

Oakhill Primary Academy

Doncaster Road, Ardsley, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S71 5AG

Inspection dates

12–13 June 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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- After a period of instability, a permanent headteacher is now in place who is ensuring that pupils' needs are put first. Attainment is rising and teaching is strong.
- Governors provide a good level of challenge and support to school leaders.
- The work the school does with its two partner primary schools underpins the rapid progress the school has made since it opened.
- The curriculum is rich in its extra-curricular programmes and in English and mathematics. Further improvements are needed to ensure that the curriculum in humanities and science is as strong.
- Teachers know how to get the best out of pupils. They question pupils well. Teaching assistants support pupils effectively.
- Most-able pupils are not always challenged as well as they might be.
- Reading and phonics are taught well. However, pupils' vocabulary is sometimes not as rich and varied as it could be.
- Pupils take on responsibilities willingly. They know how to keep safe. Bullying is a rarity.
- Inspectors were impressed with pupils' manners. They behave well both in and out of the classroom.
- Attendance is average but affected disproportionately by pupils taking holidays during term time.
- Attainment has risen sharply as a result of better teaching and more permanent teaching staff. Outcomes are now at least average in both key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported but their targets lack some sharpness.
- In the early years, children thrive as a result of high-quality teaching, leadership and clear routines being in place.
- The outdoor area in the early years does not offer rich, stimulating activities for children to develop literacy and numeracy.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment further by:
 - providing more challenge to the most able pupils
 - ensuring that pupils use a greater range of vocabulary, both in their speaking and in their written work.
- Accelerate the progress pupils with SEND are making by ensuring that the targets that are set for them are clear and measurable for impact.
- Improve the curriculum further so that pupils build up a broad and deep knowledge in humanities and science subjects.
- In the early years, ensure that there are good opportunities for pupils to improve their literacy and numeracy outdoors.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has stabilised the school after a period of turbulence. There is now clear direction which is underpinned by the simple ethos 'Be honest, be respectful, be safe, be the best you can be.' Staff morale is high. Parents and carers now have far more confidence in the school following an understandable period of uneasiness.
- The school works well with its two partner primary schools, led by an executive principal. Leaders and teachers share their expertise. Leaders work well to improve the curriculum, which is now effective in developing pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills.
- Workload is kept to a sensible level for staff who, as a result, are able to spend valuable time working with pupils. All staff support extra-curricular activities which broaden pupils' experiences and develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- The curriculum is well designed in reading. There is a consistent approach in place for the teaching of phonics in key stage 1. Early reading is taught well. Those pupils who do not pass the phonics screening check in Year 1 are closely monitored. During Year 2, most have caught up with their peers as a result of high-quality support and assessment which pinpoints their next steps in learning.
- Leaders have raised the profile of reading, for example by introducing a 'books and butties' event for parents and their children. As pupils get older, the curriculum in reading ensures that they develop a love of literature and become prolific readers. One parent told an inspector, 'My daughter now loves reading and is always picking up books to read at home.'
- Humanities and science are taught regularly. However, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge in these subjects. This is because the new curriculum, which is being formulated by subject leaders in the primary partnership of schools, has yet to be introduced.
- Additional funding for sport and physical education (PE) is used effectively. Many pupils now take part in regular sport. Fitness activities such as 'beat the street' encourage families to get active. Time is spent supporting staff to improve their skills in sports and PE.
- The additional funding for SEND is used effectively so that pupils receive most of their support alongside their peers in the classroom. However, the targets that are set for pupils with SEND lack precision and clear measurable milestones.
- While there are few pupils who are disadvantaged, the pupil premium is making a good impact on their progress, which is rising year on year. Their progress is now similar to that of other pupils nationally.
- The resource base for pupils with SEND is well led and managed. Effective systems are in place to assess pupils. Staff work well with parents to ensure that pupils settle quickly into their new surroundings and make good progress. Staff then work effectively with the pupils' schools to ensure that they continue to progress when they return to their own schools.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well. They are well aware of the various strengths but equally knowledgeable about what needs to improve further. Governors supported the school well to ensure that a substantive headteacher was appointed after a period of instability.
- Governors have good skills to support the school, with specialist knowledge of finance and education.
- Governors' governance of the three schools in the partnership has improved their knowledge of how to hold leaders to account and monitor the progress of the school development plan.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a good culture of safeguarding in the school. All staff see it as their responsibility to ensure that pupils are safe. Staff are well aware of what they must do if they have a concern about a pupil.
- The computerised system for recording any concerns is well managed and secure. Any issues are swiftly followed up with outside agencies and with parents.
- Thorough procedures are in place to ensure that new staff are vetted and checked prior to their appointment.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Across the school, teaching has improved, which has led to much-improved outcomes for pupils currently in the school. High-quality staff training is in place and there are now opportunities for staff to improve their skills by sharing good practice.
- The teaching of reading is strong. Phonics is taught well so that pupils quickly learn to match letters to sounds and to read simple sentences in books. As pupils get older, their reading comprehension improves. They are able to analyse characters in books and predict what might happen in a story. Those pupils who need additional support with their reading are heard reading aloud by an adult. This ensures that they make good progress.
- Teachers know how to get the best out of pupils in mathematics. Teachers use resources well to help pupils understand how to calculate, to reason mathematically and to solve problems.
- Teaching assistants offer good support to pupils, including those with SEND. They know just how much support to give pupils, while also ensuring that they become confident, independent learners.
- In the resource base for SEND, the quality of teaching is strong, particularly in supporting pupils' speech, language, communication and reading. However, on occasions, the mathematics work is too simple for the most able pupils.
- Teachers usually ensure that the work that is set for pupils is neither too difficult nor

too easy. However, on occasions, the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently.

- Over time, pupils' vocabulary has not been well developed, which has led to older pupils having a narrow range of vocabulary. Sometimes, teachers will point out new vocabulary in lessons but pupils soon forget it because they do not use it regularly in their speaking or their writing.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Many pupils grasp the opportunity to take on responsibilities, such as becoming a play leader, house captain or school councillor.
- The school promotes sport and PE well. As a result, pupils are aware of the importance of leading fit, healthy lifestyles.
- A learning mentor works with the most vulnerable pupils. This enables them to discuss any problems they might have and helps to increase their self-confidence.
- Pupils feel safe from any threats of bullying or harassment. They say that bullying is rare, which is supported by the school's own records. All pupils said that there was always someone to turn to should the need arise.
- Through the strong personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, pupils learn to understand and respect each other's differences. Pupils spoke to inspectors about the need for tolerance and understanding for pupils who find difficulty managing their behaviour.
- Pupils listen to and respect each other's opinions. For example, Year 6 worked well together during one lunchtime as they planned fundraising activities for their leavers' prom.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In lessons, pupils behave well because lessons are stimulating and interesting. Teachers enthuse and motivate pupils well. Most teachers have a deep understanding of the most vulnerable pupils and handle them with great sensitivity but also have clear boundaries for their behaviour.
- Outside, during playtimes and lunchtimes, it is striking how many pupils are active, energetically playing hockey and football. Pupils in Year 5 who are play leaders manage games well. All pupils play sensibly and cooperatively with their peers.
- The school has a good track record of improving behaviour for the most vulnerable pupils. Detailed records are kept by leaders, which enables them to tackle repeated poor behaviour and work with parents to support pupils' behaviour at home.
- Attendance is broadly average. Many absences are the result of parents taking pupils out of school during term time for holidays.

- Pupils in the resource base for SEND behave well and concentrate hard on their work.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2018, pupils who left in Year 6 made broadly average rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion who reached the expected standard was broadly average but fewer than average reached a greater depth of learning.
- Inspection evidence indicates that the current Year 6 have made good progress and that higher proportions of pupils have reached a greater depth of learning in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2018, a below-average proportion of pupils reached the expected standard. This was the result of some turbulence in staffing and inconsistent teaching of phonics. Much-improved teaching has resulted in pupils currently in Year 1 now reaching above-average standards in phonics. They are able to read well and apply their phonics skills well to their writing.
- Similarly, inconsistent teaching in key stage 1 in 2018 led to standards being below average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. This has now improved significantly for pupils currently in Year 2. Pupils are able to write well using a range of punctuation and are able to spell words correctly. Most pupils are able to read fluently by the end of Year 2 and are able to do simple mathematics, appropriate to their age.
- The few disadvantaged pupils in each year make similar progress to their peers. Similarly, there are few pupils with SEND in each year group. They make steady progress. However, targets that are set for them lack sharpness. Consequently, some could make better progress.
- In subjects outside of reading, writing and mathematics, outcomes vary but are generally good. In science, the curriculum is still under development so it develops pupils' knowledge systematically through the years. However, pupils gain valuable knowledge through frequent experiments. In humanities, also, the curriculum is still developing. The PSHE programme is strong in helping pupils develop a good understanding of life in modern Britain. Pupils particularly enjoy PE and sports, which are promoted well through a varied and imaginative curriculum.
- Pupils in the resource base for SEND make good progress with their reading, with some making exceptionally good progress. This is because close one-to-one support for their speech and language needs quickly 'unlocks' a barrier to learning. As a result, some pupils who have been 'stuck' reading very simple books are then able to read and say much more complex words.

Early years provision

Good

- Children begin the Nursery with skills and abilities that are appropriate for their age. They make good progress during their time in the early years, leaving with skills in reading, writing and mathematics that are above average.
- Teaching in the early years has improved. While previously, most children reached the

early learning goals, relatively few exceeded them. Staff in the early years have spent time teaching in key stage 1 to help them better understand how best to prepare children for the work that is to come. As a result, the most able are stretched well and many more children are exceeding, not just meeting, the early learning goals.

- A number of children arrive in the Nursery with weaknesses in their speech, language and communication. Adults have good skills to help children improve by modelling good speech and giving children opportunities to explain what they are doing in full sentences. This helps them improve their speech and expands their vocabulary well.
- There are plentiful opportunities for children to write. They quickly learn to write their name and write simple captions to the pictures they draw. When they bake cakes and biscuits, they write their list of ingredients. When they play shop, they write their shopping lists and read them to each other. Consequently, by the time they leave the Reception class, children are well prepared for the demands of Year 1.
- Children soon learn to appreciate and love books. Many of the play activities that are planned arise from the books that have been read. Two children eagerly retold a story about a baby fish to an inspector while making models of fish out of clay.
- Staff keep a close eye on pupils who might 'wander' from one activity to another without purpose. During the inspection, boys tended to shy away from mathematics work but were quickly picked up and gently encouraged to take part. Mathematics is taught well and, before long, children are confidently making simple calculations.
- Phonics is taught well and is not confined to the 30-minute slot per day. Throughout the day, there are fun activities for children to practise and apply their phonics skills across all areas of learning.
- Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. There are good opportunities for parents to stay and play with children and for them to learn how to support their children at home. Assessment systems are sharp and improving as they begin to involve parents more closely.
- The outdoor area is currently limited in how it supports children's learning. Many children benefit from the physical activities on offer outdoors. The construction area is popular, where children get the chance to safely use mallets and other real tools. However, there are limited opportunities for children to improve their literacy and numeracy outdoors.

School details

Unique reference number	144484
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	10087469

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	283
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Michael Sanderson
Headteacher	Lisa McCarthy
Telephone number	01226 284 493
Website	www.oakhillacademy.org.uk
Email address	admin.oakhill@oakhillacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Oakhill Primary Academy converted to become an academy under the Wellspring Academies Trust in September 2016. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require special measures.
- The school is also one of three schools in the Barnsley Primary Partnership, which is overseen by an executive principal.
- The school's headteacher was appointed in June 2018. One of the assistant headteachers took up her post in September 2018.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is below average. The proportion of pupils with SEND, who are supported by an education, health and care plan, is broadly average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language or who are from minority ethnic groups is below the national average.

- The school has a resource base for pupils with SEND who have speech, language and communication needs. Pupils in the resource base come from different primary schools in the local authority, spending approximately four terms in the resource base.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited various lessons, some with the executive principal and headteacher. Inspectors listened to various pupils reading and looked at the work in pupils' books to evaluate their progress over time. They spoke to pupils, staff (including the headteacher and other leaders), governors and the executive principal of the Barnsley Primary Partnership.
- Inspectors scrutinised various documents, including the summary of self-evaluation, safeguarding information, various policies and the tracking of pupils' progress.
- The 80 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered by inspectors. Inspectors also scrutinised responses from the school's questionnaire for parents. An inspector spoke to parents as they were bringing their children into school.
- Twenty-two responses to the staff questionnaire were considered by inspectors.

Inspection team

Robert Jones, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
John Downs	Ofsted Inspector
Fiona Dixon	Ofsted Inspector

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