Oakwood Primary School

Cotswold Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL52 5HD

Inspection dates	18–19 December 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

- Leaders and governors share a passionate commitment to the school and to the development of a positive and nurturing environment. Leaders are ambitious for pupils and provide meaningful activities, so that pupils broaden their horizons.

- The majority of children come to school with skills that are below those typical for their age. From these starting points, children make good progress by the end of Reception.

- At key stage 1, pupils' attainment remains below the national figure. However, by the end of Year 6, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

- The proportion of pupils who achieve the required level in the phonics screening check is now in line with the national average.

- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Leaders have a clear understanding of the areas of strength and weaknesses. They provide suitable training which supports teachers to review and refine their approaches. At times, however, teachers do not design well-matched activities to help pupils access tasks at the appropriate level.

- Governors are aware of the strategies for the use of the additional funding provided for disadvantaged pupils. However, they are not secure in evaluating the impact of actions taken.

- The support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. By the end of Year 6, pupils make good progress in reading and writing.

- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are cheerful and welcoming. However, where teachers' planning does not provide sufficient structure or challenge, sometimes pupils lose focus, distract others and do not work to the best of their ability.

- The majority of teachers use assessment to give helpful advice to pupils. Where this is not the case, teachers' guidance is too generic and does not pinpoint the essential skills that will improve the standard of work that pupils produce. This is particularly pertinent to errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

- Leaders are determined to improve attendance and have put new systems in place to ensure this. However, rates of absence, particularly persistent absence, are still too high.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - governors fully evaluate the impact that additional funding is having on improving the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
  - teachers routinely use assessment to identify misconceptions and plan activities that match the learning needs of all pupils, particularly in key stage 1
  - pupils have a consistent understanding of how they can improve their work, including in the accuracy of spelling and punctuation.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
  - ensuring that strategies to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence are effective by challenging more robustly those pupils who do not attend school regularly
  - ensuring that teachers provide sufficient structure and challenge to maintain pupils' focus.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good

- Leaders' self-evaluation is detailed and gives an accurate overview of the quality of the school's work. Leaders have an insightful understanding of the community they serve and show a strong commitment to ensuring that pupils 'Aspire and Achieve'. They have the skills and experience to do this successfully.

- Recent changes have been made to the leadership team to provide additional capacity. Newly appointed leaders demonstrate energy and enthusiasm in developing their skills so that they have a strategic oversight of the effectiveness of their work.

- Leaders track pupils' progress at regular points in the years. This means that they have a timely overview of the progress pupils are making. Teachers moderate assessments and share practice with staff from other schools. Therefore, there is confidence in the accuracy of this information. This forms the basis of progress reviews so that those pupils who fall behind are identified and appropriate interventions are put into place.

- Leaders monitor and continue to develop the quality of teaching and learning. Middle leaders are clear on their roles and how they contribute to whole-school improvement. Teachers are given regular feedback on their practice and suitable training supports teachers to refine their skills. For example, the more structured approach to the teaching of mathematics has developed pupils' confidence and skill in applying mathematical concepts. The focus on reading for enjoyment has been successful in encouraging pupils to read more regularly at home.

- Pastoral leaders have been successful in identifying where additional support is required. The 'nurture' group is a particularly effective example of the way in which staff support the personal, social and emotional needs of pupils. This haven of calm supports pupils to feel safe and reflect on their emotions. Leaders identify clear starting points so that they can measure small steps and the impact of actions and interventions.

- The curriculum ensures coverage of a wide range of subjects. Pupils talk confidently about what they are doing and are enthusiastic about developing their knowledge. This coherent approach has been successful in providing a platform from which pupils can extend their reading and develop their writing. Teachers help pupils to develop understanding and encourage them to broaden their vocabulary by using subject-specific terminology.

- Leaders model and promote the positive relationships that underpin the ethos of the school. They are courteous and supportive and clearly know their pupils well. They delight in their pupils' success and are proud of what they have achieved. Staff morale is consequently high, and this means that they are supportive of school priorities and work hard to achieve these.

- Leaders develop positive relationships with parents and carers and keep them informed about the work of the school. The responses that were made to Parent View endorse the fact that parents are largely supportive of the school. Parents particularly highlight the way in which staff promote self-esteem and confidence in pupils.

- Extra-curricular activities support pupils' learning well. Leaders are keen to ensure that

all pupils benefit and widen their experiences. Pupils develop skills in a wide range of subjects and are encouraged to develop their artistic, musical and sporting talents.

- The special educational needs coordinator has an extensive overview of provision and ensures that targets are precise and built upon in regular classes. Interventions are appropriate to ensure that pupils receive the support they need. However, the process for involving pupils in their support plans and evaluating the impact of these is less well developed.

- Leaders plan strategies to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Additional interventions are effective in building confidence and providing experiences. However, these plans are not precise enough to show levels of pupil engagement and the academic impact of actions.

Governance of the school

- Governors are committed to the success of the school and are conscientious about fulfilling their statutory duties. They have completed relevant training, are skilled and have the expertise to provide valuable support for school leaders. They share the commitment of leaders to providing the best experience for pupils and families in the community.

- Governors visit the school regularly and have a clear schedule for reviewing aspects of the schools' work. They demonstrate a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, there is a lack of precision when evaluating the impact of actions, particularly to improve attendance and in the use of additional funding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- Safeguarding is a high priority. Leaders provide regular training and updates, so that staff know how to apply child protection procedures. Leaders make the necessary statutory checks and follow government guidelines to ensure that staff are safe to work with children. Processes for recording concerns have been updated and leaders are supporting staff with the transition to this new system. Information is now readily accessible, and actions clearly outlined and dated.

- Leaders have appointed staff who provide early help for vulnerable pupils and their families. They are conscientious in working with external partners to support pupils who are potentially at risk. Leaders escalate referrals to the appropriate agencies where necessary.

- Pupils say that they feel safe and well looked after in school. The large majority of parents and carers who responded to the parental survey agree. Pupils can explain how to keep themselves safe and recognise risk. They know how to protect themselves, particularly when they are online.

| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |

- Teachers support pupils to make good progress. Where teaching is stronger, teachers

plan activities that are engaging and based on an accurate understanding of previous learning and ability. Tasks provide a suitable level of challenge and support with strong questioning to probe, verify and extend pupils' understanding. Sometimes, teaching is not as effective because planning is not tailored closely enough to pupils' starting points. This means that teachers limit what pupils can achieve because expectations are too low.

- Teachers use assessment well to extend pupils' understanding. Where this is most successful it identifies misconceptions which pupils can then rectify. However, some practice is not as secure. Teachers' guidance is too general and does not clearly identify what pupils need to do to improve the quality of their responses.

- Pupils are encouraged to read a range of appropriate texts for enjoyment. Younger pupils use songs and rhymes to develop an understanding of language patterns. Older pupils use non-fiction texts to research their topic work. Pupils talk positively about reading and can do so with intonation and expression. Key stage 2 pupils like to write reviews to recommend texts to their peers. At key stage 1, the majority of pupils develop their phonics skills sufficiently to enable them to identify words accurately. Older pupils continue to develop their skills, particularly focusing on comprehension, analysis and inference.

- As pupils move through the school, the quality of their writing becomes more assured. Pupils show an improving ability to sustain their responses and write for a variety of audiences and purposes. They understand the conventions of different genres and demonstrate this in their own compositions. Younger pupils use finger spaces and capital letters, forming sentences with increasing complexity. The most able pupils experiment with vocabulary and sentence construction. However, flaws in spelling, punctuation and grammar sometimes hampers pupils' ability to express their ideas effectively. Basic skills, such as letter orientation, are not highlighted and remedied early enough. This means that pupils continue to make the same mistakes, and this stifles their written fluency.

- Pupils are improving their mathematical fluency and understanding. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong, and they build on pupils' prior knowledge effectively. Teachers apply a consistent approach so that pupils have opportunities to complete problem-solving and reasoning activities. However, some pupils do not routinely reach these more complex tasks or do not move on quickly enough when they are ready to do so. At times, teachers do not identify misconceptions in number orientation and basic calculation, so pupils continue to make these errors.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare   Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Pupils are positive about their experience of school. Pupils consider different aspects of their personal development and well-being at an age-appropriate level. Pupils are encouraged to talk about the importance of forming positive relationships. They show respect and recognise each other's qualities. Their 'daily mile' run supports them to consider healthy lifestyles.

- Pupils explore different cultures and religions and show a respect for diversity. For example, they understood the symbolism of the 'Christingles' they were making for their Christmas assembly. They are aware of different beliefs and show an understanding of democracy, making them well prepared for life in modern Britain.

- Staff form positive working relationships and pupils enjoy receiving acknowledgement of what they have done well. Leaders use the 'pupil voice' to inform future actions. In addition, pupils are encouraged to take on leadership responsibilities, such as 'bullying ambassadors' or a member of the school council.

- Leaders have provided workshops with outside organisations to support pupils to understand risk. Pupils can talk about these sessions openly and know how to keep themselves safe. They say that they have a trusted adult in school who they can talk to if they have concerns.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Around the site pupils conduct themselves well and interact positively with each other and with adults. There are clearly established routines which pupils respond well to. Pupils say that behaviour is largely good but at times they are distracted by a small minority of pupils. During the inspection, it was observed that where teaching was not well directed, pupils lose focus or become distracted. While they respond well to prompts by the teacher, it means that they do not complete or produce their best work.

- Leaders have implemented strategies to support pupils who find behaviour expectations more difficult to adhere to. Interventions are carefully matched to the needs of pupils to help them cope in situations that might prove problematic. Training for staff has focused on de-escalation techniques and this has led to a reduction of fixed-term and permanent exclusions.

- The responses to Parent View indicate that a small number of parents expressed some concerns about bullying. However, pupils say that bullying is rare and are confident that teachers deal with it effectively. Incidents of derogatory language are also rare but are dealt with effectively when they do occur. Leaders place great emphasis on using restorative approaches, so that pupils understand and learn from their actions.

- Leaders have prioritised support for vulnerable pupils who do not attend school regularly. This is effective in building relationships and is showing some modest signs of improving the attendance of these pupils. Leaders have recently introduced a system to give a more strategic oversight of absence so that they can tackle this more stringently. However, overall rates of absence, particularly persistent absence, remain too high.

Outcomes for pupils	Good

- The proportions of pupils who achieve the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are below national averages. A smaller proportion of pupils than seen nationally demonstrate a higher level of understanding. However, pupils join the school with skills that are below those that are

typical for their age. Over the past three years, the progress that pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics is strong by the end of Year 6, often being in the top 20% of schools nationally, particularly in writing.

- Children join the Reception class with knowledge, skills and understanding well below the standard typically seen for their age. From these starting points, children overall make good progress. However, disadvantaged children and boys do not make as much progress as their classmates.

- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND do not perform as well as their peers by the end of key stage 1. However, they make strong progress by the end of Year 6, particularly in reading and writing. The progress of current pupils indicates that this continues to be the case, because of the strategies that are used to overcome barriers to pupils' learning.

- The proportion of pupils passing the phonics screening check has improved and is now broadly in line with the national average. Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly and carefully match their work to ensure that learning moves on appropriately.

- Assessment information and work in books show that current pupils are making at least good progress in all year groups. However, the most able pupils could achieve more to achieve a higher level of understanding.

- The standard of pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar skills remains below the national average. This means that pupils' ability to express themselves is limited. The work of current pupils shows this continues to be the case, as teachers accept phonetically plausible spelling attempts rather than encouraging correct spelling.

Early years provision   Good

- The proportion of children who reach a good level of development, the standard expected at the end of the early years, has been below the national average for the past three years. However, from their starting points, children in the early years make good progress. Teachers plan a range of engaging activities to develop early reading, writing and mathematical skills. Children are excited to participate in these activities, particularly the daily 'wake and shake' to get their day off to an energetic start. Staff gently encourage all children to take part.

- Teachers' assessment accurately identifies children's starting points to ensure that provision is well matched to their needs. Assessments are shared across other schools so there is confidence in the accuracy of these. Leaders have particularly matched activities to the interests of disadvantaged children and boys who have historically performed less well than girls. Leaders have developed the outside spaces to support this further and develop all aspects of learning.

- Routines are well established, and children respond well to adults. Opportunities to develop positive communication skills begin with the warm welcome children receive from staff at the beginning of the day. Staff model the language responses they want children to follow and are skilled in extending and connecting language.

- Children with SEND are supported effectively to ensure that they make good progress. Additional adults are skilful in providing a smooth induction to the day and resources are modified so that they are pitched at the appropriate level.

- Children play well together and take turns. Where teaching is stronger, they share and remain focused on activities. Children carry out a range of tasks independently and communicate well with each other. Teachers' use of questioning is strong and consolidates and deepens children's understanding. Where planning is not as structured, children drift off tasks and flit between activities.

- Leaders have an effective overview of outcomes and provision. They identify areas of strength and weakness and plan future activities accordingly. This information is shared with the special educational needs coordinator and pastoral leaders so that there is a coherent understanding of children's needs. At times, written observations of children's learning are too descriptive and do not focus closely enough on the development of skills.

- The teaching of mathematics ensures suitable support and challenge. Teachers use a variety of methods to develop counting skills. Teachers identify misconceptions in number orientation and, for most-able children, develop their ability to extend their number sequences.

- Teachers support children through a structured approach to phonics. Most children are beginning to read phonetically regular words and blend sounds to help them decode these. Children practise 'tricky words' and match these to the appropriate letter sound. 'Kev the kindness elf' delivers a daily message to children which they are delighted to receive. Thus, children practise their reading skills and hear a message that reinforces positive attitudes.

- Teachers plan activities, both in structured situations and free play, to support the development of children's fine motor skills. As a result, children increasingly develop their ability to demonstrate correct pencil grip and form letters and numbers. Teachers provide opportunities for children to contextualise their writing. For example, children were learning how to write name tags for gifts they were wrapping. The most able children begin to use segmenting skills to independently write simple words.

- Staff have created an environment that is welcoming, nurturing and safe. Displays reinforce key words and all opportunities to apply and practise skills are taken. For example, the choice of lunch menu provided the opportunity to practise sounds and letters.

- Transition into Reception is supported through visits to local nurseries and home visits. Parents are kept informed, so that they can help their children with their learning. For example, parents are invited to send in 'Wow' vouchers to comment on children's learning at home. Parents are encouraged to support their children's reading and there is a clear dialogue between home and school in reading journals.

- Staff have received appropriate first aid training. Safeguarding and welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	135857
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10086509

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	332
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cordell Ray
Executive headteacher	Charles Welsh
Telephone number	01242 515775
Website	www.oakwood.gloucs.sch.uk/
Email address	admin@oakwood.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 March 2015

Information about this school

■ Oakwood Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.

■ The school is currently overseen by an executive headteacher and a head of school. There have been recent changes to the leadership team to increase capacity.

■ The majority of pupils are from a White British background. The school has 10 of the 17 ethnic groups.

■ The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is also higher than the national average.

■ The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across a range of subjects and age groups and scrutinised pupils' written work. Observations were conducted jointly with members of the leadership team.

- Meetings were held with members of the leadership team and representatives from the governing body. In addition, inspectors met with curriculum and pastoral leaders. An inspector met with a representative from the local authority and phone calls were made to the designated officer and to the local safeguarding and children's partnership authority.

- Inspectors met with pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, both formally and informally, to discuss their views about their experience of school.

- Inspectors looked at the school's documentation, including the evaluation of the school's effectiveness and priorities for future improvement. Inspectors reviewed progress, behaviour and attendance information relating to current pupils, and governors' records.

- School policies relating to safeguarding, pupils' behaviour, the use of additional funding, including the pupil premium and the sport premium, and the curriculum were also scrutinised.

- Inspectors listened to a selection of pupils read.

- Inspectors considered the 16 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 8 free-text responses from parents as well as the 35 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Sarah McGinnis, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ross Newman	Ofsted Inspector
Jen Edwards	Ofsted Inspector

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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