

Oxbridge Lane Primary School

Oxbridge Lane, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland TS18 4DA

Inspection dates

9–10 January 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not make enough progress in mathematics in key stage 1 and in English across the school. Leaders, teachers and teaching assistants have not had the very highest expectations of their pupils.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Teachers do not use assessment information incisively to plan work that challenges their pupils sufficiently well.
- Pupils, especially those from the lowest starting points, do not acquire phonic knowledge rapidly enough. The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check, although rising, has been below average year on year.
- Standards in reading are too low. The books that pupils are given or choose to read are not matched precisely to their current abilities.
- The recent change from one assessment regime to another has been problematic. Leaders identified immediately that the autumn term progress data was inflated and did not match the work in pupils' books closely. They are taking action to address this issue.
- Governors do not challenge the standards reached by pupils rigorously. They have not ensured that the school's improvement planning contains numerical targets against which progress can be evaluated periodically.
- Teachers do not recognise consistently well what children know, understand or can do when they start school. Children's skills and abilities on entry to early years do not match information recorded in the school's assessment system closely.
- Subject leadership requires further development.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' attendance has shown a marked improvement since the beginning of the academic year.
- The wide variety of educational visits support teaching and learning across the curriculum well.
- The systems and procedures to keep pupils safe are thorough. Staff 'go the extra mile' to protect pupils who may be vulnerable.
- Pupils behave well in and around school. They are polite, respectful and welcoming.
- Older pupils make good progress in mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the school’s plans for improvement contain numerical targets by which progress can be measured periodically
 - developing the roles and expertise of subject leaders further so that they evaluate the impact of school improvement initiatives in their subjects
 - making sure that the school’s systems to track the attainment and progress of individual pupils, groups of pupils and cohorts of pupils are fit for purpose.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school by:
 - raising teachers’ and teaching assistants’ expectations of their pupils further
 - using accurate assessment information to plan work that meets pupils’ needs
 - embedding recent developments and training in mathematics across all key stages.
- Take timely action to improve the provision for reading and writing across the school by:
 - developing teachers’ and teaching assistants’ expertise in delivering systematic synthetic phonics, especially for children and pupils with lower starting points
 - ensuring that children in early years and pupils in key stage 1 have ready access to reading books which match their phonic knowledge and abilities closely
 - further developing parental partnerships so that more parents and carers take a full and active part in improving their children’s reading at home
 - making sure that pupils across the school understand and use basic punctuation accurately to demarcate sentences
 - giving pupils plentiful opportunities to hone their writing skills while completing longer pieces of work across the curriculum.
- Increase the proportion of children who reach a good level of development at the end of early years by:
 - making sure that children’s abilities are assessed accurately on entry
 - ensuring that children with low prior attainment make a quick and confident start to developing their knowledge of letters and the sounds they represent
 - planning activities that enable a much greater proportion of children to reach a good level of development and to be ready for the demands of Year 1.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders identify areas of the school's work that require further development annually. These areas are outlined in the school's self-evaluation document. However, the identified areas do not feed into the school's improvement plans. These plans do not contain numerical targets by which leaders, including middle leaders and governors, can measure the success of school improvement initiatives. This has resulted in leaders having an overly optimistic view of the school's effectiveness.
- During the 2016/17 academic year, leaders identified flaws in the school's systems and procedures to track pupils' attainment and progress. In September 2017, they took assertive action to introduce a new data-tracking system. Leaders identified immediately that the new tracking system provided an inflated view of pupils' progress when they analysed assessment information at the end of the autumn term 2017. They realised that the information did not match the work in pupils' exercise books closely. Currently, leaders are taking action to rectify the situation.
- Leaders have not ensured that children and pupils make rapid progress in phonics so that they become fluent readers and can access all that texts have to offer. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been below average year on year. The gap between the school's proportion and that found nationally is not diminishing. Leaders do not ensure that the school's 'banded' reading books are organised by phonic content. Pupils cannot access all of the texts in their 'band' because they do not have the necessary phonic knowledge.
- Leaders understand that pupils do not make sufficient progress in reading. They have recently introduced 'story time' across the school at the end of each day. As a result, all pupils have the opportunity to improve their listening comprehension and understanding of vocabulary on a daily basis. Leaders have not measured the impact of this recent initiative. Nevertheless, pupils enjoy this time of day. Currently, teachers find it easier to plan for pupils' progress in reading comprehension because they attended high-quality training about inference and deduction arranged by leaders at the beginning of the academic year.
- The leaders for mathematics and English have recently introduced initiatives that have led to pupils making more rapid progress, for example in mathematics in key stage 2 and in handwriting across the school. Senior leaders recognise that subject leaders need to develop their expertise further so that they evaluate the impact of these initiatives. However, these leaders do not have an accurate view of the attainment and progress of groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, the most able and those who speak English as an additional language.
- Senior leaders, during joint lesson observations undertaken with inspectors, identified the strengths and areas for development in lessons accurately. These leaders took effective action to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve by arranging for pairs of teachers, from different key stages, to check the standard of pupils' writing across the school at the end of the summer term 2017. As a result, teachers now have a better understanding of the expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in

writing in all year groups.

- Leaders launched a new initiative to reward pupils' attendance at the beginning of the academic year. Pupils and their parents have responded positively. Attendance is rising and persistent absence is declining.
- The local authority has provided, and continues to provide support for the school through initiatives such as the 'raising achievement in reading' and 'getting the balance right' projects. The local authority's view of the school's effectiveness is based on historical assessment information and leaders' views. It is not based on the progress being made by pupils currently. It presents too rosy a view of how well the school is performing.
- Senior leaders have not investigated children's attainment on entry to early years with sufficient rigour. Leaders too readily accept that every child enters early years with skills and abilities that are 'below or well below' those typical for their age in every area of the curriculum. This is incorrect. Leaders have ensured, however, that assessment information is accurate at the end of early years.
- The school prepares its pupils well for life in modern Britain. The pupils understand democracy through the work of the school council. They know the difference between right and wrong. Pupils have a deep understanding of different religions and cultures because teachers use the resource of the school's local community well.
- Leaders have acted on the recommendations of the review of pupil premium spending that took place in the last academic year. They analyse published data and implement activities to address identified weaknesses.
- Similarly, leaders use additional funding to provide targeted support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Some, but not all, of these pupils make good progress.
- The primary physical education and sport funding is spent well to ensure an increasing proportion of pupils take part in additional sporting activities in and after school. Pupils appreciate the extra-curricular clubs on offer. These include those for football, gymnastics, dance and tag-rugby.
- Senior leaders have implemented school-wide systems to appraise the performance of staff. Professional development opportunities are identified during performance-management review meetings. Staff progression up the pay scale does not happen as a matter of course. The appraisal of teachers has not had sufficient impact on the achievement of pupils.

Governance of the school

- Governance has been through a period of some turbulence. A new chair of governors recently took up post. Skills audits are undertaken annually. Governors new to the governing body have the skills and abilities necessary to support and challenge senior leaders robustly. A national leader of governance is currently supporting the governing body.
- Over time, governors have not challenged leaders about pupils' progress with sufficient rigour. They have not asked senior leaders to include ambitious targets in the school's

improvement planning. They have been unable to evaluate progress incisively.

- Governors are aware of the need to improve pupils' outcomes, especially in phonics and reading. They recognise that the school's work to improve pupils' attendance is paying dividends this year.
- Governors have not questioned senior leaders' assertions that all of the children enter early years with skills and abilities 'below or well below' those typical for their age in every area of the curriculum.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's procedures for the safe recruitment of staff are strong.
- There are robust risk assessments, such as the one for children, staff and parents travelling between the main school site and the nursery site.
- Five members of the teaching staff have completed the training for designated safeguarding leaders. All of the staff attend safeguarding update training in school on a regular basis. Safeguarding is a standing item on the agenda for all staff meetings.
- The school goes 'above and beyond' to ensure that pupils who may be vulnerable are kept safe. Leaders pursue the whereabouts of children who go missing from education doggedly. They liaise with senior leaders of local secondary schools to ensure a joined-up approach to preventing radicalisation, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.
- Leaders have established a calm atmosphere in school, together with a climate in which pupils can share their worries and troubles with trusted members of staff. Incidents of poor behaviour and bullying are extremely rare.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent across the school. For example, some but not all teachers are skilled at asking tightly focused questions that elicit reasoned answers from their pupils.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of their pupils. They do not use their assessments consistently well to plan activities at just the right level of challenge to ensure that pupils make good or better progress.
- Teachers have responded well to training delivered by the subject leader for mathematics. As a result, pupils in key stage 2 are making much stronger progress in mathematics than they have over time.
- Similarly, teachers have implemented the new expectations for handwriting well. Pupils' handwriting and presentation have improved markedly since a new scheme was introduced across the school at the beginning of the academic year. However, pupils throughout the school do not consistently use full stops and capital letters well.
- Teachers and teaching assistants do not ensure that all pupils reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. The strategies that they use do not

enable pupils, especially those from low starting points, to make the progress of which they are capable. Despite regular assessment of the pupils and teaching taking place in ability groups, the least able do not catch up with their peers. In 2017, 26% of the Year 1 pupils did not achieve the standard expected in the Year 1 phonics check.

- The school's reading books are 'banded' by colour. Books are banded by the range of vocabulary and the length of sentences included, not by phonics. Therefore, pupils are sometimes given books that they cannot read because they are unable to use their phonic knowledge to decode the words. The current system of 'book banding' is slowing pupils' progress. During the inspection, pupils in Year 1 with low prior attainment struggled to read the books their teachers had chosen for them. They did not know the 'ch' and 'sh' sounds.
- Leaders organised whole-staff training on using inference and deduction in reading comprehension. Some teachers are putting their training to good effect. The pupils in Years 2 and 4, for example, understand more of what they read now than previously.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' confidence is growing. They recognise that their handwriting has improved and that their work is neater. They are beginning to believe that they can be successful learners. Leaders are working hard to develop pupils' resilience so that they can bounce back quickly after setbacks.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe from harm. A parent, who represented the views of many, said, 'My children are very happy in this school. They are well cared for and feel safe.'
- Bullying is not an issue at Oxbridge Lane. Pupils understand the forms that bullying can take. They told members of the inspection team that bullying rarely occurs in school. Pupils said that they would report bullying to a member of staff or to a member of the school council should it occur.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are very well behaved in and around school.
- Pupils take on roles of responsibility willingly across the school. The role of 'eco warrior' is coveted. Even the youngest pupils know about the school's green scheme. The school councillors are democratically elected by their peers. They work for the good of their constituents, that is, the pupils in school. For example, the councillors wrote to a local supermarket about a lack of play equipment for use at breaktimes. They received a sizeable donation in return.
- Pupils can sometimes be a little compliant in lessons. They have not developed a real thirst and appetite for learning. As a result, they too readily accept teaching that is not

challenging enough.

- Despite the efforts of leaders, attendance has remained below average over time. However, the new reward scheme that was launched in September 2017 appears to be paying dividends. Pupils' attendance was much improved in every year group in the autumn term. Very few pupils are late for school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Standards in English are not as high as those in mathematics at the end of key stage 2. Pupils do not make good progress in reading and writing in key stage 2. Pupils' progress in reading was in the bottom 20% of schools in the country in two out of the last three academic years. Pupils are not prepared well in English for the next stage in their education.
- The 2017 cohort of Year 6 pupils made good progress across key stage 2 in mathematics. Their progress was in the top 20% of schools in the country.
- Disadvantaged key stage 2 pupils do not reach high enough standards in reading and writing. Too few of the school's most able pupils achieve the highest standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is well below average at the end of key stage 1. Too few pupils reach a greater depth of understanding in writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils do not catch up with their peers nationally.
- Only 74% of the pupils reach the standard expected in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Although the vast majority of pupils achieve the standard by the end of Year 2, the proportion is declining over time.
- The progress made by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is variable across the school. Recently, the school introduced a number of reading intervention programmes to address underachievement. Initial assessment information suggests that a large proportion of the pupils taking part in these programmes are making more rapid progress than they did previously.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Leaders state in their evaluation of the school's effectiveness that 'attainment on entry to school is below and often well below the national averages in all areas of learning when compared to children of a similar age'. Inspection evidence indicates that children who entered the Nursery class four-and-a-half weeks before the inspection were speaking in sentences, answering questions, behaving in line with adults' expectations and counting out five or more items independently. They had typical skills and abilities for their age. Therefore, the school's assessments for children on entry to the Nursery class are not wholly accurate. In addition, information in the school's data-tracking system does not always compare well to the information parents provide when their children start school.
- Leaders, through the local authority's moderation processes, have ensured that the school's assessments of children's skills and abilities are accurate on exit from early

years. However, leaders cannot measure progress from children's starting points precisely. They are unable to articulate convincingly how they use assessment information to adapt both the provision and teaching to meet the children's needs.

- Only half of the children reached a good level of development at the end of early years in 2017. Furthermore, only 35% of the disadvantaged children reached a good level of development. Far fewer children than nationally were ready for the demands of Year 1 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children, especially those with low prior attainment, do not acquire phonic knowledge rapidly enough in Reception Year. Teaching, learning and assessment do not ensure that Reception-aged children make a rapid and confident start to developing their knowledge of letters and the sounds they represent.
- Relationships are strong and children's behaviour is exemplary in early years. Children respect adults, follow instructions and know the routines. During the inspection, a girl in Reception Year walked backwards while chatting away to her friend. As a result, she bumped into another child accidentally. She spun around immediately and said, 'I'm sorry'.
- Children feel safe in the early years environment. They are curious to explore the new activities that are provided for them. Children make rapid progress when they are taught in small groups by adults who ask insightful questions and give them time to think before answering.
- Parents are appreciative of the work of the teachers and the teaching assistants. They told the inspectors that communication between school and home is strong. Parents particularly like the phonics activities and games that are sent home for them to share with their children. However, not all parents are confident in supporting their child when listening to them read. Leaders are aware that they need to share with parents the strategies they use to teach reading.

School details

Unique reference number	111644
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10042212

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	435
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Victoria Pinkney
Headteacher	Dianne Gage
Telephone number	01642 607421
Website	www.oxbridgelane.org.uk
Email address	oxbridgelane.school@stockton.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 June 2014

Information about this school

- The school met the government’s floor standards in 2017. These are the minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities who receive support is well above average. The proportion with an education, health and care plan is well below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for support through the pupil premium funding, is double the national average.
- The proportion who speak English as an additional language is above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons across a range of subjects in early years and key stages 1 and 2. Some observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- During visits to lessons, inspectors spoke with pupils and looked at their work to find out more about how well they are learning.
- The lead inspector met with four members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. Formal meetings were held with groups of pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3, and Years 4, 5 and 6.
- The lead inspector discussed the school's effectiveness with a leadership development partner from Stockton-on-Tees local authority.
- Discussions were also held with the deputy headteacher, the coordinator for SEN, the early years leader, the subject leaders for English and mathematics, a group of teachers who are not senior leaders, and a group of teaching assistants.
- Inspectors read with three children from Reception Year, three pupils from Year 1 and three from Year 2 respectively on the first day of the inspection, and two pupils from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 on the second day.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school more broadly and looked at a range of documentation. This included policies, leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness, the school's improvement plan, safeguarding records and data about pupils' attendance, attainment and progress.
- Five free-text responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey were considered alongside the 24 responses to Ofsted's survey of the views of staff. Inspectors considered the school's own recent survey of parents' views. Inspectors also talked to parents dropping their children off at school at the beginning of the first day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Belita Scott, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Richard Knowles	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Aitchison	Ofsted Inspector

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