

Oughton Primary and Nursery School

Mattocke Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 2NZ

Inspection dates

7–8 June 2017

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	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and governors are passionate about improving the opportunities for pupils in this school. Their commitment and determination have led to improved outcomes for all groups of pupils.
- Pupils learn in a stimulating and nurturing environment. Pupils are encouraged to believe in themselves and always do their best.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress due to the highly effective and nurturing support they receive.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding effectively to support disadvantaged pupils.
- The school's work to support pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils receive exceptional support to overcome their barriers to learning.
- Pupils are well behaved around school and in lessons. Parents agree that behaviour is good.
- Pupils and parents agree that the school provides a safe and secure learning environment. Safeguarding procedures are effective.
- Children in the early years get off to a flying start. They make rapid progress as a result of excellent teaching, strong leadership and highly effective support for the children and their families.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed extremely well through a broad curriculum that offers a range of interesting activities.
- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now typically good. There remain a few inconsistencies in teaching in some areas.
- The high-quality provision seen in English, science and mathematics is not always apparent in other national curriculum subjects.
- The leadership of subjects other than English, mathematics and science is improving. However, actions taken by these leaders have not been in place long enough for leaders to be able to evaluate their impact on outcomes.
- Governors are committed to improving the school. They are well qualified and provide a good level of challenge to senior leaders.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Share the existing best practice in teaching, learning and assessment to eliminate the few remaining weaknesses, such as the occasional lack of challenge in tasks, so that more pupils make accelerated progress.
- Build upon the strong provision of mathematics and English to ensure that all national curriculum subjects are taught to the same standard.
- Make leadership and management more effective by improving the monitoring role of middle leaders in order to secure further improvements.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and governors have established a culture in which learning comes first. Leaders have high expectations of pupils and staff. However, pupils' social and emotional development is valued as equally as their academic success. All staff encourage pupils to believe in themselves.
- The headteacher is very well supported by a team of staff who share her vision to continue to improve outcomes for pupils. Staff are proud to be part of the school and they feel respected and valued.
- Leaders have correctly identified the barriers to learning faced by pupils supported by the pupil premium. The school takes an all-round approach to supporting all aspects of disadvantaged pupils' experiences of school. This includes the appointment of a speech therapist, small-group literacy and numeracy support and financial support for trips and visits. The impact of this support is effectively monitored and reviewed by the governing body. The support is effective, as outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are improving.
- Leaders use a range of information to judge the classroom performance of staff. Comprehensive records of their findings are kept and used to develop individual support, thus enabling staff to improve their practice. Hence, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the previous inspection.
- The school makes good use of the sports funding. Sports coaches are employed to take sports lessons and clubs and to help teachers improve their provision of physical education lessons. Pupils appreciate the opportunities they have to participate in sports competitions and clubs. The use of the funding is contributing well to pupils' healthy lifestyles.
- Senior leaders are evaluative and, as a result, know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Improvement plans are focused on the right priorities and actions are modified if they are not having enough impact on raising standards.
- The additional funding is used appropriately to provide individual support for the wide range of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The pupils are fully integrated into the life of the school and achieve good outcomes.
- Pupils follow a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum designed to develop their enjoyment of learning. Daily lessons are often supplemented by 'WOW' days at either the start or end of a topic. Parents are invited in at the end of the day to share their child's learning. Examples of 'WOW' days include a visit by the fire brigade for children in the early years, art and mathematics days and an 'Alice in Wonderland' week. Pupils said that they really enjoy these events.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely well catered for through a range of lunchtime and after-school activities. Pupils particularly enjoy the science club, which they describe as 'amazing!' The curriculum is also enriched by trips to places such as the aerodrome at the Shuttleworth Collection and the Natural History Museum and visits by national theatre groups.

- British values are rooted in the values of the school and pupils learn about them in lessons and assemblies. For example, a group of Year 6 pupils were reading articles about the recent terrorist activity from a children's newspaper. They were discussing tolerance, justice and how to keep safe.
- The leaders of mathematics, English and science are established in their roles. They are effective in identifying priorities and taking well-thought-out actions that are having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. Leaders of other subjects fully understand their roles and are now involved in monitoring standards. However, they have not had the opportunity to fully utilise this information to evaluate whether changes have been effective or more needs to be done in some areas. As a result, there is some variation in outcomes in these subjects.
- Parents feel that the school is well led and managed. Most parents would recommend the school to others.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a good overview of the school and are ambitious for the pupils. They are effective at holding senior leaders to account for standards. Governors provide a good level of challenge and meticulously check and question information provided by leaders.
- Governors are well trained and put their professional skills to good use. Individual governors are linked to different areas of management, for example pupil premium funding or mathematics. They gather first-hand experience about the work of the school by talking to pupils and staff and visiting lessons accompanied by senior leaders. Aspects of safeguarding and attendance are checked weekly by the chair of governors. Governors fully understand their role.
- Governors understand the school progress data and the performance of the school compared to other schools nationally. They carefully monitor the impact of the pupil premium, special educational needs and sports funding on pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school gives a high priority to safeguarding and it is at the heart of the school. Leaders ensure that the appropriate pre-employment checks are carried out on staff prior to appointment to ensure their suitability to work with children. The identity of visitors to the school is carefully checked and they are provided with information about safeguarding in the school.
- All staff are trained in the latest safeguarding guidance. Staff know the pupils well and are therefore quick to identify any behaviour that may suggest a child is at risk. Staff understand the procedure for reporting any concerns they may have and the headteacher takes swift action to report concerns to the appropriate authority. Records of safeguarding concerns are meticulously kept and secure. Leaders are persistent when they are concerned about a pupil's well-being.

- Parents are kept up to date on aspects of safety, especially internet safety, through the website, newsletters and parental workshops.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it to plan work that is interesting and usually well matched to the ability of the pupils. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes toward their learning. Pupils are starting to develop resilience as learners and concentrate well in lessons, as they are keen to succeed.
- Teachers use questioning well. Teachers carefully frame questions, enabling pupils to solve problems and reach conclusions for themselves. Teachers use probing questions to deepen the knowledge and understanding of the most able pupils.
- Teaching assistants make valuable contributions in lessons as they understand the needs of the pupils they work with. They are particularly effective in helping lower-attaining pupils to catch up and enable those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make strong progress.
- Writing is taught well. Teachers model good handwriting and have high expectations of pupils to form letters correctly and present their work neatly. Pupils are given opportunities to write for a range of purposes in order to develop their vocabulary. For example, Year 4 pupils were writing an explanation of the digestion of food. Pupils take care in the presentation of their work.
- Mathematics teaching provides the opportunity for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. Therefore, pupils are becoming proficient mathematicians. Pupils said that they enjoy their mathematics lessons.
- Teachers use the school's marking and assessment policy consistently. Teachers intervene appropriately in lessons to check pupils' understanding and address any misconceptions, supporting them in improving their work.
- Homework is relevant and pupils receive work that supports their literacy and numeracy skills. Tasks also either consolidate learning in class or prepare pupils for new learning.
- The most able pupils are guided towards the more challenging learning activities, especially in English and mathematics. The work in the books of most-able pupils has examples that deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils receive good-quality phonics teaching. This gives them a solid foundation to develop their reading and spelling skills. Pupils were observed using their phonics skills to read and spell unfamiliar words.
- While teaching is generally good, teaching in some subjects, such as geography and history, is less effective. Tasks sometimes lack challenge and are less interesting than those provided in English and mathematics. Consequently, some pupils make slower progress in these subjects than in English and mathematics.
- Parents who responded to Parent View and who spoke to inspectors agreed that teaching is good.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- This is a fully inclusive school that provides a caring and nurturing environment where all pupils are respected and valued. Leaders work exceptionally well with external agencies and parents to ensure that pupils receive the support they require to break down any barriers to learning. As a result, vulnerable pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities thrive.
- Pupils said that they are well cared for by adults and that they are respected and encouraged always to do their best. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are proud of their school. When describing what they like best about the school, a group of key stage 2 pupils opened with 'We are united as a school and work together to get things done.' Teachers help pupils to develop positive attitudes and so their self-confidence is improving, along with their resilience as learners.
- Parents value the support the school provides for their children and themselves. Typical comments from parents included 'The school genuinely cares about my child's well-being', 'This is a good successful school as staff ensure that the pupils are supported educationally and pastorally' and 'All staff are caring and exceptionally responsive to children and parents.'
- Pupils feel safe in school. Parents and staff all agreed that pupils are safe and well cared for. Bullying is exceptionally rare and pupils stated that, if they have any concerns, there is always an adult who will listen to them and help them resolve any problems.
- The school's values are at the heart of the curriculum. Consequently, pupils are taught to respect one another's opinions, culture and religion. Pupils said that there is no racism and this was confirmed by the school's records.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations and school leaders provide pupils and parents with the latest information regarding internet and social media safety. Therefore, pupils are well aware of the potential dangers of using modern technology.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills. For example, they can become head boy and girl or members of the school council.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well around the school and in lessons. They are polite to one another and adults and show good manners when talking to others and eating their meals.
- On occasions, some pupils do lose their concentration in lessons but teachers quickly apply the school's behaviour policy so disruption to lessons is rare. Pupils value the rewards system and are proud of their achievements.
- The attendance of some groups of pupils, such as disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, has been well below average in

recent years. Persistent absence for these groups of pupils has also been well above average. School leaders are successfully working with parents and external agencies to lower persistent attendance. Current attendance information indicates that persistent absence for these groups is rapidly reducing.

- The overall attendance for the school is now close to the national average for primary schools.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes for pupils have improved since the previous inspection. In 2016, the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics met the national average. Progress in writing was above average and for reading and mathematics was average.
- Key stage 1 attainment remains strong and the proportion of pupils leaving Year 2 in 2016 having reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was also above average.
- The proportion of pupils meeting the threshold in the phonics screening check continues to improve and has been above average for two years. By the end of Year 2, almost all pupils had met the threshold in 2016. Pupils use their phonics skills appropriately to support their reading and spelling. Lower-ability pupils who read to the inspectors were able to use phonics skills to read unfamiliar words correctly. As a result, the pupils are becoming confident proficient readers.
- Progress information for pupils currently in the school suggests that most pupils are making good or better progress from their individual starting points in a range of subjects. This was confirmed by the work seen in pupils' exercise books.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making good or better progress. In recent years, their progress at the end of key stage 2 has improved. Work seen by inspectors, along with school progress information, suggests that the differences between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally continue to diminish. The additional support these pupils receive to address gaps in their English and mathematics knowledge is effective.
- As a result of well-targeted individual support, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress across a range of subjects.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are now being suitably challenged in their learning and making good progress. Work for current pupils indicates that a greater proportion are working towards attaining greater depth in their learning.
- Standards in writing remain high. Pupils' books clearly show how their writing has developed and improved over time. In all current year groups, inspectors could see improvements in the use of punctuation, grammar and accurate spelling. Pupils' use of interesting vocabulary is also evident.
- Progress in science has improved. In 2016, results indicated that, at the end of key stages 1 and 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in science met the national average. Pupils' books show that they are provided with the opportunity to

carry out science investigations, draw relevant conclusions and use scientific vocabulary accurately.

- Pupils are encouraged to read and most pupils enjoy reading. Teachers encourage pupils to read a range of genres, for example Shakespeare, classic novels and poetry, as well as modern children's authors. Pupils, especially the most able, read confidently, fluently and with expression. Pupils have good comprehension skills.
- Progress in subjects other than mathematics, English and science is variable. Teachers ensure that pupils have the opportunity to use their mathematics and English skills in these subjects. However, sometimes the work set is not sufficiently demanding for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding further.
- By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, they are academically and socially well prepared for secondary school. Transition arrangements between the school and the local secondary school are strong.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children enter Nursery and Reception with skills and abilities that are below those typical for their age, especially in literacy, mathematics and personal, social and emotional development. Individual needs are met very effectively through closely tailored learning plans. The proportion of children leaving Reception having attained a good level of development has been above average for three years, despite their low starting points. Children's learning journals confirm that children currently in the early years continue to make outstanding progress.
- Leaders' rigorous evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision has led to improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and in the learning environment. The classrooms and outdoor areas encourage children to be curious and children are eager to take part in the varied activities on offer. Children are very proud of their work and keen to show it to visitors.
- Leaders work highly effectively with parents and external organisations to ensure that all the needs of the children are met and that they are safe and very well cared for. Arrangements for safeguarding are effective and children learn in a safe environment.
- The welfare needs of the children are exceptionally well met. Children's special educational needs and barriers to learning are quickly identified and addressed.
- Teaching is outstanding because adults prepare enticing learning activities which are well matched to children's individual needs and which move their learning on quickly. As a result, children thoroughly enjoy their experiences. For example, children in Nursery were very excited when warming up for their physical education lesson because they were crawling like bears, hopping like kangaroos and crawling on their tummies.
- Adults use questioning exceptionally well to develop children's understanding and reasoning. For example, when listening to a story, children said the 'wolf' was silly. The teacher immediately asked them to explain why and the children gave well-thought-out suggestions, such as 'he's not good at planning' and 'he tried to grow a ladder'.
- Teachers have high expectations of the children's learning and behaviour. Adults

provide excellent role models, showing by example how they expect children to behave. Therefore, children are well behaved and play cooperatively together, sharing equipment and helping one another. Children follow instructions and listen to adults extremely carefully. They develop very good levels of concentration and listening skills.

- Staff are very effective in supporting children to develop their speech and language. Staff use Standard English and pronounce words clearly and precisely. Children are taught specific vocabulary and they use it confidently. For example, Reception children were accurately able to explain the rhyming words in their poem.
- Phonics is extremely well taught and children in Reception use their phonics very well to spell and read.
- Towards the end of both Nursery and Reception, children learn about the next stage in their education and have the chance to consider the changes they will experience and how these may affect them academically and socially. By the end of Reception, children are exceptionally well prepared for key stage 1.

School details

Unique reference number	133323
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10031362

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	248
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Mainwaring
Headteacher	Lisa Clayton
Telephone number	01462 450 716
Website	www.oughton.herts.sch.uk
Email address	head@oughton.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 June 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The early years comprises Nursery and Reception. Children attend part-time in Nursery and full-time in Reception.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. A smaller-than-average proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. A much higher proportion of pupils have an education, health and care plan.

- The proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school at times other than the start of the year is above average.
- The school works closely with other local primary and secondary schools.
- The school meets current floor standards. These are the minimum expectations set by the government for pupils' progress and attainment.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gained a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time. They observed learning in all years and talked to pupils about their work. Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books to examine learning and progress over the year and to check the accuracy of assessment information held by the school. Inspectors were accompanied by senior leaders for some of the observations.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, inclusion manager and subject leaders. The lead inspector also met with representatives of the governing body and the local authority improvement party.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents, including the governing body's minutes of meetings, information about pupils' progress, the school's evaluation of its performance, records on the quality of teaching and learning, the school improvement plan and records and evidence relating to safer recruitment and child protection.
- Inspectors spoke to two groups of pupils from key stage 2, and informally to children throughout the inspections. In addition, inspectors met with pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2 to hear them read and to discuss books and reading with them.
- The lead inspector considered the 51 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, including 39 text responses. She also considered the 89 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- The views of the 32 staff who completed questionnaires were also considered.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

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