

Offmore Primary School

Wordsworth Crescent, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY10 3HA

Inspection dates

12–13 September 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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Governors have not held the headteacher to account, particularly for the impact of the pupil premium grant. The local authority was slow to intervene when standards dipped.
- Teaching is still inconsistent. Staff have not been supported adequately to improve their practice, particularly to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Teaching assistants do not always support pupils effectively in lessons.
- The curriculum does not ensure that knowledge and skills are built upon sequentially, which sometimes limits pupils' progress.
- The school's approach to teaching phonics is not implemented consistently by all staff.
- Attainment by the end of key stage 2 remained below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics in 2017.
- Progress by the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics is now below national averages. Teachers do not use assessment information effectively to match activities to pupils' abilities. Activities do not always allow pupils to apply their skills to deepen their learning.
- Some teachers do not insist on accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. In addition to this, they do not have high enough expectations of pupils' handwriting. This impedes pupils' progress in writing.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher and leadership team now have a much sharper focus on improving teaching and pupils' outcomes. Teachers now receive professional development to improve their practice.
- Leaders have established a robust system for tracking pupils' progress. This helps teachers to identify more clearly which pupils need additional support.
- Attainment in key stage 1 is above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Most parents and carers say that their children feel safe and are happy at school. Pupils enjoy learning and behave well.
- In the early years, children are well cared for and make good progress.
- Although progress for disadvantaged pupils still varies, attainment for disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 2 improved in 2018.
- Safeguarding is effective.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress and attainment across key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - teachers use questioning more effectively to promote discussion in order to consolidate and deepen pupils' knowledge and skills
 - teachers use assessment information more effectively to plan activities that meet the needs of all pupils
 - teachers and teaching assistants receive targeted training to improve their skills in supporting all pupils more effectively, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - teachers pay more attention to the accuracy of grammar, punctuation and spelling in pupils' writing and have high expectations of presentation and handwriting
 - there is a consistent approach to the teaching of synthetic phonics which is implemented by all staff.
- Strengthen leadership further by ensuring that:
 - leaders new to their roles benefit from professional development and support
 - governors continue to develop their skills to hold leaders to account and challenge them about the impact of their decisions
 - curriculum plans are reviewed to ensure that pupils develop their knowledge and skills progressively over time
 - the impact of pupil premium funding and other additional funding is evaluated effectively to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Many areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have not been addressed. In the past, governors did not hold the headteacher to account for the performance of the school. The local authority failed to take action until very recently.
- Following the last inspection, teachers did not receive the support they needed to improve their practice. Many of them felt demoralised and defeated by the lack of guidance and direction. As a result, the quality of teaching did not develop, is currently not consistently good across the school and pupils are not able to capitalise on the strong start they achieve at the beginning of their education.
- However, since March 2018 when the acting headteacher and senior leaders took up their posts, there has been a change in culture. Staffing is now stable, leaders are clear about why and how the school needs to improve and staff share their vision. Teachers say that there is now a sense of team spirit and a real commitment to improvement. Leaders have renewed partnerships, and support from local schools is embraced.
- Parents recognise the improvements since the change in leadership. They appreciate the improved communication, such as regular newsletters. Many parents say that the school is a happier place, that the acting headteacher is welcoming and friendly and that staff are happier.
- In recent months, the acting leadership team has worked hard to ensure that the day-to-day operation of the school runs smoothly. For example, it has ensured that safeguarding practice is robust. This good practice in safeguarding is recognised by the local authority and shared with other schools.
- Leaders did not implement performance management effectively in the past. A comprehensive plan is now in place to provide feedback to teachers through regular monitoring and evaluation, closely linked to the priorities for improvement in the school development plan, to improve the quality of their teaching.
- Teachers design half-termly units of work around curriculum themes. However, knowledge and skills across the curriculum are not always built up sequentially. As a result, pupils' progress is sometimes limited.
- The school offers pupils a range of activities that promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A range of residential trips and visits are offered in many year groups. For example, as part of a recent topic on 'Peter and the Wolf', pupils attended a concert of the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. Pupils talk confidently about different faiths and why it is important for them to understand and respect the beliefs of others. Pupils also learn about democracy through work on the Houses of Parliament. This helps to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders and governors now have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The acting leadership team is relatively inexperienced, and many governors are new to their roles. Together, they are determined to see the school improve. They are fostering partnerships with other schools to ensure that the school benefits from good practice elsewhere.
- In the past, governors did not ensure that additional funding such as the pupil

premium was used effectively to support pupils' learning. Consequently, some teachers do not provide disadvantaged pupils with effective support to help them make strong progress in their learning. A pupil premium review has been carried out and appropriate plans are now in place to target this resource more strategically.

- The funding for physical education (PE) and sports premium in primary schools is used effectively to support pupils' learning and well-being. The School Sports Partnership provides coaching for staff and a wide range of opportunities for pupils to take part in competitions with other local schools. A small group of pupils act as sports coaches in the 'sport crew'. Other pupils are trained as play leaders to organise playground games at lunchtime. This helps pupils to be more active and understand how to lead a healthy lifestyle.

Governance of the school

- Since the last inspection, governors have not held school leaders to account for the standard of education in the school. The governing body accepted school leaders' accounts of the way the school was operating without sufficient challenge. Fundamental practices, such as performance management and teachers' professional development, were not carried out.
- Following a series of governance reviews, a programme of support has been put in place to ensure that all governors have the necessary skills and capacity to challenge leaders effectively.
- Individual members of the governing body now use their significant expertise in areas such as safeguarding and finance to support leaders in the challenges they face to ensure that the school starts to improve rapidly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that staff are well trained and supported to identify signs of abuse or neglect. Staff are vigilant and report any concerns promptly. All staff understand their responsibility to ensure that pupils are safe.
- The safeguarding governor meets regularly with the acting headteacher, who is also the designated senior leader for safeguarding, to monitor the school's work, check the single central record and provide support.
- The school provides a range of effective support for vulnerable pupils. The school has recently received an award in recognition of its support for children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. Leaders are reviewing this area of the curriculum to ensure that pupils have an even more detailed understanding of how to keep themselves safe and how to become more resilient.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Despite recent improvements, teaching is still not consistently good across the school. However, there are generally positive relationships between teachers and pupils. Where classroom routines are well established and consistently applied, pupils' learning is supported well.
- The recent changes to the teaching of mathematics are beginning to improve pupils' outcomes. Leaders now support teachers well to improve their planning so that the sequences of learning build on pupils' prior learning more effectively. Pupils demonstrate good reasoning and problem-solving skills and use mathematical vocabulary confidently. As a result, pupils now make stronger progress in mathematics.
- In lower key stage 2, when teachers do not pitch activities at the correct level of challenge, some pupils become distracted. This leads to occasional chatting and fidgeting. This means that some pupils do not make sufficient progress.
- Some teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning and explain their thinking. Pupils do not have sufficient time to practise and apply their skills. As a result, they are not able to consolidate and deepen their knowledge and skills, which limits their progress.
- Where teaching is stronger, teaching assistants support pupils' learning by questioning and leading discussions. This helps pupils to be fully engaged in their learning and helps them to make strong progress. However, some teaching assistants do not support pupils' learning well enough, which does not help them make progress.
- Some teachers do not insist on accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar. In addition to this, teachers across the school do not have consistently high expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation. In the early years and key stage 1, pupils are expected to write in a cursive script. However, this is not the case in upper key stage 2. As a result, pupils are confused, work in older pupils' books is sometimes poorly presented and the quality of pupils' writing suffers.
- The school has a common approach to the teaching of phonics, but this is not consistently implemented. While all teachers use the same phonics scheme, some teachers use reading books from other schemes which are not compatible with the phonics scheme. Consequently, pupils become confused, which hampers their progress.
- In the past, the good teaching practice that exists has not been shared effectively. However, the current leadership team is committed to providing high-quality, targeted support and development to teachers and other staff. Staff report that there is a renewed energy and focus in the school. They recognise the need to improve and they have confidence in the new leadership team.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have introduced an initiative to help pupils develop 'learning powers' such as

resilience and positive attitudes to learning. The reward system is closely linked to this. When pupils display the characteristics or 'learning powers', they receive rewards. Pupils say that this motivates them to try harder.

- Pupils feel well supported in staying safe. They benefit from a range of assemblies and lessons about how to stay safe. For example, inspectors observed pupils in key stage 2 enjoying a workshop about online safety presented by employees of an internet company. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the risks of giving out too much information over the internet.
- Pupils say that bullying happens rarely, and adults help them to sort it out when it does happen. There have been no recorded incidents of racist or homophobic name-calling. Pupils say that everybody is treated equally and fairly.
- At the time of the inspection, school councillors had just been elected. They were excited at the prospect of learning how to be good councillors. They understood that because their classmates had voted for them, they had a responsibility to represent their views and do a good job. They clearly made the link between this process and the election of MPs to Parliament.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is true in lessons and around school. Pupils are polite and respectful towards each other. They understand that some children find it difficult to sustain their concentration and they are patient when this happens. They offer to help without prompting.
- The school provides effective support for pupils and their families who need additional help. For example, the family support worker provides support for families who find it hard to get their children to school on time. As a result, punctuality has improved and fewer pupils miss learning time.
- As a result of more rigorous monitoring and robust intervention, attendance is starting to improve. The number of requests for holidays in term time has reduced substantially in recent months. Consequently, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced and is now well below the national average. Attendance overall has improved, but remains slightly below the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes vary across the school. Overall, pupils achieve well in the early years and key stage 1.
- By the end of Reception, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development has been well above the national average for at least two years.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard by the end of Year 1 in the phonics screening check was well above the national average in 2017. However, the proportion achieving the required standard dipped slightly in 2018.
- At the end of key stage 1 in 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving at least the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was well above national averages. A higher proportion of pupils achieved at greater depth in reading compared

with the national average.

- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as their peers in the early years or key stage 2. Pupils with low prior attainment do not achieve well by the end of key stage 2 when compared with other pupils with similar starting points nationally.
- Since the last inspection, standards at the end of key stage 2 have not improved. At the end of key stage 2 in 2017, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was significantly below the national averages for all pupils and in the bottom 20% of schools nationally. As a result, many pupils were not adequately prepared for secondary school.
- In 2017, progress by the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly in line with the national averages. However, unvalidated 2018 data suggests that progress in reading, writing and mathematics has declined. Disadvantaged pupils made significantly less progress than other pupils with similar starting points nationally.
- However, at the end of key stage 2 in 2018, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics improved significantly. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving a greater depth in writing was above the national average, which is a dramatic improvement on previous years.
- The most recent internal assessment information indicates that a higher proportion of pupils currently in school are achieving at the standard expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics in most year groups. Work in pupils' books currently indicates that progress is more rapid and gaps in pupils' learning are closing in upper key stage 2.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have not made the same progress as their peers in the past because their needs have not been effectively identified. The new leader of SEN has now put in place effective systems to identify the additional needs of these pupils. Staff are receiving guidance to support pupils' needs more effectively. It is too early to see evidence of the impact of these recent developments.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders ensure that the early years curriculum is well planned to support children's development. Teachers plan exciting activities, well matched to children's stages of development. As a result, a high proportion of children achieve a good level of development and are well prepared for Year 1.
- The majority of children cooperate and play together well. Stimulating activities help them to sustain concentration. The interesting and engaging environment in the early years supports children well to develop the characteristics of effective learning.
- Adults support children's learning well. They prompt their thinking with challenging questions, directing the children's learning effectively. They ensure that children understand risks in activities such as climbing and balancing so that they keep themselves safe.
- Children are confident and articulate and many use sophisticated vocabulary. For example, some children working together on a story map in Reception discussed their drawing of a crocodile and decided it needed 'sharp teeth'. They also considered

whether the crocodile might instead be an alligator. Children with weaker language skills when they start school improve quickly because they learn from the conversations around them.

- Parents say that teachers encourage them to get involved in their children's education through regular workshops and 'stay and play' activities. Many parents value these opportunities. A typical comment was, 'You get to be a fly on the wall and see the progress of the children first-hand.'
- Productive links with external agencies ensure that children who need additional support make good progress. For example, to support children with speech and language difficulties, leaders work with external sign language experts. This approach was so successful that leaders decided to extend it across the whole provision. This helps all children to develop their communication skills quickly. All children are welcomed and included regardless of the challenges they face.

School details

Unique reference number	135052
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10048254

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	323
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Penny Staples
Acting Headteacher	Tabitha Smith
Telephone number	01562 753934
Website	www.offmoreprimary.co.uk
Email address	office@offmore.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 January 2016

Information about this school

- Offmore Primary School is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- Before- and after-school provision is commissioned by the governing body from a private provider. The provision has been offered by the school since January 2018.
- The on-site nursery offers a limited number of spaces for two-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited every class to observe lessons jointly with members of the leadership team. Inspectors spoke to children about their learning and about how the school teaches them to stay safe.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and displays in classrooms and around school.
- Inspectors observed pupils at break and lunchtimes and as they moved around the school between activities.
- The lead inspector met with a group of pupils to discuss their experiences of school.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in lessons and in the library.
- A range of documents were scrutinised, including minutes of governing body meetings, risk assessments, monitoring information and safeguarding records.
- The lead inspector met with the acting headteacher, acting deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher to discuss the school's work. Inspectors also held meetings with subject and phase leaders.
- The lead inspector held meetings with a small group of governors and the local authority school improvement adviser.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day and took account of 51 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The lead inspector reviewed the information on the school's website and the published data prior to the inspection.

Inspection team

Jane Spilsbury, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jan Baker	Ofsted Inspector
Barry Yeardsley	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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