

Overthorpe CofE Academy

Edge Top Road, Thornhill, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire WF12 0BH

Inspection dates

29–30 January 2019

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

- Since his appointment, the headteacher has provided highly effective leadership. Together with competent senior leaders and governors, he has determinedly set the direction to improve pupils' education and achievement. Consequently, the school is improving rapidly.
- All leaders have focused sharply to tackle the decline in pupils' historical attainment and progress. Leaders effectively check and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. The quality of teaching has improved.
- Although pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 in 2018 was below average, pupils currently in the school are making strong progress across the curriculum. Some pupils make exceptional progress.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective support. Currently, they make good progress from their starting points.
- The quality of teaching and learning is strong. Teaching meets the needs of different pupil groups because teachers and teaching assistants have secure subject knowledge.
- Governors are committed to supporting school improvement. They have commissioned an external review of their own work to ensure that they are effective in their roles.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. They have positive attitudes to learning and say that they feel safe in school.
- Leaders have effective systems in place to track pupils' attendance and follow up any absences. Despite this, attendance for disadvantaged pupils has been lower than average over time.
- Learning is strong in the early years. From lower-than-typical starting points, children make good progress. Opportunities to develop writing are not as effective as other areas.
- The partnership between the parents and carers and the school is effective. Parents are overwhelmingly positive in their views.
- Historically, disadvantaged pupils did not make strong progress across the curriculum. The progress of current disadvantaged pupils is good and better because they are supported exceptionally well.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils demonstrate that the Christian school values are an integral part of school life.
- The new curriculum design has improved the breadth and depth of the curriculum. Pupils take an active part in their learning. Progress in phonics is not as strong as in other subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that:
 - the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 1 is at least in line with the national average
 - writing activities engage the interest of the children in the early years to help them get off to a good start in their writing.
- Improve pupils' attendance, especially of disadvantaged pupils and those who are persistently absent, more rapidly to be at least in line with the national average.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher leads the school highly effectively. Following the last inspection, there was a decline in the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. Since his appointment, the headteacher has had a resolute focus on halting the declining outcomes for pupils by improving the quality of teaching and tackling weaknesses. He made it extremely clear to staff that outcomes were 'not good enough'.
- The further appointments of a new deputy headteacher and early years leader have created a strong leadership team. Together, they have made consistent and successful efforts to drive improvements over the past 18 months. This determined approach has improved the quality of teaching across the school, resulting in current pupils making good, and sometimes exceptional, progress in their learning.
- Middle leaders are enthusiastic and reflective and share the drive of senior leaders to improve the outcomes of pupils. They have strong subject knowledge and use assessment information carefully to ensure that pupils' progress is understood. Middle leaders work collaboratively, providing support but also challenging one another to ensure that the highest expectations are set.
- Senior leaders and the chief executive officer (CEO) of Enhance Academy Trust have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses across the school. Together, they have ensured that teachers and teaching assistants access high-quality professional development. As a result, teachers have secure subject knowledge and high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Staff are motivated by the clear sense of direction that leaders provide, and staff morale is high.
- The headteacher and other leaders redesigned the curriculum to better meet the needs of the pupils. English and mathematics are planned carefully to provide a high level of challenge for all pupils. These subjects are now taught well. Wider curriculum subjects enable pupils to practise their basic skills and to learn through real-life experiences and through a problem-solving and reasoning approach. This fuels the pupils' interests and they are inspired to take an active part in their learning. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the wide range of extra-curricular activities available, which include running, choir and dance clubs, and adventurous residential visits. The breadth and balance of the curriculum have improved and, ultimately, this has led to good, and sometimes exceptional, progress for current pupils.
- The curriculum also promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding and fundamental British values. Pupils study different cultures, democracy and the world faiths. Opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills and moral purpose are woven through the school's Christian values of friendship, hope, trust, forgiveness and endurance. This helps to broaden pupils' experiences and provides opportunities for reflection.
- By the end of key stage 2, the attainment of pupils with SEND has been well below average. These pupils have a range of needs and some are very complex. Leaders understand the barriers to learning for these pupils and provide effective support. Current pupils with SEND have their needs met closely, resulting in good progress from

their starting points.

- In 2018, the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils were well below the national averages. Changes to the curriculum and effective use of assessment to plan carefully for their needs have resulted in effective support being identified and provided. As a result, the majority of disadvantaged pupils currently in each year group make good or better progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders use the physical education (PE) and sport premium well to provide pupils with increased access to competitive sporting activities. Teachers have participated in professional training and coaching with sports coaches to develop their skills to teach PE and sustain the improved provision.
- Parents have an overwhelmingly positive view of the school. They report that their children are safe and happy and make good progress. Parents appreciate the 'family community', and one parent commented, 'The school looks after the whole child, educationally, emotionally and physically.'

Governance of the school

- The local governing body is responsible for the strategic development of the school. Governors bring a wide range of experience and skills to their roles. This helps them to ask challenging questions and to hold leaders to account. Governors receive relevant training to support them to carry out their responsibilities.
- Governors evaluate how well the school is doing and they have an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. They are aware that the historical outcomes for pupils, particularly at the end of key stage 2, have been unacceptable. They visit the school regularly to check out the information that they receive from leaders. Reports written by governors about their visits are detailed and relevant and link to priorities on the current school improvement plan.
- Governors understand the rationale behind the spending of the funding received for disadvantaged pupils and for pupils with SEND. They challenge leaders by requesting information to measure the difference this spending is making.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Appropriate checks are carried out to make sure that all staff, volunteers and visitors are suitable to work with children.
- Safeguarding is given a high priority, with four designated safeguarding leads who follow clear and accountable safeguarding practices. The staff have attended a wide range of training courses relating to safeguarding. As a result, staff are confident in recognising any potential signs of pupils who may be at risk. Staff follow the thorough procedures in place to record any concerns about pupils.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff and governors recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The designated safeguarding leads work closely with other professionals to provide support for vulnerable pupils and their families. This makes a positive difference to pupils' education and health.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers create a calm, yet stimulating, learning environment where pupils play an active part in their learning. Teachers have developed their skills through training to deliver the new curriculum, which was introduced a year ago. This has strengthened the quality of teaching and learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have secure subject knowledge which they impart effectively to pupils. As a result, pupils understand and use subject-specific terminology and vocabulary and receive work which is matched to their needs. This is resulting in strong progress being made by current pupils.
- Teachers enrich pupils' learning by utilising the extensive school grounds. This supports pupils' learning by providing a natural setting to develop real-life contexts to their study. For example, in science, the pupils can grow plants, cook food and work in the forest area outdoors.
- Leaders have ensured that teacher assessment is accurate and used consistently to judge pupils' achievements and to identify the next areas to develop. Within lessons, teachers use assessment to move some pupils on to more difficult work in a timely way. Alternatively, sometimes teachers assess pupils' learning to provide relevant support where necessary.
- The teaching of pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils with SEND is strong. The specific 'nurture base' classroom provides a calm and nurturing environment to support pupils with significant learning needs. They learn and practise basic skills in a smaller group where the expertise of staff helps to break down any barriers to learning.
- Positive relationships are evident between teachers and their pupils. Consequently, pupils enjoy school and can confidently rise to the high expectations that teachers set for them. Occasionally, when pupils make an error, they show signs that they lack self-esteem. Teachers and teaching assistants are adept at recognising this and supporting pupils to develop their resilience to become more self-assured.
- Pupils are encouraged to think deeply because of the rich diet of problem-solving and reasoning across the curriculum. Teachers use incisive questioning to develop this further. This is particularly evident in mathematics, where pupils can explain the reasons for their methods and apply what they already know to attempt new mathematical problems.
- Phonics is taught systematically from the early years. By the end of key stage 1, almost all pupils reach the required standard in the phonics screening check. Many pupils can apply their phonics knowledge in their reading to become confident and fluent readers. However, the proportion of pupils who reached the required standard in phonics at the end of Year 1 in 2018 was below the national average. Teaching and learning in phonics for current pupils in the early years and key stage 1 are variable, therefore pupils' progress rates are variable.
- Teaching assistants have received relevant training to equip them to provide high-quality support for pupils. This includes using questioning to extend pupils' thinking. Occasionally, some teaching assistants are deployed more effectively than others. A strength of the work of teaching assistants is when they deliver a discrete session to pupils. In those instances, they have more opportunity to demonstrate that they are

highly skilled, with secure subject knowledge.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Central to this are the positive relationships that are fostered between staff and pupils and the caring and nurturing ethos that all staff have established. Staff know pupils extremely well and pupils say that they are listened to and they trust the adults in school to look after them. The younger pupils are cared for by the older pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils have specific roles to help the youngest children with the lunchtime routines.
- Staff and pupils ensure that the Christian values of friendship, hope, trust, forgiveness and endurance play a key role in the life of the school. All adults lead by example, being strong role models for the pupils. One parent commented: 'The children understand the school's values and they are reinforced and encouraged on a daily basis by the staff.'
- Pupils demonstrate care and respect for each other in lessons and in the playground. They take their responsibilities as lunchtime monitors and school council members seriously. Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying but say that teachers deal with issues straight away so there are no problems with bullying.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and they trust adults to make sure that school is a safe place. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when they are online.
- In lessons, teachers encourage pupils to persevere, learn from mistakes and be resilient. This has resulted in the majority of pupils having high self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities. Pupils recognise that the PE and sport curriculum helps them to stay fit and active. They can also explain the importance of eating a healthy diet and say that school dinners are 'healthy and taste amazing'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and very well mannered. They show kindness and consideration to their peers.
- Leaders' actions have improved the behaviour of pupils over time. The majority of pupils display positive attitudes to learning and conduct themselves well on the playground. In lessons, pupils work together collaboratively and they value the views and opinions of others. A carefully thought-out curriculum and strong relationships enable pupils to develop self-regulation techniques and understand the importance of the impact of their behaviour on others.
- Attendance of all pupils is broadly in line with national averages. Staff follow up any absences immediately and work with families to encourage good attendance. The number of pupils who are regularly absent from school is checked carefully and this is

lower than national comparatives. However, attendance of disadvantaged pupils has been below the national average over time. There are too many disadvantaged pupils who are regularly absent from school when compared with the national average.

- Children are proud to be pupils at Overthorpe and they say that they enjoy their learning. They work and play cooperatively, supporting each other and being happy when their friends do well. These positive attitudes to learning are contributing to the good progress that current pupils make.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment and progress at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics have been declining. The senior leadership team has successfully addressed the significant issues in teaching and learning and eradicated weak teaching. Pupils across key stage 2 are now making at least good progress. Some pupils are making exceptional progress.
- Leaders, governors and the academy trust identified that the reason for low outcomes historically was an inappropriate curriculum for pupils which did not meet their needs or prepare them for the standardised tests at the end of key stage 2. Leaders have implemented a broad and balanced curriculum which reflects the current national curriculum programmes of study. Pupils' progress has improved as a result.
- In recent years, attainment at the end of key stage 1 has been below the national average. Current leaders recognised that the curriculum offered to pupils did not match the standardised assessments at the end of Year 2. Leaders have successfully addressed this issue and current pupils in key stage 1 are making at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This includes the high proportion of pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, whose progress from their starting points is now good or better.
- Teachers' assessments measure skills and knowledge progression across the curriculum and check pupils' understanding in a range of subjects. Teachers know what learning has taken place and how well pupils are achieving in all subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school's own assessment information for current pupils shows that the majority of current pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school from their starting points. This assessment was supported by work seen in pupils' books. Furthermore, leaders are resolute in their determination to ensure that outcomes continue to improve.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the required standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 was above the national average for two of the past three years. Almost all pupils catch up by the end of Year 2. However, some pupils complete phonics activities which do not match their abilities as well as they could. As a result, the progress that current pupils make in phonics is not consistent across the early years and key stage 1.
- Historically, the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND was significantly below the national averages. The current revised curriculum meets their needs and, across the school, these pupils receive effective support which enables

them to make strong progress in all subjects, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of the early years is effective. Leaders have created a purposeful learning environment that is tailored distinctively to meet the needs of children from two years old until the end of Reception. The outdoor area is especially enticing. Carefully planned activities mean that children are curious, engrossed and challenged in their learning.
- Most children in the early years enter the school with skills and understanding below, and sometimes significantly below, what are typical for their age. This is particularly the case in communication, language and literacy development. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development by the end of Reception is broadly in line with the national average, representing good progress from individual starting points.
- Teachers encourage children's independence. For example, the children are taught an easy way to put on their coats so that they do not rely on adults to do this for them. Children demonstrated this independence during the inspection, for example deciding when to take off their shoes and change into wellington boots before going outside to play in the mud and grass.
- Relationships are strong between adults and children. Therefore, children are happy and confident to explore. Adults plan activities carefully so that children of different ages can work on age-appropriate activities. Children play together cooperatively and show a high level of perseverance when experimenting with different equipment. Adults intervene at key points to ask incisive questions which extend children's knowledge and skills.
- Children are taught to play safely and use the resources carefully. During the inspection, children were observed digging with real spades and using window cleaning equipment to wash the classroom windows in a safe way. Adults make sure that the early years provision meets all welfare requirements.
- Children's attainment against the early learning goals is above the national average in most areas. This includes personal, social and emotional aspects of learning, communication, reading and mathematics. In this way, children are well prepared for Year 1. However, the proportion of children attaining the writing early learning goal is below the national average and lower than it is in reading and mathematics by the end of their time in Reception. Opportunities for children to develop their writing within the learning environment are limited compared to those for reading and mathematics. Consequently, a third of children do not have the writing skills necessary to make a prompt start as they enter Year 1.
- Leaders use additional funding effectively to ensure that disadvantaged children are supported well. As a result, many disadvantaged children made exceptional progress from their very low starting points in 2018. This is true of current disadvantaged children in the early years.
- The learning space for two-year-olds is suitably adapted to meet their needs. For

example, there is a specific outdoor area which has age-appropriate activities, while soft furnishings and appropriate books and resources are provided inside. There is an area for children who need a quiet time or a nap, which is always available for them.

- Parents share a very positive partnership with the school. Parents have many opportunities to be involved in their child's learning through parents' events and learning activities that are extended to homework. Parents receive a range of valuable information through newsletters, the school website and social media. Parents speak highly of the early years provision. One parent commented, 'Children are happy in early years and they make good progress.'

School details

Unique reference number	138979
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10059092

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	306
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Sue Muscroft
Headteacher	Matt Birkett
Telephone number	01924 325 300
Website	www.overthorpecofe.co.uk/
Email address	office@overthorpecofe.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7–8 January 2015

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much larger than the national average and in the top 20% of schools in the country.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average for both SEND support and for those who have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is situated in an area of high deprivation.
- The school has a Nursery providing 30 hours places. The school also provide places for two-year-olds.
- The school offers a breakfast club before school and a range of clubs and activities after school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes in a range of lessons. In most of these sessions, senior leaders accompanied them. The quality of pupils' work in a wide range of subjects and in all classes across the school was scrutinised.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around school and reviewed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The inspectors observed pupils in the playground and during lunchtime.
- The lead inspector spoke to members of the governing body, the school improvement partners and the CEO from Enhance Academy Trust. A telephone conversation was held with an officer from the Church of England Diocese of Leeds.
- Inspectors considered the 31 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including parents' free-text responses. Inspectors also considered 23 responses to the staff questionnaire. Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and met with pupils to listen to their views about the school.
- A range of documentation was examined, including a summary of the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, safeguarding information, pupil premium documents, sports premium documents, the school's assessment information and governing body meeting minutes.
- The school is designated as having a religious character and received a Section 48 inspection on 10 June 2015.

Inspection team

Alison Aitchison, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Soutar	Ofsted Inspector
Andy Taylor	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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