

Oliver Tomkins CofE Junior School

Beaumaris Road, Toothill, Swindon SN5 8LW

Inspection dates	7–8 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The steely determination of the headteacher and her commitment to the local community are the driving force for school improvement.
- All pupils make good progress from low starting points. Recent staff training on developing writing skills has resulted in the pupils using a wider variety of styles in a range of different contexts.
- As a result of well-targeted support, both in the classroom and outside of school hours, those pupils who are disadvantaged make accelerated progress. The most able pupils are challenged well by activities which extend their thinking.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and support pupils well in their work. Stimulating classroom displays reinforce the knowledge and skills they are learning.
- Pupils receive a rich learning diet which includes art, French and music sessions.
- Pupils are eager to learn and work well together. Their behaviour is good and they are polite and courteous to each other and adults.
- The school takes great care of its pupils and keeps them safe. The family support worker plays a key role in this. She works very closely with families and outside agencies to ensure that the pupils' social, emotional and behavioural needs are met.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas which need to improve. They are not afraid to challenge senior leaders and carefully check that extra government funds are used well to support pupils' learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Middle leaders are yet to fully develop how they can use the findings from work sampling and lesson observations to inform future school development.
- Not all teachers use the school's marking policy to inform pupils about the next steps they need to take in their learning.
- Not all pupils write in a legible style and present their work neatly.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop further the role of middle leaders by ensuring that they use the findings of their work sampling and lessons observations to identify strengths and areas that need to be developed further.
- Ensure that all teachers make consistent use of the school's marking policy so that pupils are clear about the next steps in their learning.
- Improve pupils' handwriting and presentation skills across all areas of the curriculum to ensure that their work is legible and neatly presented.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The key to the effective recovery of the school is the steely determination of the headteacher. Her heartfelt commitment to the local community has been the major drive for the improvements made to all aspects of school life.
- The headteacher is very well supported by her deputy headteacher and members of the recently extended leadership team, who all share her determined vision for continuing improvement.
- The relentless focus on improving teaching and learning is securely based on the school development plan and is measured by the impact that teachers' performance has on pupil outcomes. Complacency and mediocrity are not options for teaching staff at this school.
- Very effective use is made of the extensive opportunities that teaching staff are given for professional development. Individual staff who undertake study in their own personal time share their learning and work alongside their colleagues to help classroom practice. Extensive training for all teaching staff has resulted in improvements in the teaching and learning of writing and also in aspects of mathematics.
- School leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and accurately pinpoint the areas that need developing. The headteacher's and deputy headteacher's rigorous approach to checking teaching and learning ensures that pupils make good progress. Individual groups of pupils, such as those who are disadvantaged, those who speak English as an additional language, and those who have special educational needs or disability, are vigilantly scrutinised to ensure that they are receiving high-quality and purposeful support.
- Increasing staff expectation for the most able pupils is firmly embedded into the school development plan. A recent audit undertaken with other local schools has resulted in a more focused approach to developing the most able pupils' ability to investigate and solve detailed problems on their own.
- Members of the recently extended leadership team are in the early stages of sampling pupils' work and dropping into lessons to check the quality of teaching and learning. However, they are at the early stages of developing an understanding of how their findings need to be evaluated to further school improvement.
- A strong feature of the well-balanced curriculum is the way in which open-ended questions are used to start topics. For example, Year 3 have been learning about 'Where did the Romans roam?' This has enabled them not only to learn about Roman history, but has also involved them in the development of their geographical and scientific skills. The effective use of an art specialist has enabled pupils to develop their creative skills well. Pupils proudly demonstrate their expanding knowledge of French vocabulary, which they learn weekly. A range of opportunities to learn musical instruments, and develop their singing skills, gives them the confidence to perform with other local schools.
- Leaders have a strong regard for respect and tolerance. There is a firm stance on equality of opportunity for all and this is reflected in the school's approach to promoting fundamental British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Quiet prayer and reading areas in each classroom promote the pupils' reflective thinking. They maturely compare and contrast different religious beliefs.
- The pupil democracy team uses the knowledge it has gained from a trip to the Houses of Parliament, and discussions with the local Member of Parliament, to influence daily life in school. The head girl and boy, alongside their deputies and school councillors, work well to ensure that the views of the pupils are taken into consideration. The forthcoming tea party to celebrate the Queen's official birthday is an event the pupils are looking forward to.
- School improvement has been very well supported by both the local authority officer and external specialists, who have worked closely with teaching staff to improve pupil progress in writing and mathematics.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors demonstrate a strong understanding of the strengths of the school and are clear about the barriers to learning which the school faces, which they work extremely hard to overcome.
 - Governors hold school leaders to account for the quality of teaching, and regular visits to classes enable them to see for themselves how well pupils engage in their learning. Governors confirm that teaching staff are promoting strong outcomes by checking pupil progress and matching this to the evaluations of teacher performance made by the senior leaders.

- Governors also carefully ensure that extra government funds, such as pupil premium and sports funding, are used appropriately to improve pupils' learning.
- Safeguarding is effective because all staff and governors have been trained and are clear about protecting the welfare of all the pupils. Procedures for identifying individuals who may be at risk are clear and staff are extremely vigilant. Staff have also been trained to protect the pupils from radicalisation and extremism through the government's 'Prevent' programme, and they are quick to identify any potential risks or concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Classrooms are exciting places to learn where pupils are supported in their work with engagement which reflects the knowledge and skills they are learning. Expectations of behaviour and conduct are high, with teachers generally moving pupils' learning along at a good pace.
- Good subject knowledge enables teachers to plan interesting approaches to lessons. Pupils feel confident in lessons because their knowledge and skills are developed in small steps. This enables the pupils to fully understand what they are learning before they move to the next stage.
- Teachers ask the pupils challenging questions, which makes them think beyond simple answers. Good use is made of opportunities to recap on the previous day's learning to consolidate new skills.
- Pupils learn well because their teachers encourage them not to give up quickly if they are faced with a problem. Instead, they persevere with trying to find an answer or discuss it with another classmate to find a solution. This deepens their learning and encourages them to make connections with other skills they may have learned.
- Tasks are skilfully set to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. The most able pupils are challenged with extension activities which stretch their knowledge and skills. Pupils with special educational needs or disability are supported well with resources which help them grasp practically the concepts that they are developing.
- Additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils is used well to employ teaching assistants. They provide good-quality support for those individuals who are in receipt of these extra funds. They work alongside pupils in small groups, reinforcing concepts and developing their confidence as learners.
- Most teachers adhere to the school's marking policy and the feedback given to pupils helps them move on in their learning. Nevertheless, when this policy is not used, untidy work is accepted and not accurately corrected to inform the pupils about their next steps in learning.
- The homework policy is clearly set out and homework is set regularly to support the pupils' reading, spelling and mathematics skills. The termly holiday project successfully involves the wider school community by engaging parents in a particular challenge or theme and encourages them to have aspirations for their children.
- Pupils like their teachers and 'know that they will always help us'.
- Parents are kept well informed about the progress their children are making and most parents are happy with the quality of teaching. One parent summed up the views of numerous others by explaining that 'staff are very generous with their time...we drop our children off into classrooms and can see what they will be doing that day. This helps us support the school in the children's learning.'

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The policies and procedures for keeping pupils safe in school are strictly adhered to.
- The family welfare officer plays a key role in promoting all aspects of pupils' welfare. She works very closely with families and a wider range of external agencies to meet the social, emotional and behavioural needs of the pupils.
- Pupils are very respectful of each other's cultural and religious beliefs.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their regular attendance rates. The introduction of a breakfast club, funded by additional government grants, has seen a significant improvement in the attendance rates of those pupils who are disadvantaged. This also ensures that pupils start the school

day well fed and ready for their learning.

- The most able pupils show a maturity in their discussions with others. Their confidence in learning supports their peers well.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know that there is always someone they can turn to if they have a worry or concern.
- Pupils know how to keep safe when using mobile phones. They have a secure understanding of the dangers of cyber bullying when using electronic devices.
- Pupils enjoy their sporting activities which they know keep them fit and healthy.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and courteous and respond quickly to instructions. They move in and around the school sensibly and play together well at breaktimes.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Pupils concentrate well in lessons and are eager to learn. However, they do not consistently take enough care of the presentation or accuracy of their work.
- Pupils are very clear that any types of anti-social behaviour, including bullying, are not tolerated. They know that, in the event of any misbehaviour, all parties involved are required to record their actions and suggest suitable consequences for the offender.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Many pupils have low starting points or have joined the school part-way through key stage 2. Nevertheless, since the last inspection, outcomes have improved steadily in all year groups and pupils are making consistently good progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Teachers use the information recorded about pupils' ongoing progress to identify any gaps in their learning. Their regular meetings with pupils to discuss the progress they are making has had a very strong impact on improving outcomes.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils has improved significantly and the gap between this group and all pupils nationally is closing rapidly. This is because the extra funding available for these pupils has been used prudently to fund not only effective individual and group support but also additional sessions before and after school, and during the holidays. As a result, those pupils currently in receipt of extra funding are progressing at a faster rate than those who are not eligible for the funding.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress because they are given tasks which stretch, challenge and deepen their thinking.
- The school's recent focus on improving writing skills has made a discernible difference to pupil outcomes. They confidently complete written work using a range of different styles such as diary, letter and story writing. Pupils use these different styles effectively to record the knowledge they have gained in history, geography and religious education. The school is fully aware that not all pupils write in a neat and legible style and the headteacher has recently started to take workshops for selected pupils.
- Outcomes in mathematics have also improved as a result of support from an external consultant who has worked with the teachers to help pupils find solutions to problems and use their skills to develop their learning further.
- Pupils read widely and confidently talk about their favourite authors. They use their skills in phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) well to work out words they do not know, and read on to make sense of words they are unsure of.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability and those who speak English as an additional language also make good progress because they are supported well in their learning. There are no significant differences between the progress of boys and girls.

School details

Unique reference number	126440
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10012363

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	184
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Howarth
Headteacher	Rhian Cockwell
Telephone number	01793 872 100
Website	www.olivertomkinsschools.co.uk
Email address	admin@olivertomkins-jun.swindon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	June 2014

Information about this school

- This is a slightly smaller than average school but numbers are rising. There are currently two classes in each year group.
- The school is part of a hard federation with the infant school which is located next to the junior school on the same site. Some spaces and resources are shared, including the outdoor area. The executive headteacher oversees both schools and there is a deputy headteacher in each of the schools. There is a single governing body for both schools.
- Two thirds of the pupils are White British. Other pupils come from other ethnic backgrounds which include African, Indian and Eastern European. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average but rising rapidly.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average. The proportion of pupils who have education, health and care plans is above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium is above average. This is funding provided by the government to promote the achievement of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after.
- There is a breakfast club run by the school and open both to infants and juniors.
- In 2015 the school met the current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils set by the government.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed class, group and individual learning sessions with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other senior leaders, middle leaders and governors.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised during the inspection. This included the improvement plan, the school's evaluation of its performance, and information relating to the pupils' current progress.
- Inspectors talked to pupils and looked at their books. They observed them during breaktimes.
- The 11 responses to the online survey, Parent View, were taken into account. Inspectors also spoke to parents informally at the start of the first day of the inspection and considered the school's own internal parent questionnaire.

Inspection team

Lorna Brackstone, lead inspector

Claire Fortey

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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