

Inspection of Otley Primary School

Chapel Road, Otley, Ipswich, Suffolk IP6 9NT

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn. They proudly show their work to visitors. They have enjoyed the trips, visits and visitors this year, as part of their curriculum. They particularly liked the recent visit from a children's author. However, some pupils cannot read well. The catch-up support they receive does not always help them precisely enough.

Most pupils behave well, including the youngest children. When a few pupils struggle, staff are very good at helping them to regulate their behaviour. Pupils say that behaviour has improved a lot this year. They say that pupils are kind, and that bullying does not happen often. When it does, adults are very good at helping pupils to solve their disputes. Pupils are unequivocal in their praise for the help they can get from adults, including in 'the pod', if they feel sad or worried. Pupils feel, and are kept, safe.

Older pupils are good role models for younger pupils. They enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as reading with younger children. Some pupils would like more after-school clubs, which leaders are looking to increase this summer.

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

There has been significant turbulence in leadership and staffing since the previous inspection. Several staff are new this year. This has created weaknesses in provision over time. Current interim senior leaders are bringing much-needed improvements. They know what they still must do. Many changes are either new or not fully embedded. Consequently, pupils, including children in the early years, do not learn and achieve as well as they should.

Pupils access a broad curriculum. Curriculum planning in mathematics is specific and detailed. Staff are well trained and know what, when and how to teach the curriculum. Elsewhere, there are gaps in curriculum planning. Adults are not as confident or well trained in the delivery of some subjects. This includes where teachers are delivering the curriculum to mixed-age classes. Pupils often access and complete the same activities but do not develop the deep learning that leaders intend. This includes for children in the early years.

Leaders have identified that the teaching of reading last year was not good enough. Too many pupils did not learn to read as well as they should have. Since September, leaders have established the school's chosen phonics programme with real rigour, including purchasing appropriate books and resources. This is supporting teachers to deliver the basic early reading programme far more effectively. Pupils, including the youngest children, receive books that match the sounds they are learning.

Despite these improvements, some pupils are still not able to read as well as they should. There are some high-quality interventions supporting specific pupils to catch up. Leaders have also provided additional class reading time for pupils. However, in

these sessions, activities are not routinely well matched to the pupils' needs. They do not address the gaps in their reading ability. This is not helping those pupils to catch up as quickly as they could.

Leaders have worked diligently to support pupils with the most complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to get timely support. They have sought external professional specialist expertise to support pupils. These pupils are well supported to access their learning. However, there are pupils with less complex needs, some of whom have been at the school for some time. They have not yet had their needs accurately identified. Despite leaders' efforts, they and staff do not have enough information about how best to support these pupils.

Leaders' approach to behaviour and attendance is thoughtful and well considered. Children in the early years settle well and are well cared for. They interact with their mixed-age classmates happily. As pupils get older, they become highly positive role models. Leaders for attendance, safeguarding, SEND and behaviour work closely with vulnerable pupils and their families to support them as individuals. Attendance and behaviour this year have improved markedly for several pupils owing to this close-knit approach.

Leaders have invested in pupils' well-being and personal development, as individuals and as a whole school. Pupils value the kindness and care that staff and their classmates show them. They know about the importance of friendships, healthy living, different families, cultures and religions. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their 'passion, pride and progress awards' not only as a reflection of their behaviour, but also their school values.

Governors have provided much-needed stability since the previous inspection. They continue to review how they can be more effective. They know the strengths and weaknesses in the provision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Appropriate checks on staff and staff training are in place. Staff are proactive, and vigilant to pupils' needs or changes in pupils' behaviour. They pass on their concerns to leaders appropriately.

Leaders work effectively with external professionals and agencies to ensure that action is taken to keep pupils safe. On occasion, record-keeping is less detailed than it should be. This is improving this year.

Leaders have ensured that there is a focus on how pupils keep themselves safe, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A number of pupils have gaps in their reading. Some of the additional reading sessions are not effective in helping these pupils to catch up. These activities are not well matched to pupils' specific needs and gaps in knowledge. Leaders need to ensure that this provision is more effective in supporting pupils to catch up with their peers to read fluently and effectively.
- Some subjects in the foundation curriculum are not clearly enough planned. Staff are not given precise guidance or training in some subjects or areas. This includes for delivering the curriculum to mixed-age classes, including for children in the early years. Often, pupils are completing the same work, despite curriculum planning that intends otherwise. Pupils' knowledge and skills are less well developed. Leaders need to ensure that planning and staff training enable a well-delivered curriculum, so that pupils develop the intended knowledge and skills.
- There are pupils, some of whom have been at the school for some time, who have not yet had their needs accurately identified. The 'assess, plan, do, review' process has not been well used prior to this year to help identify their barriers to learning. Despite leaders' efforts this year, they and staff do not have enough information about how best to support these pupils. Leaders need to ensure that these pupils' needs are precisely identified, and support put in place, to ensure that they achieve high-quality outcomes alongside their classmates.
- Current interim leadership is bringing about improvements. However, interim leaders are often stretched for time and focused on the day-to-day running of the school. Governors, and local authority teams, need to ensure that leaders have sufficient capacity to address the strategic aspects of the school's provision that need developing, such as the curriculum, reading and the early years.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

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

Unique reference number	124602
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10268673
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ian Liddell
Headteacher	Hannah Rigby (Interim Executive Headteacher)
Website	http://www.owfed.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	30 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been five headteachers since the previous inspection. Several other leaders have joined the school since the previous inspection, including the deputy headteacher and leader for SEND.
- School leaders are not currently making use of any alternative provision.
- Otley Primary School is federated with Witnesham Primary School. The two schools share an executive headteacher, an executive deputy headteacher (who is also the leader for early years), a leader for SEND and a governing body.
- An interim executive headteacher, who has the substantive role as deputy headteacher, is currently covering the absence of the substantive executive headteacher.
- The substantive executive headteacher is leaving for a new role in another school in August 2023.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in these subjects; early reading, mathematics, physical education and art/design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with the subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to adults teaching and/or supporting pupils, reviewed pupils' work and spoke to pupils about their learning. Inspectors also considered aspects of other subjects on the school's curriculum.
- Inspectors held discussions with the interim executive headteacher, the interim executive deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors also spoke to a local authority officer. The lead inspector met with several members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation provided by school leaders, including documentation related to safeguarding and recruitment checks made on staff.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils. To gather evidence about pupils' experiences, inspectors observed them at different times during the school day, spoke to them during free times and met with groups of pupils.
- The inspectors also took account of 17 responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including comments in the free-text facility. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the beginning and end of the school day.
- To gather the views of staff, the inspectors took account of 15 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.

Inspection team

Kim Pigram, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Simon Harbrow

Ofsted Inspector

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