

Oakley Cross Primary School and Nursery

Lomond Walk, West Auckland, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL14 9UD

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and governors share a strong vision and determination to promote pupils' personal development. They are committed to ensuring that pupils achieve highly. Staff are motivated by this vision in their day-to-day work with pupils. As a result, the school is improving.
- Pupils feel safe and know how to stay safe. They are cared for well and trust adults in the school to help them if they have a worry.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning and behave well. Attendance has improved over time. Pupils are self-confident. They show pride in their school.
- Pupils understand the importance of healthy exercise and food. Their very positive relationships with each other and staff support their emotional well-being well.
- Pupils understand the importance of respect for people from different backgrounds, beliefs and traditions. They make a contribution to their local community and wider society. Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school.
- Teachers and classroom staff plan interesting and engaging lessons. As a result, pupils respond positively and make good progress across a range of subjects.
- Occasionally, teachers miss opportunities to challenge pupils to re-apply their learning.
- Early years, including the provision for two-year-olds, is well led. Children are kept safe. Children have many opportunities to flourish across a wide range of development areas.
- Leaders tackle underperformance systematically and rigorously. As a result, rates of progress are improving quickly overall. Boys' progress in reading is improving quickly in almost all classes but has not yet closed the gap with girls' achievement.
- Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. With senior leaders, they use resources and staff skills well to enhance the impact of teaching. They target the correct areas for improvement, providing challenge and support. However, governors do not check early enough that good progress is made to address the school's key priorities.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - building more rapidly on pupils' prior learning of phonics in early years to accelerate fluency in reading, especially for boys in key stage 1
 - developing further staff skills to ensure high levels of challenge that consolidate pupils' skills and develop their understanding.
- Continue to improve the quality of leadership and management further by sharpening governors' challenge to school leaders, checking promptly that actions to improve performance towards key priorities, such as progress in reading, are effective.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, with her senior staff, models her strong vision for excellence in personal development, well-being and achievement through her day-to-day work with staff and pupils. Knowledgeable governors provide good levels of support and challenge, setting a clear strategic direction for further improvement and development.
- Staff are enthusiastic, skilled and increasingly effective in living out the school's vision in their work with pupils. Staff feel valued and know they are making a difference to pupils' lives and their future. As a consequence, pupils, including children in the provision for two-year-olds and early years, develop their personal skills exceptionally well. They learn well and make good progress across a wide range of subjects. Following a period of significant change and some weaker performance in areas such as reading in the past, the school is now improving rapidly.
- Leaders have high expectations of themselves, staff and pupils. This makes a major contribution to the school's increasingly strong momentum for improvement. All staff play a part in leading forward development and improving outcomes for pupils. They are ambitious for the pupils in their care. The school's work to assure pupils' very strong personal development and well-being enhances their readiness to learn. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next steps in their education, as they move through school and continue their studies in local secondary schools.
- Leaders use information from checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress skilfully to put in place training for staff that improves pupils' learning. Leaders spot areas of underachievement and take steps to address them quickly. They have been careful to prioritise those areas that needed the most attention first.
- Leaders use their detailed knowledge of pupils' needs to target the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively. As a consequence, disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress, and in some cases, better progress, as others in the school.
- The school's current focus on improving reading is successful. Shared planning and training have improved teaching. Shared moderation with local schools and local authority officers provides the school with confidence in its work and informs the next steps of development. As a consequence, current pupils demonstrate much stronger skills in spelling and grammar, comprehension and the skills needed to make sense of what they read. Leaders recognise that some boys have not improved their fluency in reading as quickly as girls, and are sharpening their focus further to improve this area of performance too.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have effective opportunities to learn well across a wide range of subjects, as well as in English and mathematics. Subject leaders attend regional network meetings to gather information about good practice and share this with other staff in school. They check pupils' achievement regularly to ensure that they make good progress in subject-specific knowledge, skills and understanding. Careful curriculum planning and this well-considered approach to checking pupils' progress, across the range of subjects, support the good progress that pupils make.

- Together with the planned personal development programme, the curriculum as a whole provides effective opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe, including when they make use of digital technologies.
- Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain, because leaders ensure that the personal development programme complements the rest of the school's curriculum. Leaders and staff organise additional activities. The free breakfast club and wide range of extra-curricular clubs are popular and well-attended. They make an important contribution to pupils' wider learning and development. Alongside the wide range of visits out of school and visitors to the school, clubs and the more formal planned personal development programme contribute very effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They underpin the school's work to promote diversity and equality, fully meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
- Leaders use the additional funding available to them through the physical education (PE) and sport premium to provide access to a wide range of sporting experiences. Leaders build the skills of staff to lead sporting activities themselves through the employment of specialist coaches. This contributes well to pupils' enjoyment of participation in healthy physical activity.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the needs of pupils well in the context of the local community. They are ambitious for all pupils to achieve well and are committed to their personal development in a safe environment. Governors provide support and challenge by:
 - visiting the school frequently to find out for themselves the quality of pupils' work and pupils' views
 - setting clear priorities with senior leaders for the school's development and improvement. This enables them to hold leaders to account. However, governors do not check that the school's actions to improve key priorities are making a difference early enough
 - ensuring that they are well informed about developments and improvements across the whole curriculum, including personal development. This focus sustains their ambition to promote all pupils' well-being and achievement
 - keeping a firm focus on safeguarding pupils, so that it underpins the rest of the school's work.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The highly effective personal development programme helps pupils understand risks, healthy relationships and safe use of the internet. Pupils know right from wrong. Together these help keep pupils safe.
- Governors and leaders work together to ensure that all the required safeguarding checks are made to ensure that only suitable adults work with pupils. They ensure that staff are well trained and kept up to date with safeguarding issues, so that they know the signs of neglect and abuse. As a result, staff are vigilant and know what to do if

they have a concern about a pupil's well-being. The school works closely with families and a range of teams and agencies to ensure that early help is put in place, when it is required.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers use their strong subject knowledge and knowledge of pupils' prior learning to plan effectively. As a result, pupils find their lessons interesting and they participate very well.
- Teachers and classroom staff have high expectations both of pupils' conduct during lessons and also of the quality of work they produce. Staff are adept at using questioning to check whether pupils have understood correctly and help them correct their understanding if needed. As a consequence, pupils are proud of their achievements and improve their work.
- When staff use pupils' answers to their questions to re-shape tasks and sharpen challenge for pupils of different abilities, learning moves forward rapidly. This supports well the strong progress that current pupils make, including the most able. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, pupils tried out different ways to solve multiplication problems that stretched their thinking and understanding. However, occasionally, teachers miss the opportunity to ensure that pupils are challenged frequently during lessons to re-apply their learning, and so demonstrate their understanding and skills.
- Teachers plan tasks carefully so that pupils deepen their knowledge and develop their skills well from their different starting points. Pupils are able to discuss their learning and take note of advice staff give them to improve their work. As a result, pupils feel that staff support them in their learning.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. Pupils' work, seen in a wide range of books across the key stages, confirms that they make good progress across the curriculum. Pupils say that they enjoy a wide range of learning.
- Teachers and classroom staff are successful in developing pupils' strong writing skills. Pupils practise and consolidate these by writing in different contexts and genres in their topic books. The determined focus to improve pupils' spelling and punctuation is meeting with considerable success, as current pupils write with increasing fluency and accuracy.
- The work to improve spelling and grammar forms a complementary part of the school's work to improve reading. Training to improve the teaching of reading skills, especially comprehension, information retrieval and inference, is paying dividends. Pupils' progress in these areas is improving rapidly at both key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Pupils make use of their phonics knowledge to help them read aloud and make sense of unfamiliar words. The vast majority of pupils meet the phonics screening check standard. They improve their ability to make sense of what they read. However, teachers do not make enough use of phonics skills acquired in early years to promote fluency in reading at key stage 1, especially for boys.
- The exceptionally positive attitudes to learning, engendered by the school's determination that every learner should succeed, characterise learning in every

teaching group. Learning is constructive, personalised and meaningful to pupils. Teachers celebrate learning with them, and inspectors saw no examples where staff needed to check behaviour or challenge inappropriate language.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- It provides pupils, including children in early years, with rich opportunities to acquire interpersonal skills to get along with others. They demonstrate this throughout the day in their interactions with each other and with staff. Mutual respect for each other is the norm. As a consequence, pupils develop into confident and self-assured young people, who value and enjoy their learning.
- Pupils learn about the backgrounds, beliefs and traditions of others and have a very well-developed understanding of the rights of everyone to live free from discrimination. The collaboration between staff and pupils to achieve the Rights Respecting School award and the International School award, celebrates pupils' understanding of, and commitment to equality and diversity. Pupils are curious about, and respectful of others, able to discuss and celebrate differences in religious beliefs, family backgrounds and traditions.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying and know the distress and harm it can cause. They say that bullying is extremely rare and is always dealt with very well by staff. As a result, pupils trust staff to help them if they have any kind of concern. Pupils say that they are very well cared for and feel safe in school. They are confident that they can and will get help if they have a worry or concern. Parents and carers reflect this confidence in responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- Pupils know how to keep safe, lead a healthy lifestyle and keep well emotionally. In age-appropriate ways, pupils learn about the importance of keeping safe. They learn about the importance of physical activity and healthy food to keep well. They also learn to understand that help is available to them from a trusted adult to help them keep well emotionally. They learn about and develop their understanding of healthy relationships as they grow through the school. These aspects all contribute to keeping children safe at school and in their community.
- Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to keep safe when using digital technologies, including the use of social networking sites. A group of pupils, the 'E-Cadets', support and deliver key messages about the dangers associated with the use of the internet, and also the significant benefits for young people. In a whole-school assembly, the E-Cadets used a thought-provoking story to highlight how a series of mistakes could have led to problems and that talking with a trusted adult is always good advice.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave very well throughout the day. They are thoughtful and caring towards each other, adults and visitors. They act as full partners in learning with adults in the school.
- Pupils demonstrate a full understanding of the rules in the school, and why they are there. Beyond following the rules, pupils help each other to get along extremely well and acquire high levels of skills to learn to appreciate each other's points of view.
- The school has been successful in improving attendance over recent terms. Previous attendance was low and the proportion of pupils who did not attend regularly enough was very high. This proportion of persistent absentees has reduced quickly during recent months. School leaders know that these successes need to be sustained or improved further.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and consistently good teaching enable them to make good progress, taking their starting points into consideration. Leaders' determination to improve outcomes for all pupils is aligned to effective professional development. As a result, previously weaker areas of performance, such as progress in reading, are improving rapidly.
- Effective planning that takes into account pupils' prior achievement, and pitches challenge that stretches them most of the time, supports pupils' continuous good progress well, including for the most able pupils.
- The most able pupils make very positive progress in their learning, because staff almost always take care to set challenging and additional tasks to stretch their thinking and deepen their understanding. They make particularly strong progress in mathematics.
- Progress in reading, writing and mathematics is consistently strong across key stages. Teachers' increased focus on problem solving and the re-application of skills in mathematics and on retrieval and inference skills in reading is quickly accelerating pupils' learning. Progress in these areas is quickly catching up with the very high rates of progress in writing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make consistently good progress from their starting points. Careful checks on the effectiveness of tailored support ensure that their progress and learning are given equal priority as their personal development.
- Effective use of the additional funding made available to support disadvantaged pupils enables them to engage thoroughly in school life. As a consequence, they too make the same good progress as, or better than, others in the school. There is now little difference in their progress when compared with other pupils nationally.
- Teachers plan carefully to develop the specific knowledge, skills and understanding that relate to a full range of other subjects. As they learn through their topics, pupils are able to progress well in specific subject areas too. The vast majority of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are making at least good progress in the wider range

of national curriculum subjects.

- A very high proportion of pupils successfully achieved the standard for the phonics screening check in 2017. The progress of current pupils in this area demonstrates continued high levels of success. However, some boys in key stage 1 and early key stage 2 do not continue to build rapidly on those skills to support further development in reading fluently.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders ensure that they use detailed information from parents as children make a start in Nursery to form a basis for planning that meets children's needs. They seek to find the best ways to develop individual children's skills and understanding. This reflects their high levels of determination to ensure that all children make a very positive start to their education.
- Leaders pay careful attention to children's personal development. As a consequence, children quickly grow in independence and develop improved communication and language skills that are frequently low on entry. Leaders are clear that quick development in communication and personal and social skills can be used as a key to unlocking other areas of development.
- Children in early years begin their learning about respect for others from the outset. They quickly improve their personal and social skills to develop their ability to play and learn with others and take turns. These first steps in their personal development provide a very positive introduction to their personal development throughout the school.
- Children settle quickly into the routines of early years. They grow in confidence, learning to look after their own needs, to share equipment and to move around safely.
- Staff know children well and what they need to do to help them develop well. They use their knowledge to plan, carefully, activities to develop children's skills and understanding. Staff record children's achievements to celebrate learning that continues the school's dialogue with parents and informs further planning for development.
- Staff use their observation skills to identify opportunities to pose questions to children that make them think and develop their understanding further. As a result, children develop their ideas and use their imagination to test them out. This contributes well to the proportions of children who achieved a good level of development in 2017 and which is being sustained this year.
- Staff enhance children's personal development through frequent visits out of school. For example, they visit a local residential home with staff weekly, where they meet and talk with a range of elderly members of the community.
- Leaders and governors ensure that all the safeguarding arrangements for the early years section of the school are effective. The site is secure and daily checks by staff reduce the risk of accidents.
- The statutory welfare requirements for the provision for two-year-olds and for early years are met.

School details

Unique reference number	114069
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10042214

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane Farrer
Headteacher	Rachel Brannan
Telephone number	01388 833186
Website	www.oakleycross.durham.sch.uk
Email address	oakleycross@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	1 July 2014

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in the autumn term 2014, shortly after the previous inspection. There have been a number of staffing changes since then. Recently, a new lead for the early years section has taken up post.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has opened provision for two-year-olds.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards.
- The school serves its local community. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small proportion of pupils are from Gypsy and Roma backgrounds.
- The school has been awarded UNICEF's level 2 Rights Respecting School award and has achieved International School status.
- The school does not currently use alternative education providers.
- The school is supported through the local authority's school improvement service.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning throughout the school. They talked with pupils about their work and day-to-day experience of school life. Inspectors listened to a sample of pupils read aloud.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide selection of pupils' work across year groups and subject areas.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other leaders in the school and with the full staff.
- Inspectors also held discussions with a number of school governors and the school's local authority education development officer.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documents, including those about the school's arrangements to keep children safe, pupils' attendance and records of pupils' progress.
- Inspectors took into account parents' views, given in Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, and talked with a number of parents. Inspectors also considered responses to the Ofsted questionnaires for pupils and for staff.

Inspection team

Chris Campbell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Richard Knowles

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018