sports leader ensures that the sports premium funding is used well to improve the teaching of physical education and to increase pupils' participation in sport.
- Governors know the school well. They effectively hold leaders to account for pupils' achievement and make a valuable contribution to improvements.
- Teaching in the early years captures children's interest in learning very well. As a result, children make good progress, particularly in the development of social and communication skills.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most-able pupils do not always make sufficiently rapid progress. Too few pupils attain the highest levels in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Occasionally, teachers' expectations of pupils and their work are not high enough. They do not always give pupils activities which challenge and extend their understanding sufficiently, particularly the most able.
- Not all teachers give pupils sufficiently clear advice about what they can do to improve their learning.
- Some activities in the early years outdoor areas are not as stimulating and challenging as those in the classrooms.
- Not all middle leaders play a sufficiently full part in the school's development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 16 lessons or part lessons, including three observed jointly with the deputy headteachers.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, parents and pupils. Discussions were also held with the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the academy trust.
- Inspectors took account of the 68 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). In addition, inspectors spoke with individual parents informally at the start of the school day and at other times during the inspection. Inspectors took account of the 57 staff questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and considered a range of policies and documents. These included the school's improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, attendance records, and safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work provided by the school as well as the work seen in lessons. They also listened to pupils in Year 2 and a Year 5 reading.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Samantha Crinnion	Additional Inspector
David Howley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The school provides flexible day-care in the nursery for children aged between three and four, and full-time early years provision in two Reception classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school manages a breakfast club on-site.
- The Oaks Primary School converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2012. When its predecessor school, The Oaks Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged good overall. The school is part of the Kemnal Academy Trust.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of pupils attaining the highest levels at the end of both key stages by making sure that all teachers:
 - have consistently high expectations of pupils and of the quality of their work, particularly the most able
 - set challenging work which encourages pupils to think more deeply and extends their understanding even further
 - use checks on pupils' understanding during lessons to tailor tasks more sharply to pupils' needs
 - follow the school's marking policy by addressing any confusions in pupils' work and by giving them advice about how they can improve their learning.
- Make sure that activities in the early years outdoor areas are as stimulating and challenging as those in the classrooms.
- Strengthen middle leaders' roles in the school's development.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides calm, determined leadership for the school. She works positively and productively with her colleagues and staff morale is good. She is very well supported by the deputy headteachers, inclusion leader and other senior leaders. Leaders provide strong leadership for teaching, successfully promoting a collaborative and positive approach amongst staff.
- Leaders, governors and the academy trust took decisive action in response to the unexpected downturn in mathematics attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2014. They checked teachers' assessments to ensure these were accurate and scrutinised pupils' work relating to these assessments. In addition, external advisers reviewed evidence of pupils' achievement and confirmed the accuracy of teachers' assessments. Leaders have also introduced specialist expertise to support those pupils who find more formal test conditions particularly stressful. Evidence indicates that the school is on track to reverse last year's dip in attainment and to raise standards in 2015.
- The inclusion leader checks closely the progress made by different groups to make sure they are learning well. Her effective leadership ensures that different groups of pupils, including pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils who have special educational needs, make good progress. Parents who spoke with inspectors commented on the valuable support provided for their children and the difference this has made to their experience of school.
- The academy trust works closely with leaders and managers to ensure pupils continue to achieve well. For example, representatives regularly visit the school and work alongside the headteacher and other senior leaders to scrutinise the quality of teaching and learning. This has helped to sharpen leaders' understanding of the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Detailed checks on teaching and effective training have led to improvements in the quality of teaching and to pupils' progress across the school. Teachers say they feel well supported and that leaders value their ideas and views. They willingly share good ideas and effective practice with each other.
- Middle leaders effectively lead developments in subjects such as physical education and music. For example, the sports leader keeps a close check on the use of additional sports premium to make sure it is put to full use to enhance pupils' enjoyment of sports. However, some middle leaders are less clear about the role they play in the school's development. Leaders have already identified this aspect of the school's work as a priority for development. Five members of staff have attended training within the academy trust to develop their leadership skills so that they are ready to take on extra leadership responsibilities in the autumn term.
- Leaders are dedicated to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils and will not permit any form of discrimination. All members of staff share their values. They are determined to prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education, both academically and socially, and for life in modern Britain. This commitment is reflected in the way leaders have improved the use of pupil premium so that eligible pupils make faster progress in all year groups and catch up with their peers by the end of Year 6.
- Leaders plan the curriculum very well to provide pupils with a wide variety of experiences so that pupils enjoy school. For example, special events, residential trips and visits give pupils opportunities to try out new things and develop personal skills such as resilience, courage and responsibility.
- The school has a calm, purposeful, hard-working atmosphere. Good relationships throughout the school contribute to the happy and welcoming ethos. For example, pupils happily help each other during lessons and often make sensible suggestions about what their classmates might do to improve their work.
- All aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted well and pupils respond positively. For example, Reception children listened intently to music played during a singing assembly. British values are taught alongside the school's own values and are an intrinsic part of daily life in school. For example, the school regularly promotes and celebrates values such as respect and tolerance during assemblies.
- The sports leader makes sure that sports premium funding is used effectively. A specialist sports teacher has worked with teachers to plan lessons and to demonstrate how to teach specific skills more effectively. Questionnaires completed by teachers before and after this training reflect improved confidence in teaching physical education. The school provides a wide range of well-attended sports clubs after school. The school is rightly proud of its recent success in a regional football tournament, with pupils and staff thoroughly enjoying playing in the final at Wembley Stadium.
- Most of those who completed the online questionnaire consider the school to be well led and managed and would recommend the school. Nearly all those who spoke with inspectors are extremely happy with the school's work and feel their children are learning well.

- Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are thorough, effective and meet statutory requirements. Senior leaders ensure that all staff have attended appropriate training and know what procedures they should follow if they have a concern.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Chair of the Governing Body provides strong leadership. He is committed to making sure the school provides the best education possible for the local community and for every pupil in the school. He recognises the school's strengths but there is no sense of complacency. The Chair of the Governing Body is very clear about governors' roles in holding the school to account and the governing body provides robust challenge for school leaders.
 - Governors were shocked by the dip in standards in 2014 and conducted a prompt and thorough investigation into the cause. Since then, governors have worked with leaders to check pupils' progress even more closely than before, reviewing this at every meeting of the governing body. They know about the quality of teaching, the improvements still needed to secure pupils' outstanding achievement and the steps leaders have taken to improve teachers' practice. Governors are fully involved in discussion about teachers' pay and know how this is linked to performance.
 - An aide-memoire ensures governors have the most up-to-date information about the quality of teaching and learning in the school and how this compares to other schools nationally. In addition, they regularly question the headteacher about the progress pupils currently in the school are making.
 - While governors rightly focus on making sure pupils achieve well, they also keep a watchful eye on the school's work in developing pupils personally and socially. Governors make sure safeguarding arrangements are rigorous and complete. They regularly audit procedures to check that they comply with legal requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' conduct around the school is very good and most behave well in lessons. Pupils are interested in finding out new things and have positive attitudes to learning, so that settle quickly to their work. However, sometimes, a few pupils spend time chatting instead of getting on with their work and so they make slightly slower progress than their classmates.
- Pupils are kind and thoughtful towards others and polite when talking with adults. They dress smartly for school and treat their surroundings with respect. They look after their work and help their teachers by putting their things away sensibly at the end of lessons.
- Pupils attend regularly and arrive in school on time. Attendance is consistently in line with national averages.
- Leaders make sure that any incidents of poor behaviour are carefully recorded and regularly analysed for trends and patterns. They work well with parents and keep them informed of any concerns.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they are happy in school and feel very safe. Most parents who responded through Parent View agree with this opinion.
- The school site is secure and no one is allowed into the school without the necessary checks. Pupils say the high-visibility jackets adults wear during playtimes makes it easier to find help quickly if needed so they feel safe.
- The school's breakfast club provides an excellent start to the school day for those pupils who attend. Pupils enjoy a variety of breakfast options, such as pancakes, beans on toast and fruit, and are happy and safe. Pupils say they like playing with the good range of toys and activities provided. They also enjoy reading and say that adults help them with homework if they are stuck.
- Pupils can describe what bullying is and know how this differs from more minor disagreements amongst friends. They say there is very little bullying in school but that, if there is an incident, teachers deal with it straight away. E-safety is promoted well so pupils know how to keep safe when using technology.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding. Positive and respectful relationships between

adults and pupils support pupils' learning very well. Teachers regularly use links between different subjects well to capture pupils' interest.

- Leaders have restructured the way reading is taught with a stronger emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of reading. Teachers and teaching assistants regularly listen to pupils read and provide well-focused guidance. This is boosting pupils' progress as well as their confidence. For example, one pupil gave the teachers 10 out of 10 for the help she has received with reading.
- Writing is taught effectively across the school. The teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) has improved and this has strengthened pupils' reading and writing skills, particularly during Key Stage 1. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to write at length, in different subjects and for a variety of purposes.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers make sure that pupils can use a range of different approaches to solve mathematical problems. Teachers' confident subject knowledge enables them to explain new ideas clearly and to quickly address any confusion.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide high-quality support for disabled pupils and for those who have special educational needs. Teachers identify pupils who need help, including those with speech and language difficulties, at an early stage, so that support is provided promptly.
- Most teachers have high expectations of their pupils, particularly of those pupils who find learning more difficult. They give pupils interesting work which makes them think hard. However, sometimes, teachers' expectations of the most-able pupils are not as high as they could be, so that these pupils make slightly slower progress. At times, some of the work set for these pupils does not challenge and extend their thinking sufficiently.
- While teachers mark pupils' work regularly, they do not always give pupils sufficiently clear advice about what they can do to improve their learning or use marking to strengthen and deepen pupils' understanding.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Effective teaching equips pupils with the fundamental knowledge and skills they need to be successful learners by the end of Year 6. Pupils' progress accelerates as they move up through the school, ensuring they achieve average standards by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Teaching and teaching assistants ensure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make rapid progress in all classes. Pupils rapidly develop important social and communication skills during early years and Key Stage 1. This contributes to the quality of learning across all subjects and prepares them well for the next stage of learning in Key Stage 2.
- Attainment in mathematics dipped to below average levels at the end of Year 6 in 2014. A group of pupils did not achieve the levels predicted by their teachers because they found the formality of test conditions difficult. However, the work they produced during the course of the year indicates that teachers' assessments of their work were accurate. These pupils made good progress and were working securely at expected levels for the end of Year 6, contrary to their performance in the national tests.
- Teachers' assessments indicate increased attainment in mathematics at both key stages in 2015 to levels which are at least in line with 2014 national averages. Pupils make good progress in mathematics in all year groups. Those currently in Year 6 have made very rapid progress during the year and were well prepared for the recent national tests.
- Pupils make good progress in reading and writing across the school so that attainment in these subjects is in line with the national average by the end of Year 6. This represents good progress from pupils' starting points. Pupils read confidently and say they like going to the recently updated school library. One avid reader told inspectors that he regularly changes books so that he always has something good to read.
- Improvements in the teaching of basic reading and writing skills meant that the results of the Year 1 phonics check in 2014 increased to above average levels. The school's forecasts for 2015 indicate the school is on course to secure a further increase this year. The younger pupils use phonics skills well to help them to read.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils attained lower than their peers. In mathematics, their attainment was about two years behind that of other pupils nationally and about 20 months behind that of their classmates. In reading, attainment was about 16 months behind that of other pupils nationally and their classmates. In writing, attainment was about a year behind that of other pupils nationally and 16 months behind that of their classmates. In 2014, the gap between this group and other pupils nationally increased. Information about disadvantaged pupils currently in the school indicates that they make the same good progress as their classmates in nearly all classes and with their peers nationally. As a result, the gaps between this group's attainment and their peers nationally have narrowed substantially in

reading, writing and mathematics.

- The few pupils who speak English as an additional language make very good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers identify and focus on pupils' needs particularly well in the younger year groups so that their progress quickly picks up as they move up through the year groups.
- The most-able pupils make good progress overall in reading, writing and mathematics in some year groups. In 2014, the proportion attaining the higher levels at the end of Year 6 increased in reading and writing so that levels were closer to the national average in reading and above average in writing. The proportions achieving the higher levels in mathematics were below average in 2014. While the school's forecasts point to improvements in 2015, leaders recognise the need to boost the progress made by the most-able pupils in the school.

The early years provision

is good

- Children's knowledge and skills are below those typical for their age when they join early years, particularly in communication and social skills. They make good progress, particularly in communication, language and personal skills, so that they are well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- Better consistency in practice across Nursery and Reception is accelerating children's progress. This is reflected in the fact that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development increased in 2014 to continue an improving trend over three years.
- Teachers plan interesting and engaging activities so that children are enthused about learning. For example, children in Reception were captivated by activities around the theme 'going on a safari'.
- Teachers capture children's interest in reading at a very early stage. For example, children in the Nursery were completely engrossed by the story of 'The Hungry Caterpillar'. They excitedly explained the story to an inspector in the classroom, relating this to real caterpillars in a jar and the life cycle of a butterfly.
- The outdoor areas provide good opportunities for children to develop physical and coordination skills with plenty of space for them to move around and use equipment such as the ride-on toys. Activities effectively reinforce positive relationships, good listening skills and turn-taking. However, some of the activities in the early years outdoor areas are not as stimulating and challenging as those in the classrooms. Where this is the case, children make slightly slower progress.
- Adults work effectively with speech and language therapists and put their advice into practice in the classroom so that children are supported well. Teaching assistants attend specialist training and provide children with well-focused and competent support.
- Effective early years leadership ensures consistently good-quality teaching. Leaders now track children's progress during early years more closely than previously, particularly during Nursery. This means that teachers have a sharper view of children's learning and move children's learning forward at a faster rate.
- Children copy the positive way in which adults speak, and relate to children and to each other. They learn important social skills and behave very well. Adults take good care of children so that they feel safe and confidently participate in activities.
- Parents are pleased with their children's progress. They say that teachers are easy to talk to and give them plenty of ideas about what they can do to support their children's learning at home.

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	138618
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	456230

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	418
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Lavender
Headteacher	Penny Forbes
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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