

# Old Stratford Primary School

Willow Grove, Old Stratford, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK19 6AZ

## Inspection dates

6–7 March 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Staff and governors have benefited from the clear direction provided by the current executive headteacher and the head of school. They have also brought stability after a period of turbulence.
- The curriculum covers a wide variety of subjects and prepares children well for life in modern Britain.
- Teaching and learning throughout the school are now good. Pupils said that their teachers make learning fun and that lessons are exciting.
- Leaders have created a caring and nurturing learning environment based on mutual respect and positive relationships. Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good as a result of this.
- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders and governors make sure systems are in place. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe.
- The vast majority of parents engage well with the school and feel home-school communication is effective.
- Provision in the early years is now good. Children typically make good progress from their starting points because of the exciting curriculum and activities provided.
- Engagement in lessons is usually high. Some pupils, however, are not sufficiently challenged throughout the lesson. As a result, they lose focus and learning time is lost. This is particularly true for middle-ability pupils.
- Teachers are not consistent in dealing with pupils' errors and misconceptions in spelling, punctuation and grammar. This slows the progress in writing for some pupils.
- Middle leaders, including in the early years, have helped to improve teaching and learning. They do not pay enough attention, however, to the progress made by groups of pupils. This makes it difficult to set targets for improvement effectively. The impact of the work of middle leaders is not precisely measured and therefore does not contribute enough to the school's development.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that all middle leaders:
  - use the schools' tracking system regularly to check the progress that pupils from different groups are making from their individual starting points
  - evaluate the effectiveness of their plans for improvement more precisely to help them to decide what future action is needed.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that all teachers:
  - consistently correct pupils' errors and misconceptions in spelling, punctuation and grammar
  - challenge and support middle-ability pupils throughout lessons to maximise their engagement with learning and accelerate their progress.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The leadership of the school has changed since the previous inspection. On his arrival in September 2016, the executive headteacher quickly identified weaknesses within the school. He implemented some changes to tackle these. On her arrival in September 2017, the head of school implemented further necessary changes. The school has benefited from their strong leadership. The executive headteacher and the head of school have a good understanding of the school's strengths and next steps to further improvement.
- Leaders have been active in seeking additional support from outside the school. The local authority, the Fairfields Teaching School Alliance and a partnership school have provided useful help. These actions have contributed significantly to the pace of improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the early years. Leaders are now in a good position to continue developing the school with a much-reduced level of support.
- The executive headteacher and the head of school have the respect of staff, governors, the vast majority of parents and the local authority. Teachers believe that the senior leadership team's clear and unwavering goals make the school 'a much happier place'. Staff said they feel trusted, valued and respected. They appreciate the supportive culture that has been created.
- The leader for special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is effective because she knows the individual needs and backgrounds of pupils well. She uses this knowledge strategically to plan improvements, target support and check progress. She creates learning plans with pupils and their parents to support learning. Resources and additional funds are used effectively. The leader for SEN and/or disabilities does not currently hold the required qualification but plans are in place for this to be completed in the near future.
- The curriculum offered is broad and balanced. Work in pupils' books show that they benefit from a wide variety of interesting topics. These capture their interest, allowing them to learn about the world around them. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain because British values are covered in the curriculum. Pupils in Year 5, for example, discussed their understanding of various faiths and compared how kindness and love are common in all religions. The curriculum is extended through a range of extra-curricular activities, which are well attended.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is promoted through a variety of interesting experiences. An African school choir visited the school, sharing their musical talents as well as their life experiences. This was done formally in an assembly and informally at playtime when the children shared each other's games.
- Leaders ensure that the additional government funding such as the pupil premium and the primary physical education and sport funding has been effectively used. The attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils are carefully tracked. Leaders target support according to individual needs. Pupils enjoy a variety of team sports and their participation in sporting events is monitored.

- The vast majority of parents engage positively with the school. Leaders regularly invite them into assemblies to celebrate pupils' good work. Parents said that, because of the openness of staff, communication has improved since the previous inspection. They would recommend the school to others.
- Middle leaders have helped to implement the changes that have led to improvement since the previous inspection. They have attended training that has equipped them with effective strategies to improve standards for pupils in their subjects or other areas. They do not, however, currently use the school's tracking system systematically to check the progress of groups of pupils. Plans for improvement in their subjects are not robust enough. This is because subject leaders do not evaluate the effectiveness of their work to guide them in setting new priorities.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are ambitious for the school and the future of every pupil. They have responded well to the outcomes of the previous inspection, and are determined that the school will continue to improve. The chair of the governing body leads it very well, drawing on a good understanding of the roles and responsibilities of governors in securing school improvement.
- Governors understand their responsibilities in managing and overseeing the school's finances and the use of additional government funding. They are aware of the use of additional funds such as the pupil premium and receive updates about the impact on pupils' progress.
- The governing body is developing its effectiveness in holding senior leaders to account for the school's performance. Governors ask pertinent and increasingly probing questions. They do not all have the skills, however, to accurately analyse and interpret the information provided for them.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that all necessary checks are made when recruiting staff and volunteers. The school works well with external agencies to provide support for pupils and their families. Records show that concerns are dealt with effectively and in a timely manner.
- Teachers, teaching assistants and other staff undertake regular training. They know what they should look for when considering the well-being of pupils. Pupils and the vast majority of their parents agreed that the school is a safe place to learn. Pupils said that they appreciate the improvements made to the front entrance because it makes them feel safer in school.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have been successful in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. It is now consistently good throughout the school and leads to pupils making good progress.

- Pupils' engagement in their learning is usually high because lessons are well planned and resourced. Teachers use varied strategies, including modelling their expectations of pupils. These are well matched to the activities and desired learning. Pupils said that they enjoy their lessons and teachers make them fun.
- Teachers and teaching assistants often extend pupils' learning through well-thought-through questioning. They encourage pupils to think for themselves and to explain their answers by giving reasons behind their thinking. As a result, pupils are deepening their understanding of concepts and developing independence in their learning.
- Phonics is taught well throughout the school and helps pupils to develop their early reading skills. Pupils also use their phonic knowledge to support their writing. Pupils who do not reach the expected standard in phonics in Year 1 typically catch up with their peers by the time they leave Year 2 because they are taught well.
- Staff check the progress of individual pupils rigorously. This process identifies underachievement quickly and interventions are effectively put in place.
- Writing and mathematics are taught well across the curriculum. Teachers give pupils opportunities to apply their skills in various subjects. Pupils in Year 3 wrote information leaflets about the Stone Age following a visit from a drama company. Pupils in Year 6 created a comparison graph to show the relationship between the gestation periods of mammals to their adult body weight. As a result, pupils gained a deep understanding of key skills.
- Teachers encourage pupils to think scientifically. They use investigations effectively and creatively to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts. Pupils in Year 4 explored how different instruments created different pitches. As a result, pupils attain above the national average in science.
- The majority of parents feel that they receive valuable information about their child's progress. Once a month, teachers invite parents into to school to join in a lesson with their child.
- Teachers usually give pupils time to reflect on their learning and improve their work. Work in pupils' books generally shows that they are making good progress as a result. Teachers are not consistent, however, in dealing with pupils' errors and misconceptions in spelling, grammar and punctuation. This is slowing some pupils' progress in writing.
- Activities are usually well matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Teachers do not consistently ensure that all pupils are sufficiently challenged during lessons and that they are making enough progress. As a result, some pupils do not consistently make the progress of which they are capable. This is particularly true for middle-ability pupils.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Strong relationships between adults and pupils support an orderly environment where pupils enjoy learning. Pupils said that the adults in school are caring and that 'you can ask them anything'.

- Pupils said that they feel safe at school and that they are taught how to keep themselves safe on the internet and when using social media. They understand the various forms that bullying can take and said that this happens very rarely in school. They, and the vast majority of parents, stated that they feel confident that the adults in school effectively deal with these rare incidents.
- Pupils are confident and enjoy speaking with visitors. They eloquently discussed their work with adults and with each other. They work cooperatively, supporting one another's learning inside and out of the classroom. Pupils are using this confidence to develop independence in their own learning.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are well mannered and friendly, both inside the classroom and around the school. The vast majority of pupils respond quickly and appropriately to adults' instructions, including during playtimes and lunchtimes. Consequently, very little learning time is lost.
- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy attending. Classrooms, corridors and the outdoors are tidy and the atmosphere is bright and welcoming. Pupils, staff, governors and the vast majority of parents value this learning culture highly.
- Behaviour in lessons is generally good. Pupils consider the views of others and support one another in their learning. Occasionally, when tasks are not well matched to pupils' abilities, some pupils drift into off-task behaviour and become complacent in their learning. Teachers tackle any signs of misbehaviour promptly and pupils are quick to respond because relationships are so positive. Pupils take pride in their appearance.
- Attendance is in line with the national average. Pupils arrive punctually and are ready to learn.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Good

- Children enter the early years with levels of development which are typical for their age. From these starting points, children make good progress and the vast majority leave the Reception Year with a good level of development.
- In 2017, pupils' attainment at the expected standard at the end of key stage 1 was above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion exceeding the expected standard in writing was average. In reading and mathematics, however, smaller proportions than found nationally achieved beyond the expected standard.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 has shown improvement. In 2017, the proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics increased and were above the national averages. The proportions of pupils reaching the higher standard in reading and mathematics also increased and were above the national averages. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard in writing decreased slightly, however, but remains above the national average.
- By the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils in 2017 reaching the expected

standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined was above the national average. The proportion reaching the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined was also above the national average.

- Work in pupils' books show that the vast majority of pupils throughout the school are making at least the expected progress from their starting points, regardless of their ability or background.
- Pupils enjoy reading and they read widely and often. Reading journals show that pupils change their books regularly and that there is good communication between home and school. Pupils use a variety of strategies, including their phonics skills, to read unfamiliar words. They demonstrate a good understanding of what they read and are developing secure skills of inference skills.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 was below the national average. This is a dip from previous years because, historically, the school's results have been in line with or above the national average.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- Provision in the early years has improved significantly since the previous inspection. The local authority and the Fairfield's Teaching School Alliance have both provided effective support. As a result, children are well prepared for entering Year 1.
- Children generally enter the early years with typical skills and knowledge for their age. They make good progress from their starting points. Children's attainment has been in line with or above the national average for the past three years. Current children in the Reception Year are on track for similar results.
- All activities have a clear purpose and all areas of learning are catered for, both indoors and out. The newly renovated outdoor area is stimulating and an exciting place in which to learn. Children are motivated and eager to join in activities, interacting with adults and each other well.
- Careful planning by adults means that children maintain their focus on their activities. For example, children worked from a previously created picture plan to retell a story that helped them to write at length. Adults deal with errors and misconceptions quickly, helping children to make good progress.
- The learning environment is stimulating. It provides many opportunities for children to practise key language and number skills. Resources are well organised and thought out, allowing children to develop their independent learning skills.
- Early phonics, reading, writing and mathematics skills are taught well. Adults encourage the children to develop their skills through modelling the same skills. They correct children's mistakes when necessary. During an adult-led writing activity, for example, children were reminded of the tricky spelling of the word 'was' when it was misspelled phonically.
- The curriculum provides a broad range of interesting experiences. Adults are keen to find out what the children want to learn about and plan topics based on their interests.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective and children's welfare is paramount. The

early years leader actively promotes a high level of parental engagement. Parents are invited to participate in 'walk-in' mornings, which allow them to see what their children have been learning.

- Most parents actively contribute to the assessments of their children's work. They use the school's own online assessment system to add comments and photographs of learning which has taken place at home.
- The school has strong links with the local pre-school which the majority of children attend before starting school. Teachers visit the children in the pre-school during the summer term. Children also visit their new school in the summer term, which allows them to experience school life before the start of term. Teachers also visit the children in their homes before school starts. From these visits, positive relationships begin to develop that help children to get off to a good start in school.
- The leader has a solid understanding of the needs of the individual children. Staff are quick to assess the needs and abilities of the children accurately. They use this information to provide early support where it is needed. The leader, however, does not currently have a clear overview of the year group as a whole or of trends over time. As a result, plans for further improvement are not precise or robust enough.



## School details

Unique reference number	121892
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10041563

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Brodie
Headteacher	Phil Webster (executive headteacher) Karen Sarbutts (head of school)
Telephone number	01908 267700
Website	<a href="http://www.oldstratfordschool.org.uk">www.oldstratfordschool.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:bursar@oldstratford.northants-ecl.gov.uk">bursar@oldstratford.northants-ecl.gov.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	2–3 February 2016

## Information about this school

- The school has had several changes in leadership over the past four years. The current executive headteacher has been in post since September 2016 and the current head of school has been in post since June 2017.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well below the national average.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning throughout the school in 10 lessons, all of which were observed jointly with either the executive headteacher or the head of school. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work in books covering a range of subjects, abilities and year groups.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, head of school, middle leaders with responsibility for the early years and SEN and/or disabilities, subject leaders for English and mathematics, as well as a group of class teachers and teaching assistants.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body and spoke with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Fairfields Teaching School Alliance.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils and considered their views. They also spoke informally with pupils during lessons and during breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors considered the 62 responses from Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as 60 comments from the free-text service. They also spoke informally with parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation of the school's performance, the school's plans for improvement, minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's most recent information on pupils' attainment and progress and information related to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

Heidi Malliff, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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