

Otterhampton Primary School

School Lane, Comwich, Bridgewater TA5 2QS

Inspection dates

9–10 December 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching has not been good over time. Expectations of what pupils can achieve have not been high enough.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 are not as high as they should be in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils do not make good progress in writing because their knowledge and use of English grammar and punctuation is not good enough. They have too few opportunities to practise their writing skills.
- Teachers do not make best use of the information they have to move pupils' learning on swiftly in lessons.
- Pupils do not make good progress in mathematics because they have too few opportunities to practise their mathematical skills.
- Systems for checking pupils' progress and attainment are not yet embedded in whole-school practice. The difference they are making to the quality of teaching and learning is not clear.
- Subject leaders do not have the skills necessary to drive whole-school improvement in their subject.
- The governing body, while highly committed and supportive of the school, is not sufficiently skilled or informed to be able to hold leaders to account for the school's work.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed headteacher has made a very positive start. He has established an aspirational vision for improving the school that is shared by staff, pupils and parents.
- Children in the early years make good progress from their starting points because teaching is good.
- Pupils' attendance is above average. They feel safe at school and behave well. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is good, so an above-average proportion of Year 1 pupils achieve the expected standard.
- Pupils make good progress in reading to reach above-average standards.
- Governors are very supportive of the school and are aspirational for its future. They are working closely with the headteacher to bring about speedy improvement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all pupils make good progress by:
 - providing more frequent opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical skills through investigations and problem solving
 - making sure that teachers move pupils' learning on quickly in lessons when pupils demonstrate that they have a secure grasp of their current learning
 - giving pupils more regular opportunities to develop their writing skills through other subjects
 - making sure that pupils' writing shows a good grasp of English grammar and punctuation.
- Improve the effectiveness and impact of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - systems for checking pupils' progress and attainment are applied equally well by all staff, and the information gathered is used to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' learning
 - subject leaders are given support and training to develop their skills in monitoring and evaluating so they can contribute fully to the school improvement process
 - governors develop their skills and expertise further so that they are better placed to hold leaders to account for the school's performance.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The newly appointed headteacher has quickly gained the trust and confidence of staff, pupils and parents. A clear vision for improving the school has been established and is shared by the school community. Staff have been re-energised, morale is good and teamwork strong.
- Changes in staffing have resulted in the re-allocation of subject leadership roles. Staff new to their role lack the skills and experience they need to identify what is going well and what needs to improve in their subject across the school.
- The headteacher has an accurate view of where the school is, and what needs to improve. Priorities have been identified in the school development plan, which focuses tightly on improving the quality of teaching, to drive up pupils' progress and the standards they achieve. The monitoring and evaluation of teachers' performance this term, and the swift action that has been taken, has already secured some improvement but it is too early to confidently evaluate the impact it is having on pupils' learning.
- Establishing the school's eight core values and the introduction of new procedures to manage pupils' behaviour has raised expectations of how adults and pupils will work together, to make sure all have the opportunity to reach their potential. The promotion of pupils' understanding of British values, and of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective and is reflected in the strong, supportive relationships evident throughout the school community.
- Improving communication with parents is also identified as a priority. Parents who responded to Parent View, who left a text message or spoke to the inspector, expressed their confidence that communication has got better and that the school is improving quickly in many aspects. They particularly like the introduction of pupils' learning journals which provide them with an overview of what their child has learned each week.
- The school is working with other schools in the Quantock Group of schools to share ideas and to check that assessments made about pupils' progress and attainment are accurate. Within the school staff work well together to share successes and to find solutions to improve their teaching.
- A new way of planning the curriculum has been introduced. The topics to be covered support pupils to develop their knowledge and skills in all subjects. Visits, including making use of the local environment, provide a range of enrichment opportunities. It is too early to identify the specific impact these new procedures are having on pupils' learning.
- Leaders ensure that additional funding received, including pupil premium funding, is spent appropriately. The primary sports funding has been used to good effect to improve the skills of teachers to deliver good-quality physical education lessons. It has also facilitated the broadening of sports activities pupils have been able to experience, including playing badminton and sailing.
- The provision made for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well led and managed. Pupils get the help and support they need to achieve well.
- Pupils who attend the breakfast club enjoy a calm and sociable start to their day that helps them prepare for their learning. Those attending after-school clubs are well cared for until it is time for them to go home.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body has changed markedly since the last inspection. Half of the governors have been elected during the last year and they are accessing appropriate training so that they are able to carry out their roles effectively. Governors bring a good range of expertise to their role, and have high aspirations and expectations for the school's future. They have been overly reliant upon information presented to them, and have not challenged the leadership of the school enough in relation to pupils' progress and attainment. They are working very closely with the new headteacher to increase their understanding of information relating to pupils' achievement so they can check if pupils are doing as well as they should. Governors are very supportive of the school and recognise both its strengths and aspects that need to improve.
 - Governors are evaluating the way the school's funding is allocated to make sure that spending decisions impact well on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They manage school staffing effectively, and understand that pupils' progress is the main consideration when making decisions about rewarding teachers with salary increases.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Checks are made to make sure that those adults working with pupils are appropriate and that the school is a safe place in which pupils can learn. Day-to-day safeguarding practice is effective, and the school's policy has recently been revised to bring it in line with current regulations. The headteacher has received training on the 'Prevent' duty, and training arrangements ensure that staff are up to date with requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching is improving but is not consistently good, particularly in writing and mathematics. Consequently, not enough pupils make good progress in these subjects.
- Teachers do not always respond quickly to move pupils' learning on in lessons when they have demonstrated that they have securely understood their current learning. Expectations are too low in relation to the pace at which some pupils can learn. As a result pupils sometimes spend too much time continuing to complete work that they have already mastered. This hinders the chance they have to develop the depth and breadth of their learning.
- Teachers plan well for the complexity of mixed-age classes, making good use of resources to support pupils' learning. At times, however, pupils are not challenged enough to use and apply their skills. In mathematics pupils have too few opportunities to show that they have securely understood a particular concept or skill through a mathematical investigation or by solving a problem. Similarly they have too few chances to demonstrate their competencies in writing through other subjects.
- Teachers manage pupils well and have developed ways of delivering lessons that keep pupils motivated and interested. Teaching assistants are well briefed and deployed effectively to work with individual pupils and groups. They make a positive impact on pupils' engagement and their learning.
- A revised approach to the marking of pupils' work is beginning to lift the rate at which pupils are progressing. Pupils respond positively to the feedback they receive by acknowledging their teacher's comments and if required by making corrections. Teachers check that pupils make their corrections to ensure that any errors or misunderstandings have been addressed.
- Improvements have been made to assessment arrangements so that they link to the National Curriculum and provide secure information about pupils' progress and attainment. This is enabling teachers and leaders to better identify those pupils who are progressing well, as well as those needing additional support. Teachers are also able to identify gaps in pupils' learning. This has highlighted the need to ensure that through-school procedures are established so pupils' use of English grammar and punctuation in their writing reaches the expected standard by Year 6.
- Pupils' understanding of their own learning is improving. They are given time to reflect on their learning each week, and share this with their teachers and parents through their learning journals. They are also developing self-assessment skills and will honestly and accurately check the quality of their own work against specific success criteria.
- The teaching of phonics is good and supports pupils' good reading skills and their ability to spell words accurately.
- Teachers make good use of questioning to check pupils' understanding and to challenge them to think about their learning. They seize opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the choice of resources they use in lessons. For example, pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 were asked to consider the rights and wrongs, and who was to blame for what happened to Matilda and Jim in the poems written by Hilaire Belloc.
- New arrangements for homework ensure that pupils have the opportunity to practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills as well as other aspects of their learning at school. Discussions with older pupils indicate that they value the new arrangements and understand how they benefit their learning overall.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Through a set of eight agreed values which include good behaviour, respect, kindness and effort, pupils are supported to be considerate and caring individuals. They are well prepared to take their place in British society.
- Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and carry out the roles they are given in a mature and conscientious manner. School councillors are proud of the contribution they are making to improve the school and older pupils embrace their role as buddies for the youngest children in the school.
- Pupils are thoughtful and reflective. When completing their learning journals they think carefully about their learning, about how hard they have worked and what they need to do to improve. They value and respect the views of others during discussions.
- Pupils respond positively to advice and guidance they are given during lessons and through teachers' marking of their work. They are proud of their work and want to do better.
- Pupils feel safe at school and can identify adults who they would go to if they had a problem or concern. They know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when online. Pupils, parents and staff agree that school is a safe place for pupils.
- Pupils recognise that there are different forms of bullying, but say that it is rare at school. They are confident that if an issue does occur it is dealt with quickly by adults.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and reflects their enjoyment of school.
- Pupils are confident that the new behaviour management procedures have made a marked difference to how well pupils behave and that most pupils get along together in a friendly and supportive manner. Parents who responded to the questionnaire Parent View and those who offered comments were equally positive about improvements in pupils' behaviour.
- At playtime pupils enjoy each other's company. They are generally respectful of the school rules because they understand that they are in place to keep them safe, so they can enjoy their time together.
- The school has done much to establish higher expectations for pupils' behaviour and the vast majority have responded positively. This has secured an orderly environment for pupils to work and play in. A few pupils find it difficult to behave well all the time. They sometimes struggle to wait their turn in lessons, and there is some shouting out. These situations are managed well by teachers who are quick to remind pupils of what is expected of them so very little time for learning is lost.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- The make-up of each cohort in the school varies significantly so year-on-year comparisons are not valid. Typically, however, pupils reach above-average standards in reading and broadly average standards in writing and mathematics. Too few pupils have attained above-average standards in writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Boys and girls reach similar standards in all subjects.
- Pupils make good progress in reading because it is taught well in all classes and is supported by the good teaching of phonics. Pupils read often and use their skills to support their learning in other subjects. Pupils' reading records indicate that they are well supported with their reading at home.
- The quality of teaching of writing and mathematics is improving, but it has not been good enough over time so pupils typically make expected progress through Key Stage 1 and 2 in these subjects.
- The school's system for checking pupils' progress is showing that pupils are beginning to do better, including the most able, but they have some way to go to make the good progress many of them are capable of. Teachers are sharply focused on helping pupils to reach the challenging targets that have been set for them.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because they are supported well. Both their personal and academic needs are addressed through carefully targeted activities. The impact of this support is checked thoroughly to see what difference it has made to pupils'

learning or, for some pupils, their ability to engage positively with the process of learning.

- Pupils achieve well in the Year 1 phonics screening check, with an above-average proportion meeting the expected standard.

Early years provision

is good

- Children enter the provision for two- and three-year-olds with skills and abilities which are typical for their age. They make good progress and by the end of their Reception Year most have reached a good level of development with an increasing proportion exceeding this level. Children are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Children settle well because relationships are caring and supportive and links established with parents are good. Routines and expectations are established from the beginning, with children's personal, social and emotional development given the highest priority. Adults' knowledge and understanding of how to support children's personal and learning development, including for the youngest two-year-olds, is good and underpins the good progress children make.
- Children behave well in the classroom and outdoor areas. They are keen to learn and engage in activities with enthusiasm and commitment. They cooperate well together, for example when driving the Christmas sleigh to deliver parcels, and talk enthusiastically to each other about what they are doing. Adults are firm but sensitive when managing children's behaviour. Children respond very well to this approach so disagreements are rare.
- The quality of teaching is good. Classrooms are bright and stimulating places to learn. Resources are generally used well to encourage children to explore their environment, to use their imagination and develop their creativity. The outdoor space used by the youngest children is used particularly well to help children advance their personal and physical development and their communication skills.
- The information from frequent checks on what children can do and what they need to learn next is used to modify the planning of activities. Children are challenged to move on with their learning, but are also provided with opportunities to revisit and reinforce through their play what they have already learned. Adults use questioning well to move children's learning on and to help them think about what they might do to improve.
- Staff are reflective and frequently evaluate the quality and impact on children's learning of what they provide. They have led improvements in the early years together, with a clear focus on improving the quality of learning for children. For example, following an evaluation of children's knowledge and skills they are focused on improving children's understanding of numbers. They recognise that opportunities for children in Reception to reinforce their knowledge and skills in this area could be extended further.
- The teaching of phonics is effective and children rapidly develop confidence in identifying, saying and writing letters. They confidently break down a simple word into sounds and blend them together to read them.

School details

Unique reference number	123692
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10009239

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gregg Mockridge
Headteacher	Nick Benbow
Telephone number	01278 652487
Website	www.otterhamptonprisch.co.uk
Email address	office@otterhampton.somerset.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 February 2014

Information about this school

- Otterhampton Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- Children aged two and three attend part-time in a Nursery class. Children of Reception age attend full-time in a class with Year 1 pupils.
- Compared to the national average the proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is very low. The pupil premium is the funding the school receives for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The typically small pupil cohorts vary in their make-up from year to year. Most have a higher proportion of boys compared to girls, but in 2015 this was reversed and the cohort was largely made up of girls.
- The school is part of the Quantock Group of schools that work in partnership together.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average.
- During term time the school provides before- and after-school care for pupils who attend the school through the provision of a breakfast club, and after-school clubs.
- Since the last inspection a number of new teachers have joined the school and the headteacher took up his post in September 2015.
- Half of the governors have joined the governing body during the last year.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited parts of eight lessons, all of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised. The inspector heard pupils read and spoke to pupils about their enjoyment of school, how they are able to contribute to changes made at school and their views of behaviour and safety.
- Discussions were held with staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of school documents, including its development plan and documents relating to the monitoring of teachers' performance, pupils' achievement information, behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding.
- The views of the 20 parents who completed the Parent View free-text response were taken into account, as well as those expressed by parents spoken to at the start of the school day. The views expressed in nine questionnaires completed by staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Alison Cogher, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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