

# Inspection of a good school: Overstone Combined School

Church Street, Wing, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 0NY

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Inspection dates:

19–20 November 2019

## **Outcome**

Overstone Combined School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Overstone is a welcoming school where the pupils are happy and feel safe. Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities to help them broaden their learning and experiences. These include lunchtime and after-school clubs, and the chance to be involved in local events, for example to attend the parish junior leadership meetings. Pupils also go on interesting trips. Many describe these as 'a chance to bring our learning to life'. They told us that their school is unique because the on-site forest school gives them valuable opportunities to learn outdoors.

Many pupils' behaviour is mostly positive around the school. Leaders have recently introduced a new approach to managing behaviour, but this is not yet consistently applied by all staff. Several pupils told us that, although behaviour has improved 'massively', there is some bullying in the school. They told us that not all staff help them deal with bullying. As one pupil told us, 'This is unfair, it doesn't help solve our problems.'

Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. In too many lessons a number of pupils are easily distracted. This is because the work they do in most subjects does not help them learn well. Disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not always supported effectively.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders have very recently reviewed how well the school's curriculum suits the pupils. They have made some positive changes to history and computing. However, they have yet to ensure that the wider curriculum helps pupils learn the right things in the right order in all subjects. Teachers do not always make sure pupils learn the important knowledge in different subjects. Teachers do not know what pupils have learned in previous years so that they can build on this. The work pupils complete does not help them develop their understanding of the topics they are taught. As a result, pupils do not achieve well across

this school.

Senior leaders have only recently appointed subject leaders to their posts. Some subject leaders have not had the chance to identify the knowledge that they want pupils to remember and use in their future learning. Leaders have yet to make sure that all teachers have the required subject knowledge to plan and teach well in the wider curriculum. However, subject leaders are keen to show that they can lead further improvements.

The teaching of phonics and early reading is not as effective as it should be. Leaders have not made sure there is a whole-school approach to the teaching of phonics. Not all staff have had the right training. Pupils' reading books do not always match the letter sounds and words they have been learning. In 2019, not enough pupils achieved well in the Year 1 phonics screening check.

Staff do not have high enough expectations of what disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND can achieve. Planning is not adapted effectively to ensure that these pupils learn well. For example, teachers set work that is often too hard, which means pupils lose interest. Pupils struggle to communicate their ideas clearly and do not know where to start. Additionally, the support teachers put in place is not always as effective as it should be. Leaders have not evaluated the impact of additional support to make sure it is achieving what they want it to achieve.

Children in the early years are well looked after. They are happy and calm. They learn to play well together and follow school routines. Staff prepare interesting and exciting activities in most areas of learning. During our visits to Reception class, children were enjoying learning about numbers in many different and creative ways. This helps children deepen their understanding of early mathematics.

Leaders provide pupils with a range of experiences that support pupils' personal development. Pupils discuss and debate their ideas on issues such as plastic pollution, animal testing and Brexit. Pupils have a well-rounded understanding of life in modern Britain. They told us, 'We have no right to judge others as no one should have the right to judge us.' Pupils also have a wide variety of opportunities to learn about different communities and faiths.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff have regular training. Staff know how to check for signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff act quickly when they have any concerns. Leaders work closely with other agencies and professionals.

Staff teach pupils about the risks that they might face in their everyday lives, including road safety. Pupils know how to keep safe when online. Pupils know that they should speak to a trusted adult if they are worried or upset.

Governors make all the necessary checks to ensure that staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The curriculum is not well sequenced in some subjects. Consequently, pupils do not achieve well. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum planning for all subjects set out the knowledge that pupils should learn and when they should learn it, so that it is ambitious for all pupils. Leaders should check how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum.
- Some teachers require training to develop their pedagogical and subject knowledge. Leaders need to ensure that teachers have the skills to be able to implement and deliver a coherently planned curriculum in all subjects. The roles of subject leaders need to be developed to make sure they are effective.
- Weaknesses in the school's phonics programme have left some pupils unable to read as well as they could and should. Leaders must implement a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics. Leaders must also ensure that staff receive appropriate training. They should also ensure that the texts pupils read will provide them with opportunities to practise their phonics knowledge.
- Too often the work set for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND is not well matched to their needs. Consequently, these pupils are easily distracted and fall behind in their learning. Leaders need to ensure that they check the impact of the school's work to provide a good quality of education for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND so that they achieve well.
- Leaders have introduced a new behaviour management policy and system. Leaders need to ensure that all staff consistently follow the programme and therefore address all incidents of poor behaviour.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Overstone Combined School to be good on 17–18 May 2016.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110519
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10111389
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	215
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Mark Watson
<b>Acting headteacher</b>	Lynne Mercer
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.overstone-wing.bucks.sch.uk">www.overstone-wing.bucks.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17–18 May 2016

## Information about this school

- The acting headteacher took up her post in September 2019.

## Information about this inspection

- We met with the acting headteacher, senior leaders, curriculum leaders, and members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. An inspector made a telephone call to a representative from the local authority.
- We did deep dives in the following subjects: reading; mathematics; science; history. In each subject, we met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, talked to pupils, spoke to teachers and looked at pupils' work.
- We reviewed safeguarding records, including the central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- We spoke to parents during the inspection and considered the views of 51 parents who responded to Ofsted's parental questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View.
- We also spoke with pupils formally and informally about their day-to-day experiences at the school.

## **Inspection team**

Shazia Akram, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Paul Shaughnessy

Ofsted Inspector

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