

Oakhill Primary School

Hawksworth, Glascote Heath, Tamworth, Staffordshire B77 2HH

Inspection dates

9–10 March 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Although outcomes have improved over the last two years, pupils' progress is still not rapid enough. In Key Stage 2 progress is below the national average, particularly in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching varies too much and does not consistently challenge all pupils, particularly the most able, to make the progress they are capable of.
- Staffing issues, including absences and frequent changes, have had a negative effect on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress over time.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to solve practical problems in mathematics or to develop their learning in foundation subjects.
- Actions taken by leaders to improve attendance have not had a strong enough impact, and attendance remains too low.
- Current leaders clearly identified issues that have affected the school in the past, but it is still too early for many of their actions to have had a significant impact. The leadership structure is stretched, thereby slowing down the rate of improvement.
- Governors do not play an effective role in supervising the performance management of staff and holding them to account for pupils' outcomes.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have brought about rapid and necessary improvement to the quality of teaching. They are correctly identifying weaknesses, implementing effective systems to manage the performance of teachers, and arranging high-quality training and advice. As a result, pupils' achievement is improving.
- Early years provision is good and continues to improve. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress because of consistently effective teaching.
- Pupils feel safe and behave well. They work hard in lessons and are polite and courteous.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of improvement in the school by ensuring that senior leaders have the capacity to carry out their duties fully.
- Ensure that pupils at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 achieve well across a range of subjects by making sure that teachers:
 - use information about pupils' abilities and prior learning to set work at the right level of difficulty, particularly for the most able
 - check how well pupils are learning in lessons and move them on to harder work as soon as they are ready, so that pupils make the progress they are capable of
 - provide the most-able pupils with work in mathematics that is sufficiently challenging so that more achieve the highest levels of attainment.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum by ensuring that the timetable offers a better balance of subjects at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 so that pupils have more time to study foundation subjects.
- Improve the attendance of all groups of pupils in the school, especially disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs or disability and girls.
- Ensure that governors have a clear overview of performance management decisions so that they can hold leaders and teachers to account for bringing about improvements.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior leaders and staff have worked tirelessly to ensure the smooth day-to-day management of the school during a period when there have been many staffing changes.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement because not all pupils reach the standards they are capable of in a range of subjects. Standards in mathematics at Key Stage 2 remain too low and the progress of pupils in reading across Key Stage 2 is too slow.
- The executive headteacher makes the most of the opportunities offered by the federation of the two schools he leads by ensuring that best practice is shared through close collaboration between the schools. Subject leaders, in particular, benefit from weekly meetings with their colleagues in the partner school. Teachers access a range of training opportunities that are made possible by the close working relationships between the schools.
- Although leaders are making improvements, the pace of these improvements has been slow because there is insufficient time allocated for leaders to undertake important aspects of their duties. For example, the executive headteacher is equally committed to both schools in the federation and his deputy, who has a teaching commitment also, is the senior leader in charge on site when the executive headteacher is absent.
- Senior leaders have worked resolutely to address some of the weaker aspects of teaching. They have had some success. The assessment policy is applied consistently and is effective. Work is well marked and there is now some good teaching at every key stage. However, the turbulence in staffing since the previous inspection has limited the leaders' impact on improving the school. Leaders have been unable to secure teaching that is of a good enough quality to enable pupils to make the necessary accelerated progress.
- Leaders have made good use of pupil premium funding to appoint support staff to help disadvantaged pupils to make progress and catch up with others. The funding was also used to purchase new resources for reading and provide one-to-one reading sessions to improve the reading skills of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils.
- The sports premium grant is being used effectively to provide new opportunities for pupils to try new sports, such as badminton and dodgeball, and to purchase equipment for the playground to make children more active at break and lunchtime. The promotion of healthy eating has also been supported by the grant.
- Leaders' observations of learning in lessons make a positive contribution to improving teaching, as does formal management of teachers' performance. Targets are set after lesson observations and followed up effectively the next time the teacher is seen. Literacy and numeracy leaders are involved well in monitoring pupils' work and teachers' plans, and providing training for teachers.
- Senior leaders have implemented an assessment system that allows teachers to track pupils' progress. There are systems in place to have assessment externally checked by teachers from the partner school within the federation. This also takes place on a larger scale across a network of nine local schools, which the school belongs to. The new checking system has not been in place long enough to show its effectiveness. Current progress, shown by the results of assessment and tracking, while promising, will have to be tested against national key stage results to prove their effectiveness.
- Leaders have worked hard to improve behaviour in the school and have been successful in this. The atmosphere around the school and in lessons is pleasant and orderly. Pupils are respectful to their teachers and to each other. The significant improvement in the behaviour of pupils since the last inspection is clearly acknowledged by staff, parents and pupils.
- The curriculum is broad and pupils cover a suitable range of subjects. Pupils have access to a range of extra-curricular activities, such as violin lessons for Year 3 and Year 4 pupils, visits to museums and a week-long residential trip for Year 6 pupils during which they enjoy a range of outdoor activities. These additions to the curriculum provide pupils with experiences that broaden their horizons and prepare them well for adult life.

- Because of the priority of raising pupils' attainment in English and mathematics, insufficient time is devoted to foundation subjects. As a result, pupils are not able to develop their knowledge in these subjects as fully as they should. While topic books are well kept and marked regularly in accordance with the school's assessment policy, the coverage of subjects in topic work is too limited. For example, the school has a science week every year, but there is not enough science investigation work over the year to develop pupils' appreciation of science and their skills in this area.
- The school's curriculum has a clear focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and provides them with opportunities to understand key issues of life in modern Britain. All classes have 'respect time' sessions during which they explore a range of social and moral issues, and develop their awareness of fundamental British values.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They provide support and challenge to leaders and hold them to account. They are well informed about the quality of teaching and learning in the school, and pupils' progress and attainment are a high priority in meetings. Governors supported the development of the school's new assessment system and contributed to the development of the school's assessment policy for English and mathematics.
 - Since the last inspection report, the governors undertook a review of governance and have developed their skills considerably. For example, they have co-opted a new governor with financial expertise. They also take responsibility for the development of their skills and knowledge, and commission training sessions to develop their abilities to support the school's improvement agenda.
 - Governors need to address their lack of involvement in the supervision of the performance management of staff, its outcomes and the subsequent decisions related to pay progression.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff training is up-to date and robust procedures are in place to respond to and resolve any concerns about pupils' welfare. The work to make the site more secure should be completed as soon as possible.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **requires improvement**

- Previous weaknesses in teaching and assessment and high turnover of teaching staff have detrimentally affected pupils' achievement over time. Although teaching is now improving, it is not yet consistently good.
- While activities are aimed at pupils with different levels of ability, there is a lack of challenge for the most-able pupils. For example, in mathematics, pupils are not given enough opportunities to use their knowledge to solve problems and there is too much emphasis on repetitive tasks.
- In some lessons observed, there was clear evidence of teachers targeting activities to suit the different abilities of pupils in the class. For example, in an English lesson, activities on relative pronouns were organised under headings for 'hippos' (identifying pronouns), 'leopards' (selecting the correct pronouns to complete a sentence), 'zebras' (writing own sentences with a relative clause) and 'giraffes' (writing a descriptive paragraph using relative pronouns). As a result, all groups of pupils were able to make progress through the activities.
- The teaching of reading is improving, especially in Year 1 and Year 2 where new resources and the impact of effective teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) in the Nursery and Reception classes are having a positive impact on the way pupils develop their reading skills. In a guided reading lesson in Year 2, pupils were enthused by the introduction of comic books and enjoyed discovering new stories.
- Teachers are following the school marking policy. Marking is detailed, consistent and regular, and is having a positive impact on progress. Pupils do take teachers' comments into account to improve their work.
- Where teaching is less effective, teachers fail to regularly check how well pupils are learning in lessons. As a result, teachers do not reshape activities, where necessary, to ensure that the level of challenge provided promotes good progress. In some of the lessons seen, pupils were completing tasks without having a clear understanding of the concepts they were taught. In a mathematics lesson about fractions, pupils were able to replicate the model provided by the teacher, but most of them could not apply the method they were taught in a different context.

- The quality of teaching and learning is variable across the school. Although observations of teaching and scrutiny of pupils' books indicate that there is some good teaching, not enough is consistently good or better. As a result, too few pupils make good or rapid progress, and attainment by the end of Year 6 is not high enough.
- The deployment of teaching assistants to support groups of pupils and individuals, both in lessons and during intervention sessions out of lessons, is effective and provides the right conditions for pupils who experience difficulties with their learning to make progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Overall attendance rates have risen marginally since the previous inspection. Leaders ensure that pupils' attendance is checked regularly. Although leaders encourage pupils to attend school more regularly, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent remains much higher than that found nationally. This is particularly the case among disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs or disability and girls.
- Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, both within and outside school. Pupils say that the school provides them with good information on how they can remain safe, for example they recognise the potential dangers that the internet could pose to them. Parents are very positive about how safe their children are at school.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of different types of bullying, including homophobic bullying, and why all types of bullying are unacceptable. They say that bullying is extremely rare, and this is confirmed by the detailed records that the school keeps. Parents expressed their confidence in leaders to resolve swiftly any concerns they have. These views of parents are confirmed by inspection evidence.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is a calm and happy place. Lessons proceed in an orderly way. Teachers are very positive about the ways in which behaviour has improved over the last two years. They appreciate the efforts leaders have made to ensure that an effective and consistent system of rewards and sanctions supports their management of behaviour in lessons.
- Pupils say any incidents are dealt with quickly. Pupils play cooperatively and follow the instructions of supervising staff. They line up respectfully and enter the building in a sensible way.
- Pupils are very clear about the school's rewards and sanctions system and think it is fair. In a discussion with the lead inspector, pupils said that they are always rewarded when they are good.
- Pupils' behaviour does not need to be managed vigorously by teachers in lessons because relationships are positive and pupils come to lessons ready to learn. This is a marked improvement from the findings of the previous inspection.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- The school has improved its outcomes over the last two years, but they are not yet securely good.
- Outcomes are not consistent enough across the school. Progress in mathematics is still less strong than it is in reading and substantially lower than it is in writing.
- The progress of pupils from different starting points in a range of subject areas, including English and mathematics is still not in line with the national average.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability, particularly in mathematics but also in reading, is still not in line with the national average. In 2015, expected progress and more than expected progress in mathematics at Key Stage 2 from different starting points for disadvantaged pupils were well below that made by other pupils nationally.

- The progress of children at the end of Reception is in line with, or better than, the national average. However, the progress of those who are leaving Key Stage 2 tends to be below. Achievement of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 is substantially better than at the end of Key Stage 2. Although past issues with staffing and leadership have affected some current pupils, especially in Year 6, the impact of strategies implemented by current leaders is still to be seen on the progress of Key Stage 2 pupils.
- Expectations of pupils' progress and achievement are now higher than they have been in the past. Teachers are encouraged to assess pupils' progress rigorously and tracking information shows that more pupils are reaching or exceeding age-related expectations. The accuracy of assessment information is ensured by collaboration with the other school in the federation, which allows teachers to check each other's assessments in order to ensure a higher level of consistency.

Early years provision

is good

- The early years provision is better than that of the main school. This is because the provision is well led and there is a high level of consistency in the quality of teaching.
- The early years leader ensures that planning is effective and assessment is thorough. Assessment draws well on contributions from parents as well as staff. As a result, teachers design work to help children learn in a structured way, whatever their current understanding.
- Leaders and other staff make sure that they take effective steps to engage parents. Parents are kept informed and their feedback is sought.
- The classrooms are vibrant and exciting places to be. This encourages the children to indulge their curiosity and to be creative. They develop confidence and learn to work with others. The safe outdoor area is a good example of how the learning environment created for children encourages them to learn in an enjoyable way.
- In lessons, routines and protocols are well established to allow pupils to learn well. Transition between rooms and activities is orderly, and children generally settle quickly and focus on the task given by teachers. Teachers routinely use praise, to which children respond well, and, as a result, children try hard and work for the adults.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is a particular strength of the early years provision. Through the very effective use of an audio-visual scheme, teachers create dynamic learning sessions during which children make rapid connections between sounds and combinations of letters through songs, games and writing practice. As a result, pupils at the end of Reception are well prepared to start learning in Year 1.
- Although there are many outstanding features in the early years provision, it is judged 'good' because outcomes are still not sustained at the highest level over time. Outcomes for the various groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability, have improved and are good.

School details

Unique reference number	124166
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10002484

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	153
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Edward Workman
Headteacher	Peter Hollis
Telephone number	01827 475020
Website	www.oakhill.staffs.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@oakhill.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 December 2013

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than average.
- Most pupils come from a White British background.
- The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average. Very few of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above average. This additional government funding is for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is well above average. However, the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school is in a federation with Hanbury's Farm Primary School, which is led by the same executive headteacher as Oakhill. The federation was formed after the previous inspection.
- Since the last inspection new teachers have been appointed in Year 1, Year 3, Year 4 and Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons and saw all teachers. Four lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors heard pupils read and looked at the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders and pupils. Inspectors also met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's own judgements of its strengths and weaknesses, minutes of meetings of the governing body, school records of the quality of teaching, and the information about pupils' progress and attainment. Documents detailing the school's arrangements for safeguarding were reviewed.
- There were insufficient responses to the Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to provide evidence for the inspection. Inspectors spoke informally to parents at the start and end of the school day.
- Inspectors also took account of 12 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Ashley

Ofsted Inspector

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