

Oxclose Primary Academy

Brancepeth Road, Oxclose Village, Washington, Tyne and Wear NE38 0LA

Inspection dates

1–2 November 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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the school converted to an academy, senior leaders have taken rapid action to establish a good quality of education for pupils. Leaders' aspirations for their pupils are consistently high. Middle leaders are not yet fully effective.
- Governors from the Discover Learning Trust Challenge Board robustly hold leaders to account.
- Pupils' attainment has risen considerably and continues to rise for current pupils in the school. The most able are not always challenged enough, especially in key stage 1.
- Standards in writing and mathematics are typically in line with those achieved nationally. There are too few opportunities for pupils to produce extended pieces of writing in key stage 1.
- Pupils' progress from their starting points has improved and is mostly good, including the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Most teachers, particularly in key stage 2, have high expectations of their pupils. They use assessment information to plan work that builds on what pupils already know and understand.
- The provision for pupils with physical disabilities and medical needs is very effective. Consequently, their learning needs are met and they make strong progress.
- In the early years, standards continue to rise steeply and provision is good. Children settle into routines quickly and grasp every opportunity to learn.
- Teaching assistants offer effective support but a few lack a little subject knowledge.
- The curriculum on offer is good, although the planning and assessment are insufficiently developed.
- Safeguarding is effective. A clear culture of safeguarding practice prevails across the school. Pupils feel safe and they say they enjoy school.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Their attitudes to learning are positive. Pupils enjoy the challenges set for them.
- Parents are very positive about the school and the education provided for their children. They recognise the substantial improvements made since the school converted to an academy.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' outcomes by:
 - ensuring that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, especially in key stage 1, make accelerated progress in all classes and a higher proportion exceed the standard for their age
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length so that their writing improves
 - challenging more consistently pupils' incorrect spelling and grammar to raise standards in English
 - making sure that pupils in key stage 1 do not become distracted in lessons but remain on task and engaged so that they complete more work.
- Develop leadership and management further by:
 - ensuring that middle leaders further develop their monitoring of teachers' work and pupils' outcomes
 - further developing the skills and subject knowledge of teaching assistants
 - improving the planning and assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics so that teachers build progressively on what pupils already know, can do and understand.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since arriving at the school the headteacher, with support from her deputy and the guiding hand of the executive headteacher of the Discover Learning Trust, has galvanised the school community. She provides a clear vision for the future. Together, these three key leaders are held in very high esteem by parents and staff and have not wasted time in bringing about the necessary changes required to make this a good school.
- Leaders' sharp focus on raising achievement has resulted in significant improvement in pupils' standards of work since the school converted to an academy.
- Checks on teaching help teachers to identify how well pupils are learning. Progress meetings with teachers identify pupils who have previously fallen behind and action is taken to enable them to catch up quickly. As a result, a much larger proportion of pupils are currently on track to achieve age-related expectations than in previous years.
- Staff value the strong support and challenge they receive. They are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the leadership team. A wide-ranging programme of training is in place and every teacher engages in individual coaching and guidance. Teachers are held to account firmly for their performance. Consequently, weak teaching has been eradicated and teaching is now predominantly good.
- Middle leaders have played their part in raising the achievement of the majority of pupils in school but have had less impact on improving outcomes of some most-able pupils. They have not been quick enough in identifying that the most able pupils are not being challenged enough. A greater focus on the progress of the most able pupils over the past term, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, is bringing about better progress for this group in a number of classes.
- Leadership and management of the provision for pupils with physical disabilities and medical needs are very effective. Pupils' progress is tracked meticulously and leaders ensure that planning consistently builds on what individual pupils can do. As a result, leaders have an accurate view of all aspects of the provision and pupils' progress is strong, including for those identified as the most able.
- The performance of teaching is monitored carefully. Staff appraisal and performance targets are closely linked to those areas of school improvement that impact directly on outcomes for pupils. Professional development is also targeted on those areas that will have maximum impact on the progress that pupils make. The performance of support staff is also carefully checked. Leaders have correctly identified a number of areas for development. For example, some support staff are not secure in their subject knowledge.
- Self-evaluation and improvement planning are accurate and effective. The headteacher and her leadership team carefully evaluate strengths and address weaknesses. The school improvement plan contains a suitable level of detail that supports leaders and governors in their work to improve the school. There is a relentless drive to understand what needs to be better. There is insufficient detail in the plan, especially for improving

the progress of the most able pupils.

- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to help disadvantaged pupils overcome any barriers to their learning. Leaders consider the individual needs of disadvantaged pupils and their families and provide bespoke support. The differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are now diminishing.
- The sports premium grant is used effectively. A specialist teacher has been employed to help train staff in the delivery of physical education and sport, and this is helping to improve their own teaching. Pupils also take part in many more inter-school competitions now than in the past. The funding also gives more pupils increased opportunities to take part in a wider range of activities throughout the year.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is addressed well. Pupils have many opportunities to celebrate diversity. For example, pupils consider the cultures from around the world and learn about other faiths and festivals. Children in the early years, for example, had listened to the story of Rama and Sita and knew about the Hindu Festival of Diwali. These activities enable the pupils to broaden their understanding.
- Pupils also have a good understanding of life in modern Britain. They learn about democracy through the election of school councillors and about the rule of law by adhering to rules in school and learning how to make the right choices.
- Pupils enjoy their learning because the curriculum is largely broad, balanced and motivating. Pupils' experiences in modern foreign languages and religious education are a little superficial, and the school has identified this as an area for improvement in the school improvement plan. It is enhanced by a wide range of clubs that pupils can enjoy, such as book club, choir and various sport clubs. However, the school's planning and tracking of subjects other than English and mathematics are not precise enough and do not yet provide clear progression of subject skills.
- There are a wealth of visits, visitors and interesting opportunities to celebrate learning. For example, 'That History Bloke' brings to life pupils' learning about the Vikings and there are visits to various museums, the botanical gardens and the beach. Additional events, such as a residential to Derwent Hill, offer pupils in Years 5 and 6 the opportunity to participate in adventurous pursuits.
- Almost every parent who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and those spoken to by inspectors at the beginning and end of the school day, expressed very positive views about the standard of education provided for their children.

Governance

- Governance is effective.
- The governing body is an amalgamation of the members of the Discover Learning Trust and the local advisory board. They share a wide spectrum of skills to support and challenge leaders. Governors celebrate the strengths of the school and know where the areas for improvement are. They have helped to oversee improvements in the vast majority of areas.
- Governors, and especially the Discover Learning Trust Challenge Board, robustly hold the school to account. Regular monitoring visits enable governors to check for themselves how well the school is implementing their policies and expectations. High

levels of accountability have ensured that the quality of teaching and learning has improved rapidly, and differences between disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and national standards are diminishing.

- Governors have a very secure understanding of data and use the information and external advice to help them gain a secure and accurate view of the school. They make sure that they keep abreast of where performance and practice are strong and where improvements can be made.
- Governors have an in-depth knowledge of performance management procedures and make sure that teachers' pay reflects their performance. They receive external support when setting performance targets for the headteacher. Performance targets are aligned to areas of improvement in the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The arrangements for appointing staff are robust and safeguarding training as part of the induction for new staff is thorough. As a result, staff are confident in applying the school's policies and guidance to keep pupils safe. Inspection evidence strongly supports a clear culture of safeguarding.
- All staff were able to confidently express how to make referrals should concerns be raised. School documentation shows that concerns are followed up quickly and early referrals are used to reduce pupils' risk of harm.
- Designated safeguarding leaders are effective in providing timely support for pupils. Frequent multi-agency contact is a hallmark of leaders' dogged persistence to follow up referrals, and is making a positive difference to pupils' well-being.
- Staff and governors have been trained to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism through the government's 'Prevent' duty and talk knowledgeably about how to refer any concerns. Leaders and governors complete careful checks to ensure that risk assessments minimise hazards.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Because of good teaching, most pupils make good progress during lessons. This is especially the case in key stage 2 where inspectors found that high expectations were the norm and tasks were matched well to pupils' ability.
- Staff have established good working relationships with pupils and, as a result, pupils show respect and want to learn in lessons. Pupils respond positively to questions and expect to be challenged to do their best. Positive attitudes and good behaviour are helping most pupils to make strong progress from their starting points. Occasionally, pupils in key stage 1 are less enthusiastic.
- Targeted teaching is ensuring that gaps in pupils' prior learning are filled quickly. Lower and middle attainers make strong progress and, consequently, attainment is rising quickly towards expected standards.
- Teachers plan work effectively and use detailed assessments to prepare purposeful activities for the next day. Teachers often check pupils' progress and adjust their

teaching accordingly to help pupils make better progress. However, in key stage 1 on occasions, teachers do not respond quickly enough when pupils find work too easy. This results in slowing pupils' learning, particularly for most-able pupils.

- Teachers' subject knowledge is a strength, especially in key stage 2. This allows them to assess pupils' understanding and then add extra layers of complexity to tasks if required, or to ensure that appropriate support is instantly available to keep pupils engaged and on task when they are finding some aspects of their learning difficult.
- There were a number of occasions in key stage 2 when inspectors witnessed a high degree of pupil engagement, due to the quality of teacher input, with a number of 'wow moments', when pupils were visibly excited about the activities they were embarking on.
- Most teaching assistants provide a range of effective support: for example, providing skilful modelling for the lower-attaining pupils, in small-group teaching or providing specialist individual support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Occasionally, pupils' learning stalls because the subject knowledge of some teaching assistants is not secure enough. Their questioning to deepen understanding, or move pupils on to more challenging activities, is not always effective.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Teachers, including those in the early years, have good subject knowledge and teach phonics in a systematic way. Younger pupils apply what they know in their writing and are confident to break words into groups of sounds and put them back together.
- Reading is taught well. Older pupils read with fluency and expression. All pupils, and especially the most able, are exposed to a wide range of texts and genres that are appropriately challenging and engaging. This is helping to improve pupils' vocabulary. Pupils who need support to be reading at the expected standard are given good opportunities to read with one adult regularly. Current pupils are making good progress and achieve well.
- In writing, teachers in key stage 2 provide opportunities for pupils to reason and explain, and so deepen their understanding. In key stage 1, however, the range of pupils' writing is narrow and opportunities to write at length are often limited by worksheets which restrict the amount of writing pupils can do.
- Teachers' planning usually pays close attention to pupils' grammar and spelling. However, there are still times when errors are not routinely picked up in all classes, and this can impact adversely on pupils' progress and writing standards.
- Challenging the most able pupils in mathematics is now a key focus for improvement and teachers are more adept at sharing examples of what they want pupils to learn. For example, pupils in Year 6 understood how to use their knowledge of prime numbers, factors and multiples to solve problems. Improved outcomes for the most able, especially the most able disadvantaged pupils, are becoming more evident in pupils' current work.
- Teaching of pupils who attend the specialist provision is consistently good. Teachers make precise and individualised assessments of what pupils can and cannot do, and consequently pupils make strong progress and meet their individual targets. Pupils identified as the most able within the specialist resource base also benefit from work

that extends their thinking. As a result, pupils' progress is strong.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The headteacher has ensured that a culture promoting the well-being of pupils is at the heart of everything.
- The school provides a positive, calm and welcoming environment where pupils feel content and supported. Because staff attach high importance to the well-being of pupils, the school has developed a number of initiatives that ensure that pupils are as ready to begin learning as soon as possible at the start of the school day.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured, and all are highly valued. Most pupils have positive attitudes to their learning because adults' expectations of them are clear.
- Pupils understand how to stay safe and healthy. The wider curriculum, including extra-curricular activities, ensures that pupils are taught about healthy lifestyles and that their physical well-being is promoted well.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about the potential dangers of using the internet and social media, and what to do if they have any concerns.
- Pupils understand about different forms of bullying, which they told inspectors is rare. However, they describe how there are clear systems in place should any bullying occur, and they describe how staff effectively manage and follow up bullying incidents. They value the school's behaviour guidelines and understand the importance of keeping to boundaries.
- In the early years, the youngest children are developing opportunities to be independent, making choices in their learning and taking responsibility for themselves and others. Further up the school, a positive feature of learning at Oxclose Primary is the way that pupils, particularly those in upper key stage 2, willingly take on extra responsibilities. For example, pupils are proud to be school councillors, sports leaders or members of the anti-bullying team.
- Parents who responded to Parent View were overwhelmingly positive about how safe and happy their children are in school, and how well their children are looked after. Pupils spoken to unanimously agreed that the school is a safe place to be and that everyone in school looks after them well and cares for them. Evidence from the inspection confirmed this.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. There were no occasions during the inspection where inspectors had any concern about the conduct of pupils.
- Pupils are polite to each other and adults. They understand what is expected of them in classrooms and on the playground and they know that poor behaviour is not acceptable, especially if it stops others from learning.
- Very occasionally, mostly in key stage 1, pupils become disengaged with learning because the activities they are taking part in do not motivate or interest them enough.

This is more to do with the level of challenge offered by the activities than the attitudes of pupils to learning.

- The school has introduced rigorous and robust systems to challenge poor attendance including, where necessary, collecting pupils from their homes. As a consequence, their attendance continues to rise and is now in line with the national average. Where absence has the potential to impact on a pupil's progress, school leaders are quick to intervene and work with parents to find solutions to problems.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Academic standards have risen significantly since the school converted to an academy. The progress that pupils make is improving as a result of the better teaching they receive. Any underachievement is tackled rigorously. Consequently, increasing numbers of pupils are on track to meet or exceed the standards expected for their age.
- By the end of key stage 1, the national tests and assessments for 2016 indicate that the proportion of non-disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected level and making expected progress matches the national average.
- Too few of the most able disadvantaged or other pupils in key stage 1 are making better than expected progress or achieving the highest standards. This is because current teachers are not consistently challenging the most able pupils with demanding work in writing.
- Progress in key stage 2 is consistently strong for most groups of pupils currently on roll, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Standards have risen steeply over the last couple of years to match standards nationally. The most able are now challenged effectively in key stage 2 and more pupils are achieving higher standards, particularly in Year 6.
- Key stage 2 published performance information in 2016 shows that outcomes in writing and mathematics are typically in line with those achieved nationally but below average in reading. The school was disappointed with the standards achieved in reading. They immediately investigated the reasons for this and found pupils struggled with unfamiliar vocabulary and developing an in-depth understanding of the texts they were reading. Leaders put in place strategies to address this dip and these are already having a positive impact. The school's work to improve pupils' comprehension skills in reading is developing well.
- Inspection evidence shows that pupils read fluently, with confidence and expression, and show a clear understanding of what they are reading. Reading skills are applied effectively across the curriculum at key stage 2. These approaches ensure that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, move on quickly in their reading, and, from their low starting points, pupils' achievement in reading is rising quickly to expected standards.
- Standards in writing are beginning to rise as the quality of teaching improves and pupils write more extensively across the curriculum. However, in grammar, spelling and punctuation, progress is less rapid because teachers do not always challenge pupils to correct their spellings and misunderstandings in their grammar consistently enough.
- Pupils' progress in most other subjects is good but assessment systems do not precisely track the skills knowledge and understanding that pupils are developing.

Religious education and modern foreign languages are the weaker subjects.

- Pupils' attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check has improved dramatically. The good teaching that pupils receive is resulting in their making faster progress than in previous years and pupils' attainment in phonics is now above average.
- Disadvantaged pupils are known well by teachers and they receive effective extra help when required. Overall, these pupils are making strong progress across the school. Consequently, considerably more pupils than previously are on track to meet the standards expected for their age.
- A very small number of pupils speak English as an additional language and these pupils make similar progress to their peers.
- Progress for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those in the specialist provision, is good. Parents agree. Where starting points are low, the school's assessment systems show that pupils make very strong progress and meet their individual targets.

Early years provision

Good

- The effective early years leader ensures that there is effective transition from the Nursery on site and other settings. As a result, children settle in well and learning time is maximised from day one.
- The Reception class provides children with a positive and nurturing start to school life. Environments, indoors and outside, are vibrant and provide a wealth of opportunities for learning through play. The conversation in the role play doctors' surgery was a delight to see as children asked the patients to describe their symptoms. Thoughtful prompting by adults helps children develop their personal and social skills. This prepares them well for Year 1.
- During their time in the early years, almost all children make good progress from their lower than expected starting points. A considerable focus on developing language skills across all areas of learning is helping the vast majority of children to make rapid progress during their time in the Reception class. Consequently, outcomes in Reception continue to rise year on year and are now close to national averages.
- Targeted support for disadvantaged pupils is bringing about improved standards by the end of Reception and the difference between their outcomes and those of other pupils nationally is very small.
- The impact of leadership in the early years to improve the quality of phonics teaching is strong. Teachers have wasted no time this year in beginning phonics work quickly and, as a result, learning routines are already very well established. Children show pride and excitement when rehearsing their letter sounds and take full advantage of the tasks on offer to practise their sounds. This work is effective in quickly developing children's understanding of early reading.
- The clear routines in place, excellent relationships between children and staff, and high expectations prevail throughout and ensure that children behave well. Adults grasp every opportunity to enable positive learning opportunities. Consequently, children in the early years make consistently good progress.

- The early years provision engages children in all aspects of learning. Inspectors saw children immersed in interesting activities. For example, children were thrilled to make their firework collages, were excited to use a pipette of coloured water to create the 'whoosh' of a firework going off, and thoroughly enjoyed using tweezers to place and count conkers on a number line. Routines and boundaries are establishing well and most children display confidence in persevering and working alongside their peers.
- Adults notice quickly when children need support and intervene sensitively so that children can develop their experiences further. The most able children are also identified early, but staff do not intervene and extend the most able as rapidly as they intervene for those who require additional support to catch up. Positive praise is a key feature of success in this phase. As a result, children are very quickly beginning to talk about their experiences, and this is helping adults to take every opportunity to model effective speaking and listening skills and move children's spoken language forward from their varied starting points.
- Children feel safe in the calm environment and relish opportunities on offer to have fun and learn. Systems for safeguarding are highly effective and precisely meet the needs of children in this phase.

School details

Unique reference number	140684
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10023799

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Linda Nixon
Headteacher	Audrey Bolam
Telephone number	01912 193 760
Website	www.oxcloseprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	primary@oxclose.net
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school with a provision for pupils with physical disabilities and medical needs.
- Oxclose Village Primary School converted to become an academy on 1 April 2014. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it required special measures.
- Since the conversion, the headteacher and almost every teacher has changed and the governing body has also been replaced.
- Oxclose Primary is one of two schools within the Discover Learning Trust. The other is Oxclose Community Academy, a nearby secondary school. The executive headteacher of that school is the leader of the trust.

- The school sustains a close working relationship with Gateshead local authority, one of whose officers works as the school improvement partner, supporting the headteacher, governors and trustees. The school also works alongside other local schools.
- In 2015 and 2016, the school met the floor standards, which are the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The vast majority of the pupils are White British and there is a very small proportion who have English as an additional language.
- Over 40% of pupils are entitled to the support of pupil premium funding. This is about double the national average.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons in all classes, some jointly with senior leaders. They observed pupils around the school and at playtimes, lunchtimes and during assemblies.
- The inspection team looked at samples of pupils' work in several subjects.
- Members of the inspection team held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, governors and many members of staff. They spoke with a school improvement partner from Gateshead local authority. They met with groups of pupils formally and informally and heard pupils from Years 2 and 6 read in class.
- Inspectors evaluated documents, including the school's strategic plan and evaluations, assessments of pupils, records of attendance and behaviour, and minutes of meetings.
- Inspectors took close account of documents and information provided to them by the school, and undertook many observations and discussions with school representatives, as specifically requested by senior leaders.
- They took close account of the views of parents from the 20 responses on Parent View. This included written remarks. Inspectors also spoke with parents. They analysed carefully the opinions of staff from confidential questionnaires.

Inspection team

Steve Bywater, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Dent	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Evans	Her Majesty's Inspector

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