

Oakham CofE Primary School

Burley Road, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6GY

Inspection dates

19–20 September 2017

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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The passionate, informed and determined leadership of the headteacher successfully unites the whole school team. There is a concerted focus on progress. This has secured significant improvements in the past two years.
- The headteacher has skilfully spotted and developed staff talents and skills, to form an effective leadership team. These leaders have been instrumental in securing improvements across the school.
- Governors have effective skills and a clear understanding of the school. They make a strong contribution to the clear vision and rigour that is driving the school forward.
- Leaders provide rigorous guidance and effective staff training. This has made sure that teaching across the school is now good. There is particularly strong practice in upper key stage 2 and the early years.
- Pupils now make good progress from their starting points, with some accelerated progress in writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good progress as others.
- Pupils are keen to learn because the school's curriculum interests them and helps them to know when they are successful and how to improve.
- Pupils are proud of their school and behave well. Pupils say that they feel safe and are well cared for. Parents also have a high level of confidence in the school's work.
- Teachers are not all equally as skilled at making adaptations within lessons to keep learning moving forward for all pupils.
- Teachers are not all using assessment accurately to plan lessons that systematically build on progress for all pupils.
- Leaders' decisions on the curriculum and how it is taught are not securing as much progress in other subjects as they are in English and mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning further by ensuring that teachers use informed adaptation of school approaches to better meet the needs of different pupils.
- Further accelerate progress for all pupils by ensuring that assessment is used precisely to secure more consistent progress across all year groups.
- Improve leadership and management across the school by ensuring that leaders' decisions about the content of the curriculum and approaches to teaching secure good progress for pupils in a wide range of subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has a passion and determination to secure the best for every pupil. He leads by example and has used his understanding of his staff, effective teaching and learning and the community to convey a compelling culture of high expectations that is understood and valued by all.
- The headteacher has carefully used his prior experience, effective external advice and research to overhaul school systems and policies to drive rapid improvement. He has made sure that assessment and tracking of how well pupils are learning are closely linked to rigorous performance management of teachers and a range of appropriate training.
- The headteacher has identified and enabled talented staff to develop their skills and confidence to form an effective leadership team. This means that a recent senior leadership change has not slowed the momentum of school improvement.
- Leaders have made a considerable investment in effective teaching materials to underpin a carefully designed curriculum for progress in English and mathematics. This has included a range of training which has been significant in rapidly improving teachers' subject knowledge and ensuring that pupils have skills appropriate for their age. There is now a strong platform for further improvements.
- Leaders made a conscious decision to focus learning time and teaching on accelerating English and mathematics. Pupils are highly motivated by having a better sense of what they know and how well they are improving in these areas. However, pupils identified that they would like more time to learn about other things like science, art and history. Leaders are not ensuring that teaching, learning and progress in other subjects are as consistent as in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher and staff model and promote 'the four Ps' of pride, purpose, passion and perseverance. The school's development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a particular strength which links closely with the school's Christian values. Pupils particularly relish opportunities to lead, through roles such as sports ambassadors or being members of the eco team and the school council. Pupils also shared their enthusiasm for the wide range of opportunities they have through clubs, activities and visits, including residential trips. The school understands its responsibility to equip pupils as active citizens. Pupils enjoy being challenged to think. This was seen when pupils considered 'What is art and what is graffiti?' while looking at examples of work by Banksy.
- Leaders use the additional pupil premium funding effectively. Direct adult support within the classroom and for specific interventions, including pastoral support, is carefully targeted to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have ensured that this group of pupils have every chance to participate and be successful in all aspects of timetabled and extra-curricular activities. Funding of an 'invitation breakfast club' has been particularly effective in helping vulnerable pupils raise attendance and make a calm purposeful start to their daily learning.

- Leaders use the additional funds from the physical education and sports grant to good effect. They have ensured that teachers have worked alongside coaches to improve their teaching and coaching skills. Pupils have many opportunities to take part in a range of sports and competitions, within and beyond the school, including athletics, hockey, tag rugby, cross-country and football. The school makes good use of having its own swimming pool. The school has been successful in achieving the Silver School Games Mark.
- A large majority of parents consider the school to be well led and managed, and particularly value improvements since the headteacher took up post and also the approachability of staff.

Governance of the school

- Governors share and contribute effectively to the school's culture of high expectations and focus on pupils' progress. They have continued to build upon the effective training and support provided by the local authority prior to the last inspection.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Minutes from governing body meetings and reports illustrate that they ask school leaders searching and challenging questions.
- The governing body is well organised and uses governors' skills and expertise effectively. Members are visible and active within school, for example 'championing' specific priority areas through direct liaison with subject leaders. School staff expressed how this work impacts positively on their confidence and trust in governors.
- The governors assiduously test out and scrutinise the wide range of information they receive. This allows them to hold school leaders effectively to account to improve outcomes for all pupils.
- Governors have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding, the use of the pupil premium, and physical education and sports funding. They have an accurate view of what is working well. They have a thorough understanding of the headteacher's rigorous use of the management of teachers' performance to hold staff accountable for effective teaching and pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There are clear and rigorous systems and procedures in place. These are understood by all staff. Leaders keep precise records to ensure effective and timely work with external agencies. Staff and governors receive relevant training and updates, including on radicalisation and extremism.
- The culture of safeguarding in the school is evident in children feeling safe and parents' confidence in this. Learning about how to keep safe is woven into pupils' learning across the school curriculum.
- Case studies and records show that potentially vulnerable children and families are well supported. Leaders rightly prioritise the ongoing importance of early identification and removal of barriers for vulnerable pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Thorough records show timely intervention and at least good progress for currently identified pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Since the previous inspection there has been a significant improvement in the consistency and quality of teaching across the school so that it is now good overall.
- Leaders have successfully introduced proven teaching approaches and frameworks for English and mathematics. This supports teachers in achieving consistency in systematically securing age-appropriate skills for pupils across the school.
- Recent training has been particularly effective in improving teaching in mathematics. In upper key stage 2, where new approaches were initially introduced and have had longer to embed, this has led to accelerated progress for many pupils.
- The school has developed rigorous assessment and tracking systems that ensure teachers accurately identify what pupils need to learn in reading, writing and mathematics to be able to attain age-related expectations. Most teachers have used this insight effectively to ensure that any gaps in prior learning have been targeted and taught thoroughly. Leaders do not always look closely at the rates of ongoing progress for pupils with different starting points.
- Leaders have also worked closely with teachers to carefully plan a range of effective interventions and individual support for those pupils at risk of falling behind. As a result, most identified pupils are making at least good progress.
- Teachers plan teaching assistants' work well. Pupils who have complex special educational needs receive sensitive support which effectively promotes good academic and personal progress for them.
- In their writing and their reading, pupils use their secure knowledge of phonics to spell or pronounce tricky or unusual words. This helps them to write and read with fluency. Effective teaching of grammar and punctuation is also used well to improve pupils' written responses across the curriculum.
- Teachers are implementing the school's chosen approach to teaching reading systematically and consistently. They are building pupils' ability to develop effective comprehension skills, including using specific evidence from the text to support their responses. However, pupils' written responses are not consistently as well developed. Inspectors heard a sample of pupils read from across the school. Pupils showed appropriate use of phonics to tackle unfamiliar words. Their books were well matched to their abilities and they were enthusiastically engaged with their reading.
- In mathematics, teachers have sound subject knowledge and explain things clearly. They consistently support pupils' development of their understanding through a range of strategies in line with school policy. These include, for example, using a range of equipment to model or pictorially represent mathematical ideas.
- Where teaching is strongest, teachers skilfully adapt questioning and tasks to meet individual pupils' needs. They also quickly and effectively adapt their teaching within lessons, to address individual misconceptions and spot pupils who are ready to be moved on. However, not all teachers are equally skilled at this. Leaders know where teaching is strongest and are beginning to use this to further improve teaching and learning across the school.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. All adults are strong role models and contribute to a sense of inclusivity and belonging. This ethos of care and respect, including in the two specialist provision areas, ensures that all pupils are well cared for and kept safe by all staff.
- Staff teach pupils about how to keep themselves safe from a wide range of risks. Pupils are particularly knowledgeable about keeping safe online. Younger pupils learn the importance of road safety and older pupils learn about the management of risks in readiness for secondary school. All pupils understand about the importance of physical exercise and keeping healthy.
- Pupils say that incidents of poor behaviour, bullying and the use of discriminatory or derogatory language are rare. They know who to talk to if they have a worry and trust all adults to take appropriate action. School records show that any incidents are recorded, that parents are suitably informed and support is given to reduce the risk of further incidents.
- The vast majority of parents who spoke to inspectors and responded to Parent View agreed that their children are safe, happy and looked after well.
- Pupils collaborate well and take responsibility to develop their learning best in the classes where teachers skilfully plan purposeful tasks and ask questions that keep the learning focused and moving forward.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils follow high expectations that are consistently set by all staff. They show courtesy and consideration towards each other and adults, including visitors in school.
- Pupils behave well around the school and at playtimes. They cooperate well, play happily and show care and responsibility towards each other. They understand the importance of their 'snakes and ladders' school rules and are proud that 'no one has ever been on the grey snake and we hope they never will be.'
- Pupils show a particular pride and responsibility in their well-kept school environment and wearing smart school uniform. They could tell inspectors how important this is as part of the school aims of 'pride, purpose, passion and perseverance'.
- Attendance is above the national average and any persistent absence is dealt with appropriately.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive.
- Pupils' attention and engagement only wane in lessons where teaching is less well matched to their abilities.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are now good overall and improving in all years.
- Highly effective teaching in upper key stage 2, particularly Year 6, drove necessary improvement in 2016, from the school having been below floor standards. This progress then accelerated in 2017, particularly in writing and mathematics. When adjustments are made to take account of the undue impact on data of the high level of pupils with an education, health and care plan, pupils' attainment and progress in reading are close to national averages and for writing and mathematics are above.
- In 2017, the proportion of key stage 2 pupils reaching high measures of attainment for writing and mathematics rose to be better than nationally. This shows strong progress for most-able pupils in these aspects.
- In key stage 1, including phonics, the school has successfully maintained attainment broadly in line with national averages, and this represents good progress for most pupils. However, some girls are not building on their early years attainment as confidently as boys.
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used effectively, especially for those pupils in the special provision units. The school's detailed assessment information for these pupils, together with work in books, shows that pupils in both of these groups are making at least good progress.
- The school's performance information and work in books across the past 12 months show that the number of pupils achieving the levels expected for their age is improving. However, not all pupils above or below age expectations make rapid progress.
- Pupils enjoy developing their understanding and skills in subjects other than English and mathematics. However, opportunities tailored to match pupils' abilities are less strong in these subjects. An example of this was that three classes of key stage 1 pupils had enjoyed a visit to a museum to find out about toys from the past. The follow-up task was the same for all and did not have a clear focus on historical skills or extension of thinking from Year 1 to Year 2, or for pupils of different abilities.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years leader sets high expectations. She models highly effective teaching. She ensures that the whole team are involved in planning how to effectively support children's learning within activities so that they have a consistent understanding of what is expected of them.
- Around half of the children in the early years enter with skills and abilities broadly typical for their age. Some enter with skills above, while a number of pupils arrive with skills lower than this in the areas of writing and number. By the end of Reception, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development is above the national average. This represents at least good progress from the children's starting points, and they are well prepared for Year 1.

- Teachers use careful, ongoing assessment to plan focused and well-organised opportunities to develop skills, particularly in phonics, letter formation and number skills. Teachers undertake sharply focused baseline assessments at the start of the school year to determine children's skills and knowledge on entry.
- Teachers ensure that this information quickly leads to support being in place for those who need it. This includes disadvantaged children and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers' quick identification leads to good progress for all children. In the current cohort, a number of children have entered with communication and language skills that are lower than those typical for their age. Inspectors observed this group enjoying using puppets and sound walks to encourage their use of language and listening skills.
- Children settle quickly into the welcoming environment. The adults working in the early years provide a variety of interesting, stimulating and well-organised activities. This means that children work purposefully and maintain concentration on tasks, with or without adult support. An example of this was pupils proudly and carefully making medals to celebrate their success on their 'superhero' assault course.
- Adults encourage safe play and the use of resources. Also, all of the children learn how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Children are kept safe at all times and are well looked after by caring staff. This ethos ensures that children play happily and fairly together.
- Parents are rightly positive about the good start their children make in Reception. Parents value the helpful information they receive, the approachability of staff and being able to see and contribute to the online assessments being made about their child's progress. They are confident that their children are safe and well cared for in this environment.
- The early years is well led and managed. The highly skilled and focused leader involves the whole team in securing high-quality teaching and learning from the start. The early years leader has recently been appointed to the senior leadership team as one of two assistant headteachers. This means that she is well placed to further strengthen the transition from the early years and how it contributes to whole-school development.

School details

Unique reference number	120181
Local authority	Rutland
Inspection number	10036071

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	255
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nick Cooper
Headteacher	Stephen Cox
Telephone number	01572 722404
Website	www.oakham-primary.rutland.sch.uk
Email address	office@oakham-primary.rutland.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 September 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is lower than the national average.
- Most pupils attending the school come from the immediate area. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special education needs is below average. However, the proportion of pupils with a statement or an education, health and care plan is well above the national average. The school has two specialist provisions on site, one for pupils on the autistic spectrum and the other for those with moderate learning difficulties, with places for 10 pupils.

- In 2016, the school met the current government floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed each class in the school, and some on more than one occasion. They visited 27 lessons, or parts of lessons, including five joint observations with the headteacher and senior leaders. Inspectors observed the teaching of early reading skills and heard pupils reading. The inspectors talked to pupils about their school and looked at pupils' books while visiting lessons. The team scrutinised a large sample of pupils' work jointly with the headteacher and leadership team to gain a view of the impact of teaching over time.
- Inspectors held discussions with the school's senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the start of the school day and considered the 45 responses to the Ofsted online parent questionnaire, Parent View. They also considered the 29 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the online pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching, the most recent information on pupils' achievement and progress, and information relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and punctuality.
- Inspectors considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

Inspection team

Mandy Wilding, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Dale	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Lakatos	Ofsted Inspector

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