

King's Oak Primary School

Oak Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK42 0HH

Inspection dates

13–14 March 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	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders, including governors, have not maintained the good quality of education. Pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 in 2017 was low.
- Despite recent improvements, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too uneven within and across each key stage.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress across the school varies. Leaders, including governors, have not ensured that additional government funding has had the necessary impact on increasing pupils' progress.
- Some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Most-able pupils do not consistently make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities do not make consistently good progress across the curriculum.
- Pupils' attendance is below the national average and persistent absence is too high. This low attendance has contributed to some pupils' inconsistent progress.
- A small proportion of pupils do not display the same considerate behaviour as the majority of their friends at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Governors have not held leaders to account sufficiently well for the progress pupils make, including those who are disadvantaged.
- A small proportion of parents and carers would like more information about their children's education.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the current strengths and weaknesses. The actions they are taking are bringing about the necessary, sustained improvements.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They are cooperative and supportive of each other in their learning. Relationships are positive.
- Pupils, including those in need of additional support, are safe and well cared for in school.
- School leaders and the family support worker provide considerable, effective help to pupils and families who need it.
- Children make a good start to their education. Leadership of the early years is very effective.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is provided for well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' outcomes, by:
 - refining and accelerating strategies to ensure that all groups of pupils make at least good progress by the end of key stage 2.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
 - ensuring that pupils' attendance continues to improve so it is at least in line with national averages
 - reviewing and making necessary amendments to the school's approach to making sure pupils' behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime improves.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - further developing strategies to reduce the level of inconsistency in the quality of teaching within and across each key stage
 - ensuring that teachers apply the highest expectations of what groups of pupils are capable of achieving across the curriculum, including those who are disadvantaged, those who have SEN and/or disabilities, and the most able.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, by:
 - increasing the effectiveness with which governors hold leaders to account for the progress pupils make, including those who are disadvantaged, and so ensure pupils' achievement improves
 - continue to improve the leadership of the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, so they make at least good progress
 - review and make appropriate amendments to the way the school communicates with parents about their children's education.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection leaders have not maintained the good quality of education. However, this has been over a period of considerable change. The headteacher, with the support of governors, has overseen the school's transition from a lower school with 350 pupils to a primary school of over 900 pupils.
- By the end of key stage 2 in 2015 and 2016, pupils made progress similar to that of other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics. The progress they made in writing was considerably better than that of their peers nationally. This was not the case in 2017, when pupils' achievement was too low in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2017, leaders, including governors, did not monitor provision effectively enough to prevent pupils' considerable underachievement by the end of key stage 2. Leaders have learned lessons from this and are demonstrating the capacity to make the necessary changes. With appropriate external support, they have increased the pace of school improvement this year. Nevertheless, despite developments in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, pupils still do not yet consistently make the progress of which they are capable.
- Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of what needs to improve across the school and in their individual areas of responsibility. They are now systematic, thorough and accurate in checking the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The impact of their work can particularly be seen in the early years, the teaching of phonics and the further development of the curriculum.
- Leaders do not evaluate their plans with sufficient precision to enable them to prioritise future actions as effectively as they could. This has caused a small proportion of staff to express concern about the rate and volume of changes and how these are communicated by senior leaders.
- The quality of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is improving but is not yet good. Adults identify each individual pupil's needs and put in place appropriate strategies to support their learning. With the exception of the early years, however, leaders have not ensured that teachers are consistently effective in implementing strategies that enable pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to make good progress.
- Leaders are not using additional funds as well as they should. Leaders have taken care to put in place a range of strategies that are boosting disadvantaged pupils' attendance, confidence and readiness to learn. However, leaders do not evaluate well enough the impact of the spending on the progress disadvantaged pupils make. As a result, while disadvantaged pupils' achievement and attendance are improving, the rate of improvement is not as rapid as leaders would like it to be.
- Parents and pupils express their appreciation for the additional sporting activities provided at the school. Activities such as mini Olympics, dance and boxercise are leading to an increase in pupils' participation in sport. Leaders acknowledge they need to be more systematic in their analysis of how effectively the physical education (PE) and sports funding is allocated.
- Staff who replied to their online questionnaire were positive about the quality of

professional development they receive. For example, as a result of an appropriate programme of training, teachers are more confident and effective in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics.

- Subject leaders are increasingly effective in their roles. They have undertaken a careful review of the quality of education in their subject areas and have made appropriate amendments to the curriculum and how it is delivered. Subject leaders monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in each subject and, rightly, offer support and challenge to teachers when they are needed. As a consequence, pupils' progress in subjects such as reading and mathematics is improving across the school.
- School leaders have developed a curriculum that provides pupils with equal opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills. Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoy topics such as the Egyptians, Aztecs and farmboy. Leaders ensure the curriculum is enriched through a wide variety of additional activities. Pupils broaden their knowledge and understanding through trips to museums, cultural and sporting activities and the school's own farm. Pupils are developing an age-appropriate awareness of British society and cultures.
- Leaders work with some success to inform parents of, and involve them in, their children's education through frequent newsletters, regular coffee mornings and parent workshops. Leaders also seek the opinions of parents through annual surveys. However, during this inspection, a small proportion of parents expressed frustration with the quality of communication about their children's education.
- School leaders are making increasingly effective use of the support offered by external partners. The local authority recognised it needed to amend the support offered to the school and has done so effectively. Leaders are also working successfully with a local teaching school and academy trust to assure themselves of the accuracy of their judgements about the quality of education at King's Oak Primary School.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has not been effective enough in challenging leaders. Consequently, since the previous inspection, leaders and governors have not maintained and improved the quality of education provided.
- Governors, under the leadership of an experienced and knowledgeable chair of the governing body, are dedicated to their roles and to the academic and social well-being of pupils.
- The governing body is reflective and recognises it has, in the past, been too reliant upon information from senior leaders in its monitoring of the school. Governors did not check the accuracy of the information they received well enough.
- The governing body has made changes to how it operates. Governors make more frequent, regular, focused visits to school to dig deeper and check the quality of education. Governors record their findings with care, but are not consistently using the information well enough to provide robust challenge to senior leaders.
- Governors have not been sufficiently effective in their monitoring of the impact of pupil premium funding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders, including governors, have ensured the school fulfils its statutory safeguarding duties. Records and safeguarding documents are fit for purpose.
- Pupils told inspectors they feel safe at school. Pupils explained that if they had concerns they would be confident speaking to adults at school. Pupils were equally confident that teachers and support staff would help to resolve any problems they had. Pupils also demonstrate an age-appropriate awareness of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- Evidence from the school's parent surveys and from the opinions expressed by parents on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, indicate that a very large majority agree their children are safe at school.
- Leaders ensure that staff receive appropriate safeguarding training and updates. Staff know pupils well and are alert to the signs that indicate a pupil may be at risk and in need of support. Adults told inspectors that when they report concerns, senior leaders are swift to respond and provide appropriate feedback on the actions taken.
- School records confirm that leaders take timely and proportionate action when a pupil or their family is in need of additional support. Leaders also ensure that records of any accidents are well maintained. However, leaders' systems for directly informing parents of the details of minor accidents could be further improved.
- Governors ensure that the school carries out appropriate recruitment checks on adults working at the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment remains too varied, both within and across year groups, and requires further improvement. Pupils are not consistently provided with enough opportunities to learn well across the curriculum. As a consequence, pupils still make inconsistent progress from their individual starting points.
- The effectiveness with which teachers implement, explain and adapt learning activities in lessons varies too much. In classes where learning is less strong, pupils are not sufficiently clear about the knowledge and skills they are meant to be developing. This is despite the fact that most teachers carefully take into account pupils' needs and capabilities when planning learning activities in English and mathematics.
- Teachers do not use the school's chosen marking and feedback policy consistently well. Inspection evidence demonstrates that, in several classes, teachers provide general affirmation or recommendations, but do not check that pupils improve specific aspects of their work. In other cases, however, teachers' precise, subject-specific guidance means pupils know what to do to improve and confidently do so.
- Teachers do not apply consistently high expectations of what most-able pupils can achieve. In some classes learning activities limit the extent to which the most able pupils are able to practise and develop high-quality English and mathematics skills.

Where practice is stronger over time, most-able pupils are challenged to excel, and they respond enthusiastically and well.

- Teachers' subject knowledge is not consistently good enough in science. Where this is the case, teachers do not pick up on pupils' misconceptions quickly enough and mistakes go uncorrected.
- The quality of work in pupils' books demonstrates that teachers' expectations in the teaching of subjects other than English and mathematics vary too widely. For example, the logical sequences of learning evident in mathematics books are not commonplace in pupils' work in science. This leads to pupils making inconsistent progress.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of the skills they want pupils to develop in reading, writing and mathematics. When teachers implement this knowledge well in key stage 1 and key stage 2, pupils respond enthusiastically to their careful planning of learning activities and precise, clear instruction.
- Adults work effectively to develop pupils' speaking skills and pupils work eagerly and well as they practise speaking and listening. For example, pupils in a lower key stage 2 class confidently developed their use of timing, expression and tone as they worked together to practise their dialogue.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are typically skilled at developing and maintaining a constructive and supportive classroom environment. Teaching assistants work effectively and well with pupils who need additional support. This results in a harmonious atmosphere in which pupils gain confidence in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have ensured that the school provides well for pupils' and their families' welfare. Parents told inspectors how much they value the efforts of the highly effective family support worker to help them improve their English language, financial skills and confidence. Increasing numbers of families attend the school on Christmas Day for a community lunch.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is provided for well. Pupils know why it is important to study different faiths. Pupils, from an early age, develop an understanding of fairness and respect through topics such as 'all different, all the same'. Pupils learn about friendship, sharing and tolerance through the school's personal, social and health education programme. Pupils' reflective, cooperative behaviour in lessons is indicative of the impact of adults' work to develop a harmonious school community.
- Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as those of the elected school council membership and the school's own young leaders programme. As a result, pupils develop a mature understanding of the importance of leadership, the process of democracy and decision-making, and the celebration of achievement.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and what it is not. They explained that while there

are a few instances of bullying, teachers are effective at resolving them. Pupils demonstrated that they are equally comfortable speaking with adults to resolve any falling out with friends that may occur.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' attendance has been lower than the national average for the previous three years. The proportion of pupils who have been persistently absent has also been higher than is the case nationally. Leaders rightly identified that low attendance had a negative impact on the achievement of a small proportion of pupils in 2017.
- Leaders' actions have led to an improvement in pupils' attendance, including that of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has fallen, but remains higher than national figures. School leaders rightly make pupils' attendance an ongoing improvement priority.
- Key stage 1 pupils typically play well at breaktime and lunchtime. They make appropriate and enthusiastic use of the wide range of equipment and activities provided for them. However, leaders have not ensured that all key stage 2 pupils are suitably aware of the impact of their highly energetic playing on other pupils around them. As a result, some minor accidents occur, which could be avoided.
- A small number of pupils told inspectors they would welcome a more understanding approach from some of the school's adult play leaders when they report that pupils' behaviour in the playground has become too boisterous or, on occasions, unkind.
- Pupils typically behave well in lessons. They happily cooperate in their learning and are supportive of each other and the adults who work with them. As a result, pupils are increasingly confident and resilient in their learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016, by the end of key stage 2, pupils made progress in line with their peers nationally in reading and mathematics, and significantly better than those peers in writing. However, in 2017 pupils' achievement in this key stage fell and was significantly below that of other pupils nationally in each subject. Inspection evidence demonstrates that pupils in key stage 2 are now making improved, but not yet good, progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Lower proportions of pupils achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check in both 2016 and 2017. Given their individual starting points, this does not represent good progress. As a result of leaders' effective amendments to how phonics is taught, pupils in school are making considerably better, but not yet good, progress.
- In 2017, lower proportions of pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics than was the case nationally by the end of key stage 1. Inspection evidence indicates that, as a result of better teaching, pupils' achievement is improving. However, it remains too variable.
- Most-able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, have not consistently achieved the standards of which they are capable. The proportions working at greater

depth and the high standard in each key stage are improving, but remain lower than they should be.

- Disadvantaged pupils' achievement is lower than that of other pupils nationally at each key stage and requires improvement. In some classes, adults do not use suitably amended teaching strategies or resources so that disadvantaged pupils can make consistently good progress.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make inconsistent progress. This is because teachers are not yet equally skilled at providing these pupils with the precise support they need to excel.
- Evidence from work in pupils' books demonstrates that the progress they make in subjects other than English and mathematics is still too uneven in both key stages.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years provision is well led. The leader has an in-depth understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. She is taking decisive and effective action to bring about continuous, sustained improvements.
- Because of the good teaching they receive, children, many of whom enter early years with skills and capabilities below those expected for their age, make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Leaders have taken care to develop the early years environment so that it is supportive of children's learning. In addition to the well-organised main classrooms, there is a well-resourced outdoor learning area. Children enthusiastically make use of this area to develop their physical, social and communication skills and aptitudes. Leaders have also ensured that there are suitably adapted areas for children who want quieter learning opportunities.
- Adults quickly and accurately identify the capabilities of each child when they join either the small provision for two-year-olds, Nursery or Reception. Making good use of this information, adults put in place appropriate support and challenge. For example, the leader of the early years allocates one-to-one help or small-group activities for children in most need of support. Inspection evidence demonstrates that these pupils make swift gains in their fine motor skills and their basic skills.
- Adults make skilful use of what they know about the children to plan meaningful and interesting learning activities. Children are increasingly keen learners and are delighted to show adults their work. For example, a small group of boys proudly explained how much money they had and what they were spending it on as they worked happily together in their shop.
- Children know and understand what is expected of them. They follow the clearly established routines and move between activities happily and well. Children typically behave nicely, taking turns and learning and playing together harmoniously. For example, a small group of children worked very well together outside as they built an insect habitat. Through adults' provision of well-thought-out activities, children are increasingly inquisitive and curious in their learning.
- Leaders have placed great emphasis on developing children's speaking skills and are successful in doing so. Leaders are being equally effective in their emphasis on the

development of children's writing. As a consequence, children, including those who speak English as an additional language, are progressively more confident communicators.

- Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements in the early years are effective and children are cared for well.

School details

Unique reference number	109502
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10044161

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	907
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Davies
Headteacher	Mrs Ali England
Telephone number	01234 220480
Website	www.kingsoakprimary.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@kingsoakprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 March 2013

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Since the previous inspection, the school, formerly known as Stephenson Lower School, has undergone a transition to primary school status and now provides education for pupils from the early years to the end of key stage 2.
- The proportion of children and pupils who are believed to speak English as an additional language is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils for which the school is in receipt of the government's pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The percentage of children and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have education, health and care plans is in line with the national average.
- The school includes a specially resourced provision for a very small number of pupils with a hearing impairment.

- In 2017, the school did not meet the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made visits to 50 lessons. Almost all of these visits were undertaken

alongside a member of the senior leadership team. Inspectors, together with members of the school's leadership team, also evaluated the quality of work in pupils' books in lessons and in the displays around the school site.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and when moving around the school site at breaktime and lunchtime. During these times, inspectors held informal discussions with pupils about their learning and play.
- Meetings were held with: four groups of pupils; the headteacher; other senior leaders; one group of subject leaders; two groups of teachers; one group of teaching assistants; the family support worker; two members of the school's governing body; and three representatives of the local authority. The lead inspector also had telephone conversations with the local authority's director of children's services and with a headteacher providing support to the school.
- Inspectors considered 23 responses to Ofsted's free-text service, alongside 55 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day on both days of the inspection. The lead inspector also spoke with a group of parents attending a regular workshop. Inspectors also evaluated 94 responses from staff to their online questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors evaluated the information contained in the school's documentation relating to: safeguarding and child protection; curriculum development; pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour; school development and improvement plans; leaders' self-evaluation; external audits of the quality of provision; school leaders' allocation of pupil premium funding; leaders' plans and evaluation of the PE and sport premium funding; and the school's own surveys of parent opinions.

Inspection team

John Lucas, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lynn Lowery	Ofsted Inspector
Ceri Evans	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Maher	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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