Oakhill Primary School

Rookery Lane, Oakhill, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 5NS

Inspection dates	9–10 January 2019

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning is too variable to secure consistently good outcomes for all pupils. Gaps remain between the achievements of boys and girls and disadvantaged and other pupils in too many classes. Teachers' subject knowledge is not consistently strong.

- Teachers' high expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough.

- Teachers do not use assessment information consistently well. Many learning tasks do not provide sufficient challenge for all pupils, including the most able pupils.

- Pupils do not make sufficient progress in writing. They have too few opportunities to develop their skills by writing at length.

- Leaders and governors have not ensured that the impact of teaching and interventions is evaluated rigorously enough. There is a lack of clarity over leadership of literacy.

- Subject leaders do not currently check on pupils' progress or monitor the impact of teaching in their subjects effectively enough. Good practice is not shared between teachers.

- Not enough pupils achieve at the higher standard in mathematics by the end of key stage 2. Teachers do not support pupils effectively to explain their answers and apply their problem-solving skills independently in mathematics.

- Some pupils are unable to apply their phonics skills when reading independently.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders are committed to improving outcomes. They have identified the correct priorities for improvement.

- Governors are supportive of leaders and are determined to make sure that differences in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and others are eradicated.

- Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are caring and supportive towards each other. They enjoy coming to school.

- Outcomes are improving. More pupils are now attaining the expected standards for their age throughout the school.

- Attendance is improving because staff provide effective care and support to pupils and their families.

- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils say they feel safe in school. Staff know the children well. Parents value the caring support provided.

- Children make good progress in the early years.

- The wider curriculum is well planned.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for all groups of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, by ensuring that:

  - all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve, including the most able

  - pupils are supported more effectively to apply their knowledge, skills and understanding, including their phonics skills, independently in reading and writing

  - pupils are supported more effectively to explain their answers and demonstrate their problem-solving skills in mathematics.

- Improve the quality of teaching to strengthen pupils' progress by ensuring that:

  - teachers are supported effectively to develop their subject knowledge, particularly in mathematics

  - all teachers use assessment information effectively to match tasks more accurately to pupils' needs

  - teachers have more opportunities to learn from the good practice that already exists in school and elsewhere to improve their skills.

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:

  - the impact of actions taken is evaluated rigorously so that future interventions are more sharply focused on bringing about the necessary improvements

  - all leaders develop their skills to drive improvement in their areas

  - leadership roles for literacy are clarified so that it is clear who is responsible for standards overall

  - governors develop their skills further so that they can hold leaders to account more effectively.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement

- Since the headteacher took up her post in September 2016, she has focused on improving the quality of provision, not least by tackling significant issues of underperformance. Together with other senior leaders who are also relatively new to their roles, the headteacher has improved staff training, streamlined systems and procedures and improved communication with parents. There are signs of impact, for example in the improvements to outcomes across the school, which are now more closely in line with national averages. Attendance has also improved.

- Leaders have an accurate understanding of many of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. In many cases, they have identified appropriate interventions to address pupils' needs. For example, in the early years, pupils benefit from teachers' and other adults' support to develop their speech and language.

- Leaders and governors are ambitious for outcomes to improve further. They are committed and passionate. However, leaders' monitoring and evaluation activities are not currently focused sharply enough on the impact of initiatives on improving the quality of teaching and, in turn, improving outcomes. Leaders do not evaluate the impact of additional funding rigorously enough. As a result, governors do not have a clear understanding of the effectiveness of leaders' spending decisions.

- Leaders carry out a range of monitoring activities, for example checking work in pupils' books and observing lessons. These activities are linked to priorities in the school development plan and to teachers' performance management. However, too often monitoring activities are focused on whether teachers and other adults are following policies and procedures rather than evaluating the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. As a result, leaders do not have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. There are too many aspects of teaching that are not yet consistently strong.

- Subject and phase leaders carry out monitoring activities in their areas. Those who are new to their posts are supported by senior leaders to develop in their roles. However, many leaders do not currently have a detailed understanding of the impact of teaching on pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility. They need further support to become more effective in their roles.

- Subject leadership is fragmented. Leadership of literacy is split between reading, writing and phonics. Each leader has an overview of outcomes and provision in their areas, but it is less clear who has an overview of literacy as a whole. This means that links between reading and writing are not as well developed as they need to be, and outcomes vary across reading and writing.

- Leaders gather information regularly about pupils' progress, attainment, attendance, behaviour and other indicators. However, leaders currently do not cross-reference this information to identify significant patterns and trends. Interventions for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not evaluated effectively. As a result, support is not targeted sharply enough on those activities that will bring about rapid improvement.

- Leaders have reviewed the curriculum. The revised curriculum focuses on developing

generic learning skills such as resilience and respect, as well as subject-specific skills. Learning objectives in subjects other than English and mathematics are well mapped out. Work in pupils' books shows that pupils study a wide range of subjects, including geography and history. Through topics such as 'The Titanic', pupils also develop an understanding about fundamental British values. They learn about the English class system at the time of the *Titanic*, and how this affected those on board ship and more widely in society.

■ Teachers feel well supported and say that leaders consider their work–life balance when planning new initiatives. The marking policy has recently been revised to ensure pupils receive meaningful feedback in a manageable way. Staff who responded to the online questionnaire all agreed that they are proud to work at the school.

■ Parents are very positive about the school and the support offered by staff. They say children are happy and enjoy coming to school. One parent's comment reflected the views of many: 'Oakhill feels like a community or a family.'

■ The work of the school to promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is strong. Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as ukulele club, Lego club and dance club. Year 6 pupils talked excitedly about their forthcoming trip to Holland.

■ Pupils' spiritual development is well supported. For example, in preparation for the opening of the new community room, pupils were invited to enter a competition to create a piece of artwork to represent the care and support staff would provide in the room. The winning entry is on display in the Treehouse room.

Governance of the school

■ Several governors have served on the school's governing body for many years. They are committed and dedicated. They know the school well and they are keen to see further improvements. They work closely with leaders, carrying out visits to school to meet with leaders in their link subjects to see for themselves how things are improving.

■ Governors have been proactive in commissioning an external review to inform their development. They have recently audited their skills to identify any gaps and put together a training plan.

■ Governors are rightly concerned about the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils. A review of the use of pupil premium funding has been commissioned. They have asked leaders to ensure that the impact of interventions is more rigorously evaluated in future so that they can be assured that additional funding is used effectively to improve outcomes further.

■ Governors receive detailed information about pupils' progress. However, they do not ask sufficiently challenging questions of leaders to fully understand the performance of pupils currently in school.

■ Plans are in place for the school to join a new multi-academy trust with other local schools in the very near future. Governors have only a limited understanding of how this will impact on their role. There is some confusion over who will be accountable for the performance of the school, going forwards.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- Staff receive training on safeguarding as part of their induction when they join the school. They keep their knowledge of safeguarding up to date through regular training and updates. They know the signs to look out for if they suspect a child needs support, and how to raise any concerns. Staff say the new online recording system makes this process simpler.

- Governors and leaders ensure that safeguarding requirements for recruitment are fulfilled. The pupils' use of the internet is monitored and filtered to ensure they do not inadvertently access inappropriate material.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching in key stages 1 and 2 is not consistently strong. As a result, pupils do not make sustained progress in their learning in all classes and in all subjects. This is the case where teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Too many pupils, including but not exclusively the most able, are not sufficiently challenged by the work set. Too many pupils are asked to complete tasks that they can do easily. Learning time is wasted as they wait for further instructions from the teacher before moving on. Inspectors observed this particularly in English, where pupils were asked to write in short, structured paragraphs, directed by the teacher. For those pupils who need this level of support, this is helpful. However, for other pupils this limits their progress, because they are prevented from writing freely and at length. Many pupils are capable of writing independently to a high standard but were prevented from doing so by the structure of this activity. The work in pupils' books shows that this is not an isolated example.

- Where pupils make strong progress, teaching is well structured, adapted to pupils' needs and provides excellent challenge. The teacher's strong subject knowledge helps them to adapt their teaching promptly to address pupils' misunderstandings. However, this good practice is not shared effectively between teachers.

- In too many cases, teachers do not use assessment information effectively to set tasks that are well matched to pupils' abilities. Some teachers do not provide enough support for pupils to achieve success. Tasks are not planned precisely enough to help pupils to embed their learning step by step. As a result, pupils become confused and learning slows.

- Too many pupils struggle to apply their mathematical skills. For example, when attempting problem-solving questions, pupils struggle to interpret the question and decide which calculation strategy to use. This is in large part because teachers do not provide them with sufficient opportunities to discuss their thinking, explain their reasoning and justify their choice of the most efficient method of calculation. Some teachers do not pick up pupils' misunderstandings promptly.

- Teaching assistants support pupils well through skilful questioning, working with small groups of pupils. They know the pupils well, particularly those with SEND. The progress of pupils with SEND is monitored closely, but leaders do not use this information

strategically to evaluate the impact of support and interventions.

■ The teaching of phonics has improved recently and is now effective. Well-established routines and teachers' strong subject knowledge support pupils' learning effectively. Teaching is precisely focused on pupils' needs. Pupils use technical language confidently to describe word features.

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 polite and confident. They are proud of their school and welcoming to visitors. They are familiar with the school's values, such as equality, respect and resilience, and they know why these are important. Every pupil belongs to a house, named after the values, which gives them a sense of belonging and helps to embed the values.

■ Pupils say they feel safe in school. They learn how to stay safe outside school through things like swimming lessons and cycle training. Through assemblies and lessons, they learn how to keep themselves safe online. They say that bullying happens rarely and, if it does, teachers and other adults will sort it out quickly.

■ The school promotes pupils' physical and emotional well-being effectively through the wide range of activities after school, including ukulele, dance and sports clubs. An increasing number of pupils take part in sporting competitions. The breakfast club is well attended and gives pupils a positive start to the day. The Blossom room provides a calm space at lunchtime for pupils who need additional support.

■ Pupils enjoy taking on roles of responsibility, for example as school council representatives. Some pupils act as ambassadors, supporting younger pupils by listening to them read and playing with them at breaktime. Ambassadors also lead celebration assemblies. Year 6 pupils behave in a mature and responsible way. They are encouraged to take responsibility. For example, they each have a locker to store belongings. This is just one of the ways in which they develop maturity and independence before they move on to secondary school.

Behaviour

■ The behaviour of pupils is good.

■ Pupils behave very well at breaktimes and around the school. They play happily together. They know what to do if any accidents happen and they know staff will help them if they need it. As a result, pupils are well cared for and they feel safe.

■ At the end of break and lunchtime, pupils enter school from the playground in an orderly manner. Well-established routines help pupils to settle back down to learn. For example, all pupils read for a short time straight after lunch.

■ In lessons, pupils behave well and the vast majority are engaged in their learning. Disruption to learning through poor behaviour is very rare. Pupils support each other

well. They readily offer to help their classmates if they get stuck with their learning.

■ Pupils understand what good behaviour is and why it is important. They regulate their own behaviour. Pupils do not need to be reminded by adults how to behave.

■ Attendance has improved. It is now in line with the national average. Leaders and pastoral staff have supported effectively pupils who previously had low attendance. Very few pupils are now persistently absent. Staff call parents on the first day of a pupils' absence to find out the reason for the absence and to provide support if it is needed. Fines are now being issued to parents who do not ensure their children attend school enough or who take their children on holiday in term time. This has helped to improve attendance.

Outcomes for pupils   Requires improvement

■ Attainment has improved for many pupils over the last three years. In 2018, at key stage 1 and key stage 2 in reading, writing and in mathematics the proportion of pupils achieving the standard expected for their age was much closer to national averages than in previous years. However, in 2018 no pupils achieved the higher standard in mathematics at the end of key stage 2.

■ In 2018, at the end of key stage 2 in mathematics and writing pupils did not make as much progress from their starting points as other pupils nationally. Pupils made better progress in reading than in writing and mathematics.

■ The progress and attainment of pupils currently in school are similarly variable. Current assessment information and work in pupils' books show that, in many classes, the pupils are making stronger progress. However, this is not the case for all classes or groups of pupils.

■ In many classes across the school, disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as their peers. Current assessment information and work in pupils' books indicate that the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils are not reducing. In some classes, there are significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls. However, currently leaders do not take into account all available information to form a comprehensive overview of the reasons for pupils' underachievement.

■ In lessons, teachers do not use assessment information effectively enough to design activities to address specific gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. Where pupils have weak mathematical skills, this slows them down when completing tasks independently. There are plans for teachers to deliver daily arithmetic sessions, but these are not yet fully implemented. As a result, many pupils make insufficient progress in their learning in mathematics.

■ Leaders recognise that pupils need to practise their skills at home, but many do not have access to resources to help them. Pupils now have access to a mobile phone app which helps them practise their times tables.

■ Many pupils have underdeveloped communication and language skills when they join the school. Although they make good progress in the early years, pupils struggle to cope with the demands of key stage 1 as they move into Year 1 from Reception. Leaders have identified this as an area for development and have ensured that staff have the necessary expertise to support pupils' language skills. However, it is too early

to see evidence of impact of this initiative. The proportion of pupils working at the standard expected for their age in Year 1 is lower than in other year groups.

- When listening to pupils read, inspectors found that some pupils struggle to apply their phonics skills. Some pupils were unable to decode some simple words when reading independently. Although pupils read often, their reading records show that teachers do not give pupils clear guidance on how they can improve.

- Despite these challenges, in 2018 the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check by the end of Year 1 improved to be more closely in line with the national average. By the end of Year 2 in 2018, almost all pupils had achieved the expected standard.

- Leaders have rightly identified improving pupils' handwriting and presentation as an area of focus and have provided support and training for staff to improve this. Although this is starting to have an impact, the standard of handwriting and presentation in pupils' books across the school remains patchy.

Early years provision	**Good**

- Since the last inspection, the quality of provision in the early years has improved. As a result of more effective provision and strengthened leadership, children are making good progress in the early years. When children join the school, many of them have skills below those typical for their age. Their communication and language skills are particularly underdeveloped. However, by the end of the Reception class in 2018, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was close to the national average. From their low starting points, this represents good progress for the majority of children.

- Children currently in the Reception classes are making similarly good progress. Disadvantaged children are achieving in line with others, according to the school's current assessment information. External verification confirms that teachers' judgements in the early years are accurate. The early years leader verifies teachers' assessments in other schools on behalf of the local authority.

- Although relatively new to the role, the early years leader has established an ambitious culture where staff have high expectations of what all children can achieve, including disadvantaged children. Teachers in the early years meet every week to assess children's progress and plan the next week's provision. They consider a range of information, including levels of attendance, which helps teachers and other adults to address children's needs more precisely.

- The lively environment in the early years helps to engage children in learning activities. In the outdoor area, children use a range of climbing and balancing equipment with increasing confidence. This promotes independence and helps children to develop an understanding of assessing risks.

- Children behave very well in the early years. They play together and support each other with their learning. They listen eagerly to adults. Children's learning is supported effectively by positive relationships between children and adults, which create a harmonious learning environment.

- Staff receive effective support to develop their skills. Adults design effective learning

activities that promote children's curiosity and love of learning. In the outdoor area, children enthusiastically acted as detectives, using magnifying glasses like Sherlock Holmes, to hunt for items that matched the words they read on cards, for example 'web'. In Nursery, children enjoyed the 'dough disco' – a warm-up activity where children manipulate playdough in their hands as they dance. This activity supported children well to develop their fine motor skills while learning to follow instructions and improve their coordination and balance.

■ Positive relationships between parents and staff in the early years support children's development well. Parents say staff are always available to speak to and they have many opportunities to come into school to support their children. Parents can see their child's development easily through an online portal. Staff encourage parents to post online examples of children's activities and work that they complete at home to build a comprehensive picture of their development.

■ Children are well cared for and safeguarding is effective. Leaders have ensured that the early years welfare requirements are met. Staff work closely with external teams to ensure children have the right support at the right time.

School details

Unique reference number	124000
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10058614

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	417
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Newman
Headteacher	Joanna Leach
Telephone number	01782 235238
Website	www.oakhillprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	jleach@oakhillprimaryschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	13-–14 January 2015

Information about this school

- Oakhill is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are from white British families. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is relatively small, compared to the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school is due to become an academy and join a new multi-academy trust with other local schools very shortly.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all classes across the school. Many of the observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors and leaders discussed their observations, and feedback was provided to teachers.

- The lead inspector analysed published data and looked at policies and documents on the school's website prior to the inspection.

- Inspectors met with a small group of pupils and talked to pupils at breaktimes and in lessons.

- The lead inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, along with another governor, to discuss their work with the school.

- The lead inspector spoke to the local authority school improvement partner on the phone.

- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and other documents, such as the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks, safeguarding files, monitoring records, minutes of governing body meetings and current assessment information.

- Inspectors spoke to parents as they dropped off their children at the start of the day, and took account of 44 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online parent questionnaire.

- Inspectors also considered 37 responses to the staff questionnaire and 58 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jane Spilsbury, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Linda Brown	Ofsted Inspector
Kevin Butlin	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.

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.

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 2019