

Oakley Vale Primary School

Cheltenham Road, Corby, Northamptonshire NN18 8RH

Inspection dates

13–14 June 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 principal and governing body have acted decisively to provide a clear direction for the school. This has led to improvements in all aspects of the school's work.
- The partnership with Brooke Weston Trust contributes extensively to the overall effectiveness of the school.
- The school has undergone a significant change in culture, ethos and ambition. Leaders and teachers now have much higher expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Leaders at all levels have a precise and accurate view of the quality of teaching. They act swiftly to address any underperformance.
- Leaders have put effective support in place for teachers to learn from best practice in the school and elsewhere. Staff are highly motivated to work together to improve their practice.
- Subject leaders check the standards of teaching and the progress pupils make in their subject. They make effective contributions to the planning and development of teaching.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons and the curriculum is enriched by a wealth of stimulating activities. Consequently, pupils are enthusiastic learners and are keen to attend school.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and at different times during the school day.
- Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their starting points.
- Children in Reception make good progress from their starting points. The early years leader has clear plans for securing further improvement.
- Typically, work is well matched to pupils' individual abilities. However, challenge for the most able pupils is not yet consistent.
- Pupils do not consistently apply and develop their mathematics skills in other subjects.
- Teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for all pupils to write at length in English and in other subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - all work is sufficiently challenging, especially for the most able pupils
 - all teaching is consistently good across year groups and subjects.
- Improve pupils' outcomes by:
 - providing pupils with opportunities to deepen their knowledge and apply their mathematical skills across a variety of subjects
 - developing their ability to sustain concentration in writing, by providing more opportunities to write at length in English and across the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal of the school provides an excellent model of leadership for all staff. She has brought about a significant change in the culture of the school. She is ably supported by her vice-principal, governing body and the director of education from the Brooke Weston Trust. Their shared vision, drive and determination have been key to the improvements made since the last inspection.
- Plans to improve the school are precise. They correctly identify the priorities and the actions needed to achieve success. Senior leaders and governors are driving improvements forward and embedding good practice.
- The principal has strengthened systems for managing the performance of staff to further improve the quality of teaching and learning. Training is tailored to meet individual needs and is closely aligned to raising standards. Staff who met with inspectors told them that they value the training they receive. Their views are supported by the responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire. As a result, staff development is strong.
- The recently appointed special educational needs coordinator has a good understanding of her role. She has a secure knowledge of the individual pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, she has identified clear actions to address their needs. The plans she has put in place are having a positive impact on pupils' progress. Consequently, standards of achievement for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are rising.
- The roles of the English and mathematics leaders are well developed and effective. The work of leaders positively impacts on the progress pupils make in these subjects. The leadership of subjects other than English and mathematics is developing. Leaders regularly discuss pupils' work with teachers, to check that assessments are accurate and that pupils are receiving a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is a strength of the school. It is supported by a curriculum that engages and enthuses pupils. For example, when pupils in Year 5 were learning about space, they discussed the question 'Are we alone in the universe?' In Year 3, during pupils' work about conservation, they wrote a letter to the president of the World Wide Fund for Nature. In the letter, they expressed their concerns about the safety of animals in Africa. In addition, older pupils have learned about Fairtrade farming and produce.
- Fundamental British values are embedded within the curriculum. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. This is evidenced by work displayed around the school, in books and through discussions with pupils. For example, to help pupils understand the meaning of democracy, one pupil became the Mayor of Corby for the day. She met the Mayor, wore his special chains of office and spent the day doing his job. For example, she attended a charity event and signed some documents. To develop pupils' understanding of our democratic system, the school conducted their own mock general election. Pupils learned about the different political parties and cast their votes in a ballot box.

- The curriculum is broad and enriched by numerous activities. Consequently, pupils enjoy their learning and receive a balanced and creative education. Termly topics, such as 'Meet the Flintstones', 'Rule Britannia' and 'The Blitz', are introduced with a 'Sparkling Starter' day. Teachers decorate the classroom to match the topic, or encourage pupils to come to school in costume. Topics are concluded with a 'Fabulous Finish' event. For example, the 'Rule Britannia' topic ended with a great British street party. Parents are invited to take part in all 'Fabulous Finish' events, which are typically well attended.
- Good use is made of the primary school physical education and sport premium funding to provide specialist teaching and training for staff. The school also provides a range of after-school clubs, such as football and gymnastics. As a result, pupils' physical development and understanding of the importance of keeping fit to stay healthy are good.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged children is used well. The design of the curriculum and use of targeted intervention ensures that these pupils make good progress.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well and are ambitious for its future. They are effective at holding the principal to account for school improvement. They provide appropriate challenge and question the information she provides.
- The governing body check on how the pupil premium and sport premium funding are used. In addition, minutes of governing body meetings evidence that governors are asking increasingly relevant questions about the use and impact of the additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The governing body has ensured that performance management procedures are in place and are effective at securing improvements in teaching and learning.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet statutory requirements. The governing body ensures that leaders provide a safe environment and that policies and procedures for safeguarding are implemented effectively.
- Leaders make all the required checks to ensure that staff and visitors are suitable to work with children.
- The principal has ensured that all staff, including those new to the school, are familiar with procedures and how to identify pupils at risk.
- Staff keep accurate records, and they work well with parents and other professionals to ensure that pupils are kept safe and are well cared for. All staff understand their individual responsibilities to report safeguarding concerns and ensure that actions are followed up. The principal will escalate concerns with the local authority, if necessary.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection. Observations of learning, examination of pupils' books and the school's assessment information show that teaching is typically good. Where teaching is less strong, senior leaders provide effective support and guidance.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and they plan lessons that capture pupils' interests and motivate them to learn. For example, pupils in Year 4 enjoyed making model robots for their Robot Gallery. In the majority of lessons observed, pupils were engaged in their learning and sustained concentration throughout their tasks.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive well-coordinated and effective support. Teachers have termly meetings with the special educational needs coordinator to discuss pupils' individual plans and the progress they are making. Subsequently, teachers plan targeted interventions to support these pupils. As a result, this group of pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Teachers use questions well to reinforce learning and clarify misconceptions. The most effective questioning extends and deepens pupils' knowledge and understanding. As a result, pupils make good gains in their learning.
- Typically, teachers and teaching assistants work well together to promote good learning and behaviour. Where teaching assistants are most effective, they use questioning to encourage pupils to think for themselves and work well on their own. Furthermore, they provide timely intervention that gives helpful support and guidance.
- Pupils receive good-quality phonics teaching and this provides them with a secure base on which to build their wider reading skills. Pupils who read to inspectors were able to use their phonics knowledge to read unfamiliar words. In addition, inspectors observed pupils using their phonics knowledge well to support their writing.
- Teachers model reading aloud to pupils and use the class novel to plan interesting work in English and across the curriculum. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the books their teachers read to them. They explained how this had inspired them to read books by certain authors. Furthermore, inspectors observed pupils in Year 1 using the class Beatrix Potter book to support their research work in history.
- Teachers have a good understanding of the technical aspects of writing and find engaging ways for pupils to write. Evidence in pupils' books demonstrates that pupils apply their writing skills well across the curriculum. However, opportunities for pupils to write at length are inconsistent across the school and across subjects.
- Training has ensured that all staff have a good understanding of how to teach mathematics and how to provide opportunities for pupils to master and apply their learning to solve complex problems. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in various subjects.
- There is some variation in the level of challenge for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. In some cases, they are given work that is too similar to the work given to less-able pupils. Pupils who spoke with inspectors felt that they were sometimes given work that was too easy.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and caring. Pupils said that they feel safe in school and that their teachers help them with any problems they might have. The Year 6 pupils act as 'buddies' and, when they are 'on duty' at breaktimes, they help other pupils when needed.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's on line survey, Parent View, confirmed that the school keeps their child safe. Pupils can explain the different ways to keep safe. This includes staying safe online, near water and how to safely cross the road.
- Pupils are aware of the different forms that bullying can take. They said that incidents of bullying are rare, but if they do occur, pupils are confident that their teachers deal with this effectively.
- Work in books and discussions with pupils evidence that pupils have a well-developed understanding of equality and diversity. For example, Year 6 pupils have learned about the work of Nelson Mandela to eradicate racism and inequality in South Africa. Pupils told inspectors, 'The school encourages us to be better people. If we didn't have tolerance of different religions, we wouldn't be as civilized or come as far as we have.'
- In most cases, pupils work hard, listen carefully and concentrate in lessons. They are good at working with each other and sharing their views and opinions. However, in a minority of classes, pupils lose concentration and become easily distracted. This is because teachers' presentation of learning, at times, lacks challenge or is not delivered in a way that captures pupils' interest.
- In most classes, pupils take appropriate pride in their work and present their work well. However, this is not the case in all classes.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well in lessons and around the school. The school is a happy, calm and friendly environment. Pupils are notably polite and well mannered to staff, each other and to visitors.
- Incidents of disruption to learning caused by poor behaviour are extremely rare. Leaders and teachers have high expectations, with a common and consistent approach in relation to behaviour management.
- The school has effective procedures to ensure that pupils arrive at school on time and attend regularly. Consequently, rates of attendance are rising rapidly, including for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those pupils who are disadvantaged.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Published information for the early years foundation stage shows that standards have risen over the last three years. At the end of 2016, the proportion of children reaching age-related expectations was greater than that found nationally. School information for current children shows that standards have remained high and are likely to remain above the national average. Although the percentage of children reaching the higher levels has increased, senior leaders have recognised that standards for the most able children must continue to rise.
- Standards of reading and writing in key stage 1 have improved over the last three years and continue to do so. Pupils' achievement in mathematics did not improve as rapidly. However, current school information shows that by the end of this academic year, pupil achievement in mathematics is expected to be at least in line with national standards. This is because changes to the mathematics curriculum and staff training have been effective.
- Due to the effective teaching of phonics, pupils do well in the Year 1 national phonics screening check. Published information shows that, for three successive years, the school's performance has been better than the national average. Current school assessment information suggests this year's pupils are also doing well with their phonics.
- Over the last four years, pupil achievement at the end of key stage 2 has steadily improved. The performance of current pupils indicates that standards have continued to rise.
- Teachers check their assessments of pupils' achievement in English and mathematics with other schools in the local area and within their trust. Senior leaders ensure that systems are robust and because of this, they know that teachers' assessments are accurate.
- Pupils across the school are making good progress in a wide range of subjects. They make more progress in English and mathematics than in other subjects. Pupils' achievement in history is a particular strength of the school.
- Work in pupils' books shows that the learning of disadvantaged pupils is at least in line with other pupils and sometimes better.
- Those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and lower-attaining pupils are well supported. Consequently, they make good gains in their learning.
- In the majority of cases, different groups of pupils are well catered for. However, work set for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, is not consistently demanding. Consequently, not all of these pupils make the progress of which they are capable.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the early years with skills and knowledge appropriate for their age. From this starting point, they make good progress and the majority leave Reception with a good level of development. Children are therefore prepared well for Year 1.

- Leaders have created a stimulating environment to support children's learning. The classroom and the outdoor area encourage children to be curious and take an interest in their learning. Consequently, they focus on the tasks they have been asked to do and are keen to explore their environment. Children take responsibility for their own learning in purposeful play, building on the skills and knowledge taught to them by their teachers.
- Relationships between adults and children are good and, as a result, children are happy and behave well. They work and play happily together. They are proud of their work and are confident enough to show it others. Children are kept safe and are well cared for.
- The quality of teaching is good. The teacher and teaching assistants work well together to assess children's learning and plan lessons that typically meet children's needs. Consequently, children make good progress.
- The early years leader provides numerous opportunities for parents to engage in their child's learning in Reception. Through an online programme, parents can access information about how well their child is doing in school. Parents are offered individual meetings with their child's teacher when their child starts school and at various points during the school year. In addition, there are a number of opportunities for parents to attend 'stay and play' sessions. Parents speak positively about the early years.
- The early years leader plans creative lessons that enthuse and motivate children. At the time of the inspection, children were enjoying a topic about pirates. Children were keen to tell the inspector that they were looking for a naughty pirate. They asked the inspector if she had seen their letters. The children had been enthused to write and the standard of writing was good. There was clear evidence of how children had successfully applied their knowledge of phonics to help them with their writing.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well; for example, when children are learning through play, their timely interventions and effective questioning moves learning on. As a result, children make good gains.
- The early years leader supports the development of her team. She has effectively supported a teacher who is new to teaching in Reception. She is aspirational for the early years and has clear plans in place that focus on priorities for improvement.
- The number of disadvantaged children and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is too small to report on without the risk of identifying them.

School details

Unique reference number	140120
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10031143

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	416
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Mark Gilding
Principal	Emma Goodwin
Telephone number	01536 461199
Website	www.oakleyvaleprimary.org/
Email address	admin@oakleyvaleprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	28–29 April 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Oakley Vale Primary School is larger than most primary schools. It is part of the Brooke Weston Trust.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than the national average. The percentage of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is much lower than the national average for primary schools.
- The overall percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is around 9%. This is lower than the national average for primary schools. However, the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is twice the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 22 lessons. Two lessons were observed jointly with the principal.
- The inspection team looked at pupils' books and the school's own performance information, to evaluate the progress pupils are making in different subjects across the school.
- Inspectors undertook a range of other school activities, including observations of playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils in meetings, during lessons and informally at breaktimes. They listened to a selection of pupils read.
- Inspectors met with the principal and other senior leaders. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and representatives of the trust.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school improvement plan, self-evaluation, and the school's report on its use of funding to support disadvantaged pupils. The school's website was evaluated. Inspectors also considered information relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors looked at systems used to manage the performance of staff and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors took account of 43 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and considered the responses made through the Ofsted free-text service. Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day. The lead inspector also considered the 20 responses made to the online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Helen Richardson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Elizabeth Mace	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Moore	Ofsted Inspector

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