

Offmore Primary School

Wordsworth Crescent, Kidderminster DY10 3HA

Inspection dates	28–29 January 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	Good
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

- Since the last inspection, Key Stage 2 pupils have not achieved nearly as well as they should have done in reading, writing or mathematics.
- Progress in writing is lagging behind that in other subjects, and remains weak in some year groups.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making less progress than other pupils in the school, and are only beginning to catch up with other pupils nationally.
- Leaders do not provide governors with the information needed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the school’s performance. Governors have not had the opportunity to check on the expenditure of the pupil premium grant.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Some teachers do not check on pupils’ progress, so that some fall behind in class, and those who work quickly are not given new challenges.
- Teachers do not always plan the work of teaching assistants to enable them to have the best impact on pupils’ learning. Sometimes teaching assistants’ questioning does not help pupils to develop their ideas.
- Although pupils study wide-ranging topics, they do not consistently acquire the knowledge and understanding required by the National Curriculum foundation subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders have set high expectations for pupils and for staff, and as a result, the quality of teaching is improving. Pupils recognise that lessons are now more demanding but also more interesting.
- Pupils feel safe in school, and their parents agree. The school takes a good range of measures to protect pupils from risk.
- Pupils’ conduct around the school is orderly and responsible. In lessons, they are keen to learn, collaborate well and show care in presenting their work.
- The early years provision is good. Leaders identify rigorously what children can do, and teachers plan opportunities carefully to help them move on. Strong routines ensure that children behave well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - teaching assistants work more effectively with pupils, especially in their questioning
 - teachers check closely on pupils' progress during lessons, so that they are able to support pupils who are at risk of falling behind, and provide additional tasks for those who work quickly
 - pupils make good progress in developing a coherent knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum foundation subjects.

- Raise standards of attainment by:
 - increasing the progress of disadvantaged pupils so that their attainment is at least in line with that of non-disadvantaged pupils in the school in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - making sure that the school's approach to developing writing is applied effectively in those classrooms where progress remains weaker
 - ensuring that all governors have a thorough understanding of the work of the school, including the expenditure of the pupil premium, and have the opportunity to challenge leaders regularly on all aspects of its progress.

An external review of governance and a review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior leaders have not yet secured consistently good teaching, nor ensured that pupils are making good progress in developing their writing skills across the school. The actions that leaders have taken to tackle weak teaching have meant that, at the time of the inspection, several classes were taught by temporary teachers.
- The headteacher has an accurate view of the quality of teaching in the school, and has attached an unwavering priority to improving the quality of teaching and learning. He has clear plans to achieve this, although these lack the milestones which would allow others, including governors, to check on the school's progress towards its aims.
- Current leaders have paid insufficient attention to the expenditure of the pupil premium grant. They consider that past assessment practice provided an inadequate basis on which to evaluate the impact of the 2014/5 grant. The headteacher has allocated most of the current year's grant to pay for additional staffing and learning resources, and has taken the first steps towards evaluating the effectiveness of this expenditure. However, governors have not been given the opportunity to discuss how the grant is spent, nor the effectiveness of past or present provision.
- Leaders have placed a strong focus on reading, writing and mathematics to address the long-term stagnation in standards at the school. Other subjects are introduced through a series of topics, such as dinosaurs at Key Stage 1, or Greek myths at Key Stage 2, and these succeed in engaging pupils' interest. However, planning does not provide pupils with the opportunity to gain the knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum foundation subjects such as history, geography and science in a coherent way.
- Senior leaders have established a new system of assessment at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics following the removal of National Curriculum levels. They have checked its accuracy using a commercial scheme. Leaders are now able to use the results of tests to check on pupils' progress, and make changes for those pupils at risk of falling behind. The school is working to develop the assessment of pupils' progress in foundation subjects.
- Pupils enjoy extra-curricular sports activities, and a limited number of other opportunities. The school spends its primary sports funding wisely on staff training, direct coaching of pupils, better equipment and access to inter-school competitions. This has resulted in better teaching and greater participation. The school has elected a 'Sports Crew', the members of which are ambassadors for physical activity.
- The headteacher has set clear expectations for staff, and thoroughly checks on their effectiveness. His insistence on strong teaching is beginning to drive up standards across the school. He has revised the arrangements for evaluating teachers' performance, and has set targets which are firmly based on pupils' progress. Teachers have the opportunity to benefit from training, which is tailored closely to their requirements, and to observe best practice in the school.
- A relatively new team of subject and other leaders is well informed and enthusiastic, and has already succeeded in contributing to the improvement of teaching and learning. For example, leaders have developed the use of assessment in the early years provision, and adjusted the teaching of mathematics to address weaknesses in key skills, placing more emphasis on pupils' thorough understanding of mathematical concepts.
- The headteacher has established clear and consistent rules for pupils' behaviour, and at the same time emphasised the importance of pupils' own responsibility for their conduct and their learning. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by encouraging them to understand more fully their role in the school and the local community. They respect social differences, and have an appreciation of different religions, although leaders recognise that they should extend their understanding of life in modern Britain.
- Staff demonstrate a high level of care for those pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, including a number of children in the care of the local authority. They make sure that parents and other agencies are involved in meeting their needs. Staff are trained to identify pupils who may be at risk. Safeguarding is effective. Senior staff visit the alternative provision, and check frequently on these pupils' achievement and well-being when they are on the other school site.
- The local authority has played a key role in working with governors to establish the current senior leadership team in the school. In addition, staff learn from and contribute to other schools through the links that leaders have forged.
- The school closed its website in October 2015, and is currently developing a new site. Although this

means that the school does not currently meet all its statutory responsibilities in this regard, it maintains good communication with parents through paper documents and text messaging.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors' oversight of the school requires improvement, because they have not ensured that they achieve a comprehensive picture of the school. Governors' minutes indicate that they are focused rightly on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching, and that they give the headteacher the support necessary to effect important changes in the school. They provide some challenge to leaders, for example about the impact of staffing changes on pupils' learning. A few governors visit the school frequently, and check on aspects of its work. The governing body was reconstituted in September so that all business is conducted in a single half-termly meeting. However, governors have not discussed the expenditure or effectiveness of the pupil premium grant, and the records of their meetings indicate that some other aspects of the school's performance receive little attention.
- Governors involve an independent adviser in their management of the headteacher's performance so that decisions about his role are well-founded. The current headteacher has not yet presented his recommendations on the pay and performance of other staff to the governing body.
- Governors ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met, although the recent audit is not recorded in the meeting records. They demonstrate financial responsibility, and the school works within its budget.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching remains too inconsistent. Leaders' considerable and well-directed efforts to improve practice have been hampered by difficulties in recruitment. The result is that teaching is comparatively weak in the younger years of Key Stage 2, and that the rate of pupils' progress in writing across the school is only beginning to increase.
- In a number of lessons, teachers do not check thoroughly on the progress that pupils are making. This allows some to work slowly, or to stop work altogether if they do not know what to do. Occasionally, pupils finish their work quickly, but the teacher does not realise the need to provide an additional task to deepen or extend their understanding. In both cases, the result is that pupils' progress slows, and sometimes inattention creeps in.
- Teaching assistants work in most classrooms. Sometimes, however, teachers do not plan carefully enough to ensure that the teaching assistant is using all their time to support pupils' learning. When teaching assistants are working with a group of pupils, the questions they ask often seek to establish facts rather than probe understanding and help pupils to think more deeply. In these circumstances, the teaching assistant has a limited picture of the pupils' progress, and their ability to offer support is therefore reduced.
- Teachers generally plan lessons that take account of the differing prior knowledge and understanding of pupils in the class, making increasingly good use of previous assessments. However, in the foundation subjects such as science, geography and history, subject content is chosen to engage pupils' interest in the topic, rather than with a view to building on existing knowledge and understanding. As a result, progress in these subjects is limited.
- Teachers mark pupils' work and discuss it with them regularly. Usually, pupils respond to teachers' comments in line with the school's expectations, but this is not always the case. Regular homework makes a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is taught well. Teaching builds firmly on what pupils already know, and teachers explain new sounds and letters clearly, using the specific vocabulary of phonics accurately and starting in the early years provision. Teaching assistants are skilfully deployed to reinforce and support the learning of individuals and small groups. As a result, pupils are demonstrating increasing confidence and resilience in their reading, although pupils do not always listen carefully enough to correct their own mistakes.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs generally learn well, especially in reading. Leaders have identified precisely how best their particular needs can be met, and check carefully on their progress.
- The best learning takes place when teachers use their strong subject knowledge to explain clearly, extend pupils' understanding and address any misconceptions. These strengths were particularly evident in the learning observed and in the books of pupils in the older years of Key Stage 2. In a physical education

lesson, pupils made rapid progress in developing their hockey dribbling skills, consolidating their understanding in a short game. The teaching of French is well planned and strong.

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 have responded well to the current headteacher's emphasis on responsibility and independence, taking a pride in the school and in their own learning. Staff encourage pupils to do their best, and recognise their achievements, so that pupils grow in confidence. Pupils are able to explain the importance of respect for others who are different from themselves.
- Pupils feel safe in school, and their parents agree. Some recall instances of bullying, but state that they have absolute confidence in the headteacher to address any problems, and such incidents are now rare. This is supported by the school's records.
- The school teaches pupils how to keep safe in many respects, including about online safety, the dangers of substance abuse and the importance of road safety. The school promotes a healthy lifestyle, and pupils are excited about the opportunity to act as 'Sports Crew' ambassadors.
- Pupils in Year 6 believe that they have been well prepared for secondary school, reflecting the detailed attention that leaders give to the transition of pupils from one key stage to the next.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They conduct themselves appropriately on the corridors and at social times, and play happily together.
- Teachers in the early years provision establish strong routines and high expectations for behaviour. Pupils show respect for adults, and respond promptly to staff requests. They are enthusiastic to learn, and take a pride in their written work, which they present with a good level of care. They collaborate well, and almost always settle to independent work promptly, sustaining a good level of concentration.
- Inspection evidence showed staff working successfully to improve the conduct of a very few pupils who display challenging behaviour. The school has therefore used fixed-term exclusion very rarely, and there have been no permanent exclusions over recent years. The very few pupils on alternative provision behave well.
- The school has recently adopted a more rigorous approach to monitoring attendance, and has refused to authorise all but the most exceptional absence. As a result, attendance has improved to the point where it is in line with the national average and is rising further.
- Occasionally in lessons, particularly when the teacher does not check sufficiently carefully on progress to sustain the pace of learning, pupils become a little inattentive for short periods. It is rare for this to disrupt the learning of others.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Over recent years, pupils' attainment in the early years provision and in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been average, but progress has slowed throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, with the result that pupils have left Year 6 with attainment which was below average. In 2015, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was below average, and Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment in writing was weak. Too few pupils have left the school having attained the highest levels.
- In 2015, the proportion of Key Stage 2 pupils who left the school having made expected progress in mathematics and reading was broadly average, but the proportion who had made expected progress in writing was below average. The proportions who had made more than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics were all below average.
- However, information supplied by the school and supported by inspection evidence indicates that the rate of pupils' progress is now increasing, and increasing rapidly in reading. Pupils read a variety of texts enthusiastically in school and at home, and use the strategies that they have learnt to tackle unfamiliar words with increasing confidence. In mathematics, pupils are increasingly skilled in applying their existing understanding of mathematics to new problems, and where appropriate, make good use of practical

equipment.

- Information supplied by the school indicates that pupils' progress in writing has, until very recently, been weak, but a detailed scrutiny of pupils' books indicated to inspectors that standards of writing are also beginning to improve. Some pupils are responding very well to the school's approach that they should develop 'the heart of a writer'. They are writing good extended pieces in a variety of styles, and for a number of different audiences, using a wider range of sentence structures.
- Nevertheless, recent improvements in writing are not consistent across the school, and inspectors observed some pupils, especially younger pupils in Key Stage 2, writing at a slow pace in lessons. Some handwriting remains cumbersome and in a printed style.
- In 2015, disadvantaged pupils left the school on average nearly three terms behind other pupils nationally in mathematics, and two and a half terms behind in reading. In writing, they were over two years behind. Information supplied by the school indicates that disadvantaged pupils in the school are beginning to make more rapid progress, but that they are continuing to fall behind their peers.
- From their different starting points, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making increasingly good progress, especially in reading. The very few pupils on alternative provision make good progress, because the setting is appropriate for their needs.
- Pupils' progress in some foundation subjects, such as geography, history and science, is limited because teachers give insufficient attention to the skills, knowledge and understanding which underpin each of these subjects.

Early years provision

is good

- The children currently in the school arrived with rather stronger skills in personal, social and emotional development and literacy, but are a little further behind in their understanding of the world. In recent years, an increasing proportion of children have attained a good level of development, and inspection evidence indicates that a higher than average proportion are on track to do so in 2016. Children are now making good progress.
- Current leaders are having a strong impact on standards in the early years provision. They have established a new baseline from which to measure progress, and put in place a clear pattern of assessment based on children's learning journeys. These contain paper and electronic evidence of achievements in the seven areas of learning. Leaders have trained staff to ensure that judgements are accurate and consistent. Leaders have also raised expectations of children's progress, although they acknowledge the need to give further consideration to those pupils capable of exceeding the early learning goals.
- Leaders have enhanced the learning environment so that it is safe, attractive, and stimulating and pupils have access to a wide range of resources. The outdoor area offers a range of activities, but does not entirely match the quality of the indoor classrooms.
- Teaching in the early years provision is good. Teachers work closely with teaching assistants, and plan activities which engage and sustain the interest of the children. Many are well designed to develop children's interest in literacy and numeracy. For example, an exercise matching picture cards to words with a particular vowel digraph was particularly effective because there were more pictures than words, requiring children to read carefully. Teachers use the correct terms to identify new knowledge, and encourage children to do the same.
- Children behave well in the early years provision, because they find the activities engaging and because routines are well established from the beginning. They respond promptly when the teacher calls them to attention or asks them to sit on the carpet. Good behaviour is effectively recognised and rewarded, and adults act quickly to support children who are upset or inattentive. Children collaborate well, and learn to support each other.
- Leaders work effectively with parents to settle their children at school, offering workshops and communicating daily through diaries and meetings at the school gate. The school has ensured that children are well prepared for Key Stage 1, both in their academic development and in terms of the independence and confidence required to continue with the learning.

School details

Unique reference number	135052
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10002457
This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	334
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Graeme Anderson
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Mr Matthew Ascroft
Telephone number	01562 753934
Website	None at the time of inspection
Email address	office@offmore.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 November 2013

Information about this school

- Offmore Primary School is slightly larger than the average primary school. Pupils attend full-time in the Reception class, and part-time in the Nursery class.
- The Offmore Stars before- and after-school club operates on the school site. It is not managed by the governing body and is inspected separately.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium, which is the additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care, is slightly below average.
- In the early years provision, a very small number of pupils currently receive alternative provision for two afternoons a week at Wyre Forest Special School.
- In 2014, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6.
- There has been a considerable turnover of staff since the last inspection. The headteacher was appointed to his post in May 2015. The deputy headteacher joined the school in June 2014, and the early years leader took up her post in January 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 17 lessons, and conducted two further learning walks. One lesson and one learning walk were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors visited registration time, and observed pupils' conduct at social times.
- The inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, other leaders, class teachers and the Chair of Governors. They spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met formally with three groups of pupils, including two chosen at random, and spoke with many more informally.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons. They scrutinised several exercise books in more depth. They also looked at information on the progress of current pupils and groups of pupils.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of documents, both electronically and on paper. These included: development plans and evaluations of the school's progress; minutes of governing body meetings; policies; information provided for parents; and records showing how the school supports vulnerable pupils.
- The inspection team took account of the 41 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, and inspectors spoke to parents delivering their children to school. The inspection team also considered the 12 responses to the questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Appleby	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Somers	Ofsted Inspector

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