

Oakham CofE Primary School

Burley Road, Oakham LE15 6GY

Inspection dates

29–30 September 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Although rates of pupils' progress have increased considerably in the past year, their attainment is not yet high enough. Progress is slower in mathematics than in reading and writing.
- Not all disadvantaged pupils are making fast enough progress.
- Teachers are not giving the most-able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, work that challenges them sufficiently.
- Although teaching, learning and assessment are now much better, they are not yet consistently good in all year groups.
- Teachers do not always check that all pupils, and particularly those of lower ability, have followed their advice on how to make their work better.
- Teachers do not always adjust the work they give to match pupils' different needs, or ensure that increasingly difficult work is set when pupils are ready for it.
- Especially in mathematics, teachers need to improve their subject knowledge so they can pinpoint pupils' misconceptions quickly and correct them.
- Though behaviour has improved greatly, some pupils do not listen enough or concentrate on their work sufficiently in every lesson.
- Some school policies are out of date and leaders have not checked these regularly.
- The school website does not comply with the legal regulations to publish the information required.

The school has the following strengths

- New leadership has brought about rapid improvements to all areas. Leaders have raised expectations and created a culture of success. Staff are now a united team, working quickly to promote higher achievement for all pupils.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are good. Pupils are cared for and kept safe by all staff. Parents agree that their children feel safe in school.
- Attendance is rising because pupils feel proud of their school. Most want to attend and to learn quickly.
- The provision in the early years is good and, as a result, children get off to a rapid start.
- Good teaching practice in the early years is spreading quickly to other parts of the school as teachers learn from each other and improve their skills.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - accelerating the rate at which gaps are narrowing between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school and nationally, through intensifying support for those who are not making fast enough progress
 - ensuring that more pupils, including those who receive the pupil premium, reach the higher standards by being given work that makes them think hard.

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - staff give pupils work that is consistently and accurately matched to the needs of different groups
 - the work staff set for pupils becomes progressively more challenging
 - teachers check that pupils act upon the advice they have been given
 - teachers improve their subject knowledge, particularly in mathematics, so that they can precisely identify pupils' misconceptions and reshape their teaching accordingly.

- Improve pupils' behaviour so that it is consistently good throughout the school by promoting positive attitudes to learning in all lessons.

- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management so that:
 - all policies are regularly reviewed and thoroughly evaluated for their effectiveness
 - the school website meets all statutory requirements.

An external review of the school'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

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The current deputy headteacher took over at short notice as acting headteacher in September 2014, following unexpectedly low outcomes in end of Key Stage 2 assessments. With extensive support from the local authority and Peterborough Diocese, he quickly implemented wholesale changes to all aspects of the school. Staff were made very aware of the need to improve the achievement of pupils rapidly. He has also created a united team in the school, with greatly raised expectations. As a result, there is now a shared determination that every pupil must succeed. Pupils are responding to the emphasis on learning by making much faster progress. Their behaviour has also improved significantly, as they aspire to do their best.
- The new headteacher has rapidly made his mark, for example by reorganising the school timetable to ensure that no time in the school day is wasted. Together with the deputy headteacher, he has communicated the school's ambition to pupils, parents and the school community, who warmly support the changes that leaders are making.
- Leaders continually talk about and model their high expectations for all aspects of the school. They know that action must take place as fast as possible to make up for past slow progress. They have accurately evaluated the current priorities in the school and have drawn up a detailed plan for improvement. This is driving forward the necessary improvements at high speed.
- The senior leadership team is strengthening further the impact of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. These leaders, including teachers with specific responsibilities for literacy and the early years, are working together to ensure that staff meet and work in groups to plan and deliver improved learning for all pupils. The team believes that the school's provision and outcomes for pupils are simply unacceptable unless they are good or even better. Leaders and staff fully and warmly endorse the new headteacher's culture of 'pride, purpose, passion and perseverance', and say that it sums up their commitment to all pupils.
- Leaders have worked hard to improve the skills of staff by giving them opportunities to learn from each other and attend training where needed. Although the quality of teaching is not yet good overall, it is improving quickly because staff feel more confident and are able to plan and deliver better lessons. Leaders have wisely identified good practice in the early years, where teachers capture the imagination of children to deliver good learning, as a way of improving the quality of teaching elsewhere in the school.
- Pupils' improved engagement with their learning arises, in part, from the school's lively, new curriculum. This includes cross-curricular themes that pupils help to adapt so that they can make links in their learning and apply what they know to other areas. Teachers enrich the curriculum with opportunities such as meeting real-life 'Vikings' who visit the school to teach pupils about history. There are also various extra-curricular activities for art, sport and music. These include drumming and an animation club. Pupils who inspectors met during the visit say they really enjoy these and that there is 'always something to do'!
- Good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education means that pupils become considerate, thoughtful and reflective young people. The school is particularly effective in teaching pupils about, and promoting respect for, other religions and cultures. Teachers give pupils first-hand experiences to meet visitors from other countries and to visit places of worship, such as a Sikh Gurdwara. This means that pupils have a good understanding of other religions and this, in turn, prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders' commitment to the success of every pupil ensures that equality of opportunity is strong. Every pupil is included and welcomed, regardless of their needs. There is a clear determination to see that outcomes are as good for minority groups and pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable as they are for other pupils.
- Leaders have spent the primary physical education and sports funding well to ensure that pupils' enjoyment of, and participation in, physical and sporting activity have increased over time. Cricket, basketball and archery are amongst the many sports that pupils enjoy.
- Until last year, school leaders did not spend the funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively. Intervention work to help them improve their achievement was not well planned or delivered. As a result, pupils made progress that was too slow and gaps between their performance and that of others in the school and nationally did not close. Since last year, this has begun to change and intervention is now much more effective. As a result, pupils in many, though not yet all, year groups are making faster progress than other pupils.

- The school's website is not compliant with statutory regulations and lacks information on pupils' progress, the impact of spending on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, details about the spending planned for the current year and a report from the school on provision of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- The website also contains a large number of policies, including that of safeguarding, that leaders and governors have not properly monitored, evaluated or reviewed. These contain out-of-date terminology and do not yet demonstrate good practice.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have no illusions about the past underperformance of pupils and they have worked hard to become a rapidly improving, and now effective, governing body. They now hold senior leaders fully to account and have undertaken extensive training to become familiar with pupil performance. They know about the quality of teaching in the school and receive regular information about this from leaders. Governors are continuing to oversee carefully the many improvements that leaders are making to all aspects of provision.
 - Like leaders, governors are now a visible presence in the school. They visit the school regularly and have undertaken examinations of pupils' work, along with visits to classrooms, to see for themselves that the changes set out in the school's 'rapid improvement plan' are actually taking place. Whilst warmly supportive of the school's leadership, governors are unafraid to ask continual, challenging questions to check which actions have not yet proved sufficiently successful and what staff are doing about them.
 - The school's system for managing the performance of teachers is now good. Targets are ambitious and focused upon the progress of pupils. Leaders put in place good support for teachers to improve their skills. However, governors are not afraid to take tough decisions and deny salary increments if teachers do not achieve their targets.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The efficient senior business manager ensures that the single central register is always up-to-date. The deputy headteacher and two other members of staff coordinate the safeguarding of pupils. They ensure that staff receive regular and up-to-date training to keep pupils safe and supported. The training includes ensuring all staff are aware of the warning signs of, for example, any neglect, exploitation or bullying to children. Staff are also very clear on the procedures to report any concerns and do not hesitate to pass these on. Records seen by inspectors during their visit show that any referrals are made to outside agencies quickly. Staff keep detailed records of all concerns, and monitor visitors closely. Staff are also very keen to support parents and work with families who need particular help.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Though leaders have secured significant and rapid improvements in the quality of teaching, the progress of pupils is not yet consistently good. Considerably better teaching is occurring in many classes, but this is not yet true in all of them. For example, teachers do not always accurately target the work they give to the needs of different groups or set clear time limits. As a result, not all groups of pupils make as much progress as they could in all lessons.
- Where teaching is less effective, pupils do not always receive progressively harder work when they are ready for it. On occasions, teachers give them easier work even though they have successfully completed problems that are more challenging. When this happens, pupils' progress slows.
- Some pupils, particularly lower attainers, do not respond to their teacher's advice and so make slower progress than they should. The advice, including marking and other feedback, is often weak in literacy and this limits pupils' progress because teachers do not give them clear ideas on exactly what they need to improve.
- Teachers need to develop their subject knowledge, particularly in mathematics, so that they can spot and correct pupils' misconceptions.
- Teachers do not always give the most-able pupils, including the most-able disadvantaged pupils, work that challenges them and makes them think hard. Because of this, too few of them have reached their potential over time and achieved the higher measures of attainment.
- The quality of teaching has improved significantly during the last year, with staff responding enthusiastically to the clear and high expectations set by senior leaders. A common approach to teaching through the school, adapted from successful practice in the early years, is having significant effects.

- Pupils say that the level of challenge teachers give them has increased over the past year. Those interviewed said that they like the way they are encouraged to judge their own success not on how busy they are, but by how much they are learning.
- In the better lessons teachers' good subject knowledge is shown by effective questioning and the correct use of vocabulary which probes pupils' thinking and teaches them the correct language to use when, for example, describing mathematical shapes.
- Staff assess all pupils rigorously and therefore have accurate starting points from which to measure progress. Staff are now using a new system to assess progress based on the national expectation of pupils at different ages, which pupils like. Staff recognise that they need more time to become more familiar with this.
- Teachers deploy teaching assistants well in order to support pupils, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language. Teaching assistants are well briefed and work closely alongside teachers, adapting the learning but questioning pupils using the same vocabulary as the teacher. Inspectors noted a particularly strong example of this in a mathematics lesson taught in the specialist unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties where, with support, pupils sustained their concentration and so improved their knowledge of decimals and place value.
- Disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress than their peers in many year groups because of better intervention by teaching assistants. However, this is not yet the case in all years. Teachers know that they need to intensify the support they give to any disadvantaged pupil if he or she is not making the necessary progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare require improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Across the school, including in the two specialist provisions, pupils are well cared for and kept safe by all staff. Pupils say that they feel safe and can approach any adult in school if they have a concern. They also say that whichever adult they approach, they will deal with the issue quickly, fairly and effectively.
- Staff teach pupils about how to keep themselves safe from a wide range of risks. Children learn to behave safely around the school from the time when they join the Reception class; they learn, for example, how they must always use scissors carefully.
- Pupils are particularly knowledgeable about keeping safe on the internet and mobile phones. Staff teach younger pupils about the dangers of roads and strangers, for example. Pupils approaching the move to secondary schools learn how to recognise and manage the risks they may encounter when they are older.
- Pupils say that bullying and the use of discriminatory language are rare. Should any incidents occur, staff take appropriate action and inform parents. Actions take account of the age of the child and the circumstances. Logs kept by the school show that these incidents are properly recorded and the 'next steps' are noted to reduce the risk of further incidents.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their child feels safe at Oakham Church of England Primary. Parents' positive views of this aspect reflects their positive views of the school overall.
- Pupils are encouraged to take regular physical exercise and keep healthy, which they do. Teachers also encourage pupils to be calm and reflective and to support each other. Staff carefully attend to both pupils' physical and emotional well-being; as a result, pupils' self-confidence grows as they get older. Pupils are also becoming aware of the need to focus on what they are learning rather than being satisfied with merely being busy.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because, while attitudes to learning are good for most pupils, they are not yet consistent across the school. For example, during the inspection there were a small number of incidents of low-level disruption and of pupils not paying attention to the work that the teacher had set. This shows that not all pupils have yet developed good levels of self-discipline.
- Pupils and teachers confirm, however, that behaviour, including that of pupils in the two specialist provisions, has improved significantly over the past year. This follows the introduction of clear expectations of how pupils should behave both in lessons and around school. In most classes, pupils ask questions and are willing and ready to learn. They are respectful to adults.

- Books seen by inspectors during their visit show that pupils are developing a greater sense of pride in their work, with most now completing their work neatly.
- Pupils are respectful of the school environment and litter is rare. They wear their school uniform proudly and view the introduction of the new dress code positively. They move about the school calmly and are polite to adults and visitors. At break and lunch times they play and cooperate happily.
- Attendance is improving as leaders make clear that pupils must be in school unless there are exceptional reasons. Staff note any absence quickly and follow it up, with effective support given to those families where pupils' persistent absence is a concern. Pupils also say that they enjoy coming to school to learn. Because of the changes leaders have made, attendance is now above the latest published national average and persistent absence is rare.
- There have been no exclusions since the start of the previous academic year.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because pupils have been making insufficient progress over several years. Published information from 2014 shows that their progress was significantly below average and in the lowest 10% nationally for reading, writing and mathematics. Historically, progress has slowed in Key Stage 2, with the rate only beginning to improve again in Year 6. As a result, many pupils have not been attaining the levels expected for their age by the time they leave. They have therefore not been well prepared for secondary school.
- Progress for disadvantaged pupils has been far too low. Leaders have allowed significant gaps to develop between their achievement and that of other pupils in the school and nationally. In 2014, they left the school approximately two terms behind their classmates and nearly seven terms behind other pupils nationally in mathematics. In reading, they left approximately three terms behind their classmates and, again, six terms behind other pupils nationally. In writing, they were nearly five terms behind their classmates and more than nine terms behind other pupils nationally.
- The most-able pupils have not reached the high measures of attainment that they are capable of because teachers do not give them challenging work that makes them think deeply.
- Improvements in the quality of teaching over the last year and considerably raised expectations are now having a significant effect on the rate of progress that pupils make.
- Around half of children arrive at Reception with skills that are typical of their age, while others arrive with skills lower than this in the areas of writing and number. All make at least the progress expected of them and around half make more than expected progress in most areas. As a result, children leave the early years with standards that are a little above national averages.
- Pupils' good rate of progress continues overall in Key Stage 1. As a result, they now transfer to Key Stage 2 with skills above those expected nationally.
- The school's robust performance information shows that in Key Stage 2 the number of pupils achieving the levels expected for their age grew significantly each term over the past year. The majority of pupils in Key Stage 2, and in other year groups in the school, are now making at least expected progress. The number of pupils making more than expected progress has increased substantially, and is now around one in three pupils. Leaders have set ambitious targets for the end of this school year to ensure that this improvement continues.
- Pupils are also deepening their understanding and increasing their skills in subjects other than English and mathematics. For example, in history pupils showed a good understanding of the reasons for the Apollo 13 mission, and in religious education pupils demonstrated confidence in reflecting on the experiences of others.
- The school's assessment information, together with work in pupils' books, confirms that the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is rising considerably. Gaps between the progress of these pupils and others in school and nationally are narrowing in many, though not all, year groups. Leaders know that they need to ensure that any pupils still making insufficient progress catch up rapidly.
- Pupils' work seen by inspectors in all year groups confirms that greater progress is occurring across the school. Pupils are now able to write for a range of genres and at greater length. Teachers are aware that, though pupils are developing the skills to become fluent at reading, progress in mathematics remains inconsistent.

- Those pupils who attend the school's two specialist provisions achieve their potential because their learning and pastoral needs are well provided for. Staff ensure that they make the progress that they can. In one lesson seen by inspectors, pupils were very excited and were developing a visible confidence in their learning, with one pupil happily telling classmates, 'I totally get it on maths!'
- Staff identify quickly the needs of those pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs and adapt their teaching for them. Not all these pupils are yet making consistent progress, but this is improving because the school's new system of targets is helping staff to plan more suitably challenging work.
- The progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language is now good, with pupils given appropriate support and work that helps them achieve well.

Early years provision

is good

- The Early Years Leader ensures that the provision in the early years is of high quality. She meets with her staff at the start of each day to discuss what children have already learned before planning the next activities with them. As a result, she has created an effective team where expectations are high and a common approach is used. Staff use children's ideas within the lessons to excite them and make them want to find out more. Teachers in the early years have shared their successful approach with colleagues in other year groups in the school, which has improved their teaching.
- Well-organised routines ensure that children quickly settle in and feel safe. They behave well, sitting quietly while staff take the register, listening to adults and following instructions correctly. They cooperate and learn well together.
- Good learning begins from the moment children arrive, with activities that engage them, such as 'Funky Fingers' to help develop their fine motor skills. Good daily teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) means that children learn the skills of reading effectively. Other teaching is consistently good.
- Staff give high priority to those children who are disadvantaged and those children whose skills are lower than those found typically in children of the same age. Staff give both groups high-quality intervention and support. As a result, these children make good progress. Staff also quickly identify the most-able children and give them work that challenges them and develops their skills quickly.
- The 'open door policy' for parents means that parents are warmly welcomed in school and feel included in the education of their children. Good relationships mean that staff quickly address any concerns.
- Good-quality teaching in the early years means that most pupils are prepared well for Year 1. Teachers share useful information about the children so that those who need it get further support when they leave the early years.
- Staff have not developed links with pre-schools as much as they could. As a result, staff do not receive detailed information about the skills, knowledge and abilities of those children who are starting school. This means that Reception staff need time to gather more first-hand information about what children can do when they arrive.
- The outdoor area is not as well prepared or structured as the classroom and on occasions is limited to mainly play-focused activities. As a result, children do not always get enough opportunity there to develop their key skills.

School details

Unique reference number	120181
Local authority	Rutland
Inspection number	10005476

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	308
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nick Cooper
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Stephen Cox
Telephone number	01572 722404
Website	www.oakham-primary.rutland.sch.uk
Email address	office@oakham-primary.rutland.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 November 2011

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium funding is slightly higher than average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, who are from service families or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is slightly below average overall. However, the school has two specialist provisions on site, one for pupils on the autistic spectrum and the other for those with moderate learning difficulties. The former currently has nine pupils and the latter has 10.
- In 2014, the school did not meet the current government floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed each class in the school, and some on more than one occasion. In total, they visited 16 lessons, or parts of lessons. Inspectors also checked pupils' behaviour at break times, lunchtimes and as they moved about the school during the day.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders in the school, including the special educational needs coordinator, the leader of the early years, and subject leaders for English. Inspectors also met with members of the school's governing body, a representative of the local authority and a representative of Peterborough Diocese.
- Inspectors discussed pupils' work with them in lessons, heard pupils read and met more formally with them in groups to discuss particular aspects of their experiences at the school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documentation, including the school's improvement plan, the school's data for tracking pupils' attainment and progress, the headteacher's reports to the governing body, minutes of meetings of the governing body and the school's self-evaluation document. They also looked at work in pupils' books, individual case studies showing the impact of the school's support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, anonymised records of the performance management of staff and school documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors analysed the responses, including the comments made, from 93 parents and carers on Parent View (the Ofsted online questionnaire).

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