

Oak Tree Primary School

Queens Road, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 5HH

Inspection dates

12–13 October 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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Senior leaders, including governors, have not given sufficient priority to pupils' attainment and progress during the establishment of the new school.
- Leaders do not carry out sufficient checks to ensure that the school's policies to improve teaching are used well. Subject leaders do not influence their colleagues' teaching sufficiently.
- Despite children making a good start in Nursery, learning falters in Reception, so children are not as well prepared for school life as they should be.
- Too few pupils met the expected standard in phonics last year.
- The school takes good care of its most vulnerable pupils. Nonetheless, teachers are not yet precise enough in identifying pupils' barriers to learning, to ensure that resources are well matched to need.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was below the national average.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' achievement is under-developed in some subjects.
- Too often, learning is too slow and teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low.
- Behaviour has improved considerably since the school opened. Pupils listen to their teachers, wear their uniform with pride and speak politely to visitors. However, not enough pupils take care with the presentation of their work or apply themselves diligently to the tasks set by their teachers.

The school has the following strengths

- School leaders have successfully united the staff, parents, governors and pupils from the predecessor schools. The headteacher has gained the confidence and trust of the school's community.
- School leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance and are taking action to improve it.
- Pupils are safe and well cared for. Pupils show respect for each other's different faiths, ethnic backgrounds and families.
- Strong leadership in mathematics is improving the quality of teaching and learning in this subject across the school. Pupils enjoy the mathematical challenges their teachers set for them.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that all groups of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, make better progress than at present by:
 - providing appropriate, high-quality training for all staff, including in the early years, to improve their practice in the teaching of reading and writing
 - making lessons more challenging so that pupils are engaged and appropriately stretched
 - insisting that all adults raise their expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving
 - using the good practice in Nursery as a model for other classes in the early years.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - setting out clearly the impact leaders expect the actions in the school's strategic plan to have on outcomes for pupils
 - refining the senior and middle leadership structure so that lines of accountability are clearer
 - increasing the capacity of the deputy headteachers and other senior leaders to undertake regular and rigorous classroom monitoring to secure the consistent application of agreed policies and practice
 - regularly evaluating the impact of support programmes to ensure that they are making a positive difference to the pupils that receive them
 - further developing the role of middle leaders so that they have greater influence on improving teaching, and the responsibility for improvement is shared evenly across the school
 - extending the assessment and tracking system to include all subjects in the curriculum
 - sharpening governors' focus on improving performance across the school, by challenging and holding school leaders to account to raise standards for all groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged
 - ensuring that governors fulfil their statutory duties, including checking that the school's website meets requirements.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders, including governors, have not ensured that they have given sufficient focus to the attainment and progress of pupils across the school since the federation of the two predecessor schools. As a result, too many pupils fell behind in their learning last year.
- Leaders have not been successful in making sure that teaching is equally good across subjects, year groups and between classes. They recognise that they have not been checking, as frequently as needed, on what is happening in lessons and dealing with any issues as robustly as they should.
- The analysis of the barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils is superficial, so that support packages do not address pupils' specific gaps in knowledge, skills and understanding. Moreover, no one is making sure that these approaches are making a positive difference or that teachers are also incorporating these into their planning. As a result, there is still a long way to go in ensuring that these pupils reach the same standards as other pupils nationally.
- Senior leaders are in no doubt about the urgency with which they need to address underperformance. They understand the reasons why pupils did not perform as well as they should have done last year. However, although leaders have correctly identified the most pressing areas for improvement, the school's action plan does not set out clearly the results that leaders expect to achieve.
- Leaders have recently changed the school's system for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. Although it is early days, leaders are confident that this system will give them the information they need for English and mathematics. Leaders understand the urgency with which they must also include other subjects, once the system is fully in place.
- Leaders identified that the performance targets set for teachers last year lacked precision. Consequently, the process did not sufficiently raise expectations and ensure that all those teachers had the skills to teach well. The headteacher's revisions have strengthened the process for this year.
- The deputy headteachers and some of the middle leaders are getting to grips with the job in hand. However, there needs to be greater clarity around their roles and responsibilities, so that they are in no doubt about what is expected of them. Moreover, the skills and experience of these teachers are not yet being used to best effect, in lifting the quality of teaching across the school.
- Leadership of special educational needs is good. However, the teacher in charge has managed a number of complex cases, which have taken up much of her time. This has limited her opportunities to oversee the day-to-day support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and to review the effectiveness of interventions.
- The enormity of the task to bring together the two governing bodies, two groups of staff and two leadership teams, as well as the pupils and parents, is considerable. Leaders have worked hard to ensure that everyone feels a valued member of Oak Tree. The headteacher has skilfully brought everyone together as a united team.

- The senior leadership team now recognises the adjustments it needs to make to successfully run a large primary school. Staff appreciate that communication has improved across the school since the beginning of last year and value the willingness of senior leaders to take account of their views.
- The two deputy headteachers collaborated, prior to the federation of the two schools, to develop a curriculum for the new school. They have devised a broad and balanced curriculum, which is strengthened through the contribution of a wealth of specialist teachers such as sports coaches. Pupils enjoy the regular visits out of school as well as visitors and theme days. Pupils talked enthusiastically to inspectors about the range of clubs on offer, including those for street dance and coding.
- Leaders have been determined to take good care of pupils during the transition to the new school, particularly the school's most vulnerable pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders planned a wide variety of events and activities prior to federation, so that pupils and staff could get to know each other. They also listened carefully to parents' concerns. Pupils and staff talked to inspectors about how successfully this transition was managed and how happy they are in the new school. Parents valued the regular opportunities to talk to the headteacher during this period of change, particularly through the parent link group meetings.
- Leaders made good use of the primary physical education and sport premium funding last year to provide pupils with as many opportunities as possible for physical activity, despite the constraints of the site during the building work. The use of external coaches is making a positive difference to teachers' skills and confidence in teaching a range of sports. Pupils make good use of the playground equipment available at lunchtime to keep active.

Governance of the school

- Governors acknowledge that the huge workload created by the federation process reduced their capacity to give the time needed to providing challenge and support for leaders to secure high academic standards.
- Governors have an understanding of the reasons for the poor outcomes at the end of last year. However, they have not held school leaders to account sufficiently robustly for the school's poor performance.
- Governors have not challenged school leaders rigorously enough to make sure that pupil premium and special educational needs funding is being well spent. As a result, the difference in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils is not diminishing quickly enough.
- Governors have steered the school through a difficult period. However, they have paid insufficient attention to their other statutory duties, such as keeping the school's website up to date.
- Governors have stayed true to their commitment to make sure that senior leaders, staff, parents and pupils from both schools felt equal partners in the new school. This has presented them with some considerable challenges to overcome in the past couple of years. The governors, like the headteacher, are refreshingly frank about the difficulties they have encountered while managing these changes.

- Governors, like the senior leadership team, see this academic year as the next stage of the school's journey. Governors have recognised the need to reconstitute in order to create a governing body more fit for purpose. Governors have completed an audit of skills and have already recruited some new members to plug gaps in knowledge and experience.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school has recently updated its policy in line with changes to statutory guidance. Senior leaders have ensured that all staff are well trained to identify and respond to any concerns. Parents value the support the school provides for its most vulnerable pupils and their families. The partnerships the school has developed with other agencies make a positive difference in keeping pupils safe. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including online. Pupils, staff and parents agree that pupils are safe and well cared for.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching that pupils experience day to day is inconsistent across classes, year groups and subjects.
- Too often the pace of learning is slow, the expectations of what pupils are capable of are too low and the school's agreed policies and practices are not followed. As a result, pupils across the school are not making the progress of which they are capable.
- Despite leaders' recent changes to the school's approach to teaching writing, teachers are not making sure that pupils learn spellings effectively, improve handwriting and practise different forms of writing.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is not always as secure as it needs to be. This is apparent in the teaching of reading. Not all teachers have a sufficient grasp of the requirements of the national curriculum or understand well enough how to improve pupils' proficiency.
- When the pace of learning is slower, teachers fail to set clear expectations, or high standards are not demanded. As a result, pupils, including the most able, do not complete enough work, pay sufficient attention to their learning or take care to avoid careless mistakes.
- In contrast, the way in which mathematics is being taught is more successful. The strong subject leadership, more consistent approach and greater staff confidence are making a positive difference in most classes. The majority of teachers are more confident to adapt their teaching as lessons progress. Teachers pick up and address pupils' misconceptions, develop useful resources to support pupils' learning and plan well-pitched lessons, with appropriate levels of challenge.
- When teachers give pupils opportunities to assess their own levels of confidence and competence, pupils rise to the challenge. Pupils enjoy choosing challenging tasks that deepen their learning and they behave well.
- Teachers use teaching assistants well, making good use of this additional staffing in the classroom. For example, in Year 1, teachers and teaching assistants work well together to provide smaller group, targeted teaching to help address the gaps in pupils'

phonics knowledge.

- Almost all parents agree that the school sets appropriate homework. While some parents of younger pupils commented on the large amount of homework set, they feel that it contributes well to their children's overall learning.
- Although there are some examples of high-quality teaching and learning in history, geography and religious education, teachers do not assess pupils systematically in subjects other than English and mathematics. As a result, no one can be certain how well pupils are progressing in these subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils were keen to tell inspectors about how well pupils from the two predecessor schools get on together. Pupils appreciated the well-considered range of activities planned by teachers to help them get to know each other. These activities did much to dispel pupils' anxieties about the changes.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors were adamant that everyone is safe and valued in their school, regardless of their ethnic background, sexuality or faith. Pupils were confident that staff would swiftly and effectively deal with any incidents of bullying.
- Year 5 pupils take pride in their roles as play leaders for younger pupils, organising outdoor games at lunchtime.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn about risks both online and in the community. Pupils know what to do in an emergency. During the inspection, there was an unplanned evacuation of the building. Pupils were familiar with the routines, ensuring that the evacuation was calm and orderly.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy religious education lessons and are knowledgeable about the major world faiths. They enjoy their regular singing assemblies and many pupils learn to play a musical instrument. Pupils look forward to the regular visitors to school, such as a professional cyclist who has disabilities. Pupils enthusiastically participated in Fairtrade Fortnight and were able to explain how Fairtrade benefits farmers in developing countries.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils across school show a lack of pride in their work, with sloppy presentation and imprecise layout of mathematical calculations. All too often, errors are scribbled out, pupils' writing does not follow the ruled lines and pupils do not adhere to the school's agreed handwriting style.
- In some classes, pupils, including the most able, fail to consistently apply themselves diligently to their work. This is usually when the pace of learning is too slow, there is insufficient challenge or teachers' expectations are too low. In other classes, notably

mathematics, pupils are eager to learn, listen attentively to their teachers and apply themselves well to the tasks set.

- Staff and pupils confirmed that behaviour has improved considerably since the school opened. Teachers consistently apply the school's agreed approach to behaviour management. Pupils told inspectors that pupils get on well most of the time. Pupils' occasional squabbles are quickly sorted out. In class, in the dining room and as they are supervised moving around school, pupils behave well. However, on occasion, pupils lack consideration for others as they move in and out of the building or are running about in the playground.
- Most pupils attend school regularly. The school knows its families well and provides support to the small number of families who struggle to get their child to school on time every day.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Across the school in reading, writing and mathematics, the rate of pupils' progress since the school opened has been variable. Too few pupils make consistently good progress from their different starting points. In particular, pupils in key stage 2 do not achieve well. Not enough pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 in 2016.
- In 2016, despite pupils entering Year 1 with a good foundation for learning from their predecessor schools, less than two thirds met the expected standard in the phonics screening check.
- This year, pupils joining the school in Year 1 had already fallen behind in reading during Reception. Teachers in Year 1 have a good understanding of the gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge and are systematically addressing these. However, senior leaders are not yet ensuring that pupils' underperformance is being tackled with sufficient urgency, if they are to catch up quickly.
- Teachers are not setting high enough expectations of pupils in their writing. Teachers do not insist that pupils use the school's handwriting style in their work or make sure that pupils use accurate spelling and punctuation. Teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to practise their writing and make sure that work is well presented. As a result, not enough pupils across the school are writing at or above the expected standard for their age.
- Too many excuses have been made for the underperformance of disadvantaged pupils. Although leaders now track the attainment and progress of this group, the support provided to help these pupils overcome barriers to learning is not always planned well. No one has analysed with sufficient precision the gaps in these pupils' learning so that the additional funding for these pupils is accurately targeted. As a result, not all of the disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as they should.
- Across the school, current pupils are making steady progress in mathematics. In 2016, pupils attained in line with other pupils nationally at the end of key stages 1 and 2. In most classes, pupils have got off to a good start in mathematics this year, although more needs to be done to increase the proportion of older pupils who are working at greater depth.

- Pupils in key stage 1 achieved well in 2016.
- Pupils starting Year 1 this year lost ground during Reception and as a result they are not as well prepared for school as they should be.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They benefit from the many opportunities to read, both in school and at home. However, some teachers do not ensure that pupils develop the skills and knowledge they need in order to improve their understanding of increasingly complex texts.
- The progress of least-able pupils in reading is variable. These pupils do not develop an early passion for books.
- The most able pupils achieve well across the school. These pupils are accomplished readers who use expression well to hold the listener's attention. At the end of both key stages, in most subjects the proportion of pupils who exceed the expected standard is above the national average. Senior leaders have not tracked the progress of the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, sufficiently from their starting points to make sure that they all achieve their full potential in every subject, in all year groups.
- The headteacher and teacher in charge of special educational needs keep a close eye on pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils do not make consistently good progress from their starting points. They receive a high level of support but leaders do not have an accurate view of the effectiveness of the different support programmes that they put in place.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children enter both Nursery and Reception classes with skills broadly typical for three- and four-year-olds. Children get off to a good start in Nursery. However, their progress falters when they join the Reception classes. By the end of Reception Year, too many children do not achieve the good level of development of which they are capable.
- Teaching is not always purposeful and the learning environments do not routinely capture children's interests and imagination. In the Reception classes, children are not regularly engaged in a range of purposeful activities, which inspire and enthuse them in learning across the areas of learning. Consequently, children do not sustain their concentration on tasks for a sufficient length of time, and nor do they learn to persevere.
- Leaders have identified the need for improvement in the quality of provision in the early years. There is too large a difference between the classes. Too little has been done to make use of the skills and expertise of the effective teachers within the department to help their colleagues. The separate leadership of the Nursery and Reception classes exacerbates these issues.
- In response to disappointing outcomes in 2016, the headteacher has appointed an external consultant to work with the early years team to improve the quality of the provision. The consultant has completed an in-depth review and is now supporting staff to address the most pressing issues. However, it is too early to assess the impact of this support.

- In Reception, there are too few opportunities for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills either indoors or outdoors. The limited displays of letters, sounds and numbers are often too high or too crowded for children to use well. Teachers lack subject knowledge and as a result they make errors when showing children how to write.
- By contrast, the Nursery teacher has given careful consideration to both the indoor and outdoor learning environments. For example, during the inspection, the judicious choice of activities and resources in all the areas helped the children learn about shapes. Children are enthusiastic and inquisitive learners. All groups of children make good gains in their learning and are well prepared for Reception.
- Good relationships between staff and children help children settle into school quickly. Children get on well with each other, taking turns and sharing. During an unplanned evacuation of the building, children were quick to respond to teachers' instructions, behaving safely and sensibly. Staff are vigilant, ensuring that children are kept safe and welfare requirements are met.
- Parents talked positively about the online journal used by Nursery staff to record children's learning. Parents like being able to find out how their children are getting on as well as making their own contributions. These journals provide a comprehensive view of children's learning. However, in the Reception classes, although parents receive information about their children's learning, the quality of record-keeping and assessment is poor.

School details

Unique reference number	106073
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10002920

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	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	544
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lisa Ward
Headteacher	Christine Slater
Telephone number	0161 4851453
Website	www.oaktree.stockport.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@oaktree.stockport.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school opened in September 2015. The new building in which the school is accommodated was completed in spring 2016. The new school was formed through the federation of two neighbouring primary schools, Orrishmere Primary School and Queen's Road Primary School. The headteacher had previously been the headteacher at Orrishmere Primary School. The associate headteacher was previously the headteacher at Queen's Road Primary School. The deputy headteachers also joined Oak Tree from the predecessor schools.
- Many of the staff joined from the predecessor schools. There are currently four newly qualified and four recently qualified teachers working at the school.
- The governing body was formed through the federation of the two predecessor governing bodies.

- The associate headteacher was not present during the inspection.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is well below average.
- The school meets the national floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about pupil premium funding, primary physical education and sport premium funding, special educational needs and/or disabilities and the curriculum on its website.
- A breakfast and after-school club is run by the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school, including a joint observation and learning walk with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, other members of staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, school improvement planning, assessment information and reports on the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils informally during the school day and observed them during playtime and lunch. They also met formally with two groups of pupils to talk about their learning, behaviour and safety. There were no responses received to the inspection questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors heard a number of pupils read.
- Inspectors took note of displays around the school.
- Inspectors checked a range of pupils' books.
- Inspectors spoke with a number of parents during the inspection and considered the 136 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- Inspectors spoke with a group of staff and also considered the 24 responses they received to the inspection questionnaire for school staff.

Inspection team

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