

Oldfield Primary School

Green Lane, Vicars Cross, Chester, Cheshire, CH3 5LB

Inspection dates

6–7 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Overall achievement in the school is good. Pupils enter the school with knowledge and skills which are broadly typical for their age, make good progress and, by the end of year 6, attain well above the national average.
- Teaching is consistently good and some outstanding. Robust monitoring of the quality of teaching supported by well-targeted additional training for teachers is ensuring continued improvement. Teaching staff are well-supported by their school leaders.
- Pupils have a real desire to learn. They listen to their teachers carefully and work together very well. Behaviour is excellent in and out of the classroom. Attendance is consistently much higher than the national average.
- The school provides a friendly, safe environment for its pupils. Parents are very happy about the standards of care their children receive and believe it to be a strength.
- School leaders provide a calm and determined drive to bring about continuous school improvement. They have an accurate picture of where the school is, where it needs to go and what needs to be done to get it there.
- The monitoring of English and mathematics is robust and driving up standards.
- The school is very inclusive. Its curriculum is outstanding and provides a rich and broad experience of learning for all its pupils.
- Governance of the school is good. Governors are very well-informed and committed to the school. They ensure that the school meets all its statutory requirements and hold it to account for its actions.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding.
- The outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage does not provide enough opportunities for the children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Pupils do not always present their work to the best of their ability.
- On occasions, work set for some pupils does not match the pupils' ability and provide enough challenge, especially for the most able.
- The leadership of the foundation subjects is less effective in monitoring standards in those subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons delivered by seven teachers including a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made a few short visits to observe pupils in small group phonics sessions and also heard some pupils read. They examined pupils' work in their current books as well as looking at books from the previous year. An inspector also carried out a learning walk to assess the wider curriculum.
- The team held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, staff, representatives of the governing body, a group of parents, and spoke by telephone to a local authority representative and to the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors also met with two groups of pupils and talked to pupils during lessons and on the playground.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a range of documents including: the school's own information about pupils' progress; planning; the monitoring of learning and teacher performance; organisation of the curriculum; safeguarding information; and the minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors also took account of 58 responses to the online survey (Parent View) and also 16 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Peter Martin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Pamela Davenport

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a below average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is lower than that found in most schools. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is much lower than the average seen nationally. (This is additional funding provided by the government for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after.)
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those who are learning English as an additional language, is well below that found nationally.
- There have been significant changes to the governing body with a new chair and vice-chair in place since September 2012.
- The school hold the International School's Award and is a Global Expert Learning Centre.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide more opportunities in the Early Years Foundation Stage for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills, particularly in the outdoor provision.
- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that the learning needs of all pupils, particularly the most able, are met by providing work which consistently matches their level of ability and is sufficiently challenging
 - provide pupils with more opportunities to work independently and pursue their own interests
 - ensuring that pupils always present their work to the best of their ability
 - give teachers more opportunities to observe and learn from the best teachers in the school.
- Develop the role of foundation subject leaders to enable them to more effectively monitor and evaluate the standards in their subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills which are broadly typical for their age. They settle in smoothly and quickly develop a good level of independence. They enter Key Stage 1 having made a level of development above that seen nationally.
- By the end of Year 6 the attainment of pupils is significantly above the national average and has been so for the past three years. The proportion of pupils making the expected progress in Key Stage 2 is higher than seen nationally. However, the proportion exceeding the expected progress is in line with the national average in all subjects and is indicative of some lack of challenge for the most able.
- There has been a gradual upward trend in attainment in Key Stage 1 over the last three years despite a dip in 2012 in boys' writing. Decisive action by school leaders and changes made to the approaches in teaching have resulted in a marked improvement in boys' achievement in all subjects in 2013. Pupils are now making rapid and improving progress in both key stages.
- Improved standards in English and mathematics reflect the strong leadership in both subjects. As a consequence of well-planned lessons and careful monitoring of pupils' progress, standards of attainment in reading and writing are significantly above the national average, although the quality of presentation of some work does not always match the content and accuracy of the writing. Standards are also high in mathematics and well above those seen nationally.
- Well-organised and well-paced teaching of phonics (the linking of letters to their sounds) has ensured that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard set by the government has been above the national average for the last two years.
- The number of pupils who are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is very small and in some classes there are none at all. The school uses the small amount of additional funding to provide additional support to meet the individual needs of these pupils and ensure that they are able to access all educational opportunities the school provides. As a result, they are making good progress.
- The proportion of pupils who have disabilities or special educational needs is also low compared to the national average. However, these pupils present a wide range of needs, some of which are complex. The school's thorough and well-organised provision of additional support for these pupils is excellent and ensures that these pupils make good and in some cases outstanding progress in their learning.
- The school's commitment to equal opportunities for all its pupils is shown by the high level of pupil attendance, the steps to ensure that all pupils have access to full curriculum during and after school and that all its pupils make good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching observed during the inspection was consistently good with some outstanding. This matches the school's own evaluation of its teaching quality and matches the picture of good teaching over time suggested by the pupils' achievement.
- Teachers make lessons interesting. They are given at a good lively pace which ensures that pupils are well motivated and learn quickly. Teachers use good questioning skills to check on pupils' understanding and to provide them with further challenge.
- Marking is consistently of a high standard. It tells pupils clearly what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve their work. Time is routinely given to pupils to reflect on what the marking is telling them and make improvements to their work.
- The teaching of phonics is most effective. Pupils are actively engaged in activities and games which are fun and help them to learn quickly and apply the skills in their reading and writing.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a secure and happy place to learn and gets the

children off to a good start in their school life. Children, some of whom have complex learning and social needs, are well supported by caring staff who help them to develop their confidence and social skills thus preparing them to become good learners. Children's independence is encouraged, for example children were observed accessing computer programmes to develop their mathematics skills without the need of an adult. However, opportunities to develop the children's literacy and numeracy skills are not fully exploited, particularly in the outdoor provision.

- The development of independence in the pupils is generally a strength of the school. For example, in an outstanding lesson in Year 6, pupils were writing biographies about Anne Frank. They were allowed to decide for themselves the focus for their research and then get on with it using computers very effectively as a source of information. The teacher set high expectations for their work and checked on their progress constantly seeking to make the pupils challenge themselves and the quality of what they produced.
- However, in some lessons the work set for pupils is not challenging enough, particularly for the most able, and on occasions teachers restrict the pupils' opportunities to start their work early in the lesson and to learn on their own.
- Expectations of the quality of handwriting and the presentation of the pupils' work are not consistently high enough.
- Parents and pupils share very positive views about the quality of teaching. Pupils say their lessons are fun and that 'teachers always help us when we need it'. Parents say their children enjoy school and cannot wait to tell them about what they have been doing in school when they get home. They are very appreciative of the wide and rich experiences the school offers their children.
- Skilled teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils in their learning during lessons and also in providing additional targeted support for pupils who have been identified as needing it. This contributes greatly to pupils' progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The school provides a happy and safe environment where pupils feel safe and very well cared for by all the adults.
- Pupils' behaviour makes a very positive contribution to their good progress in lessons. They are keen to learn. They listen very carefully to their teachers. They are given lots of opportunities to work together in pairs and groups and they do this very well. Consequently, lessons run smoothly and pupils learn quickly.
- Pupils are very friendly and polite. They speak very appropriately to adults and each other. They have excellent manners and move about the school in an orderly way.
- Pupils say they feel very safe at school. They comment, 'Teachers are really friendly', and, 'If you have a problem you can go to them'. Pupils also have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, they are fully aware of the dangers posed by internet use. This is because they have received effective teaching at school.
- Pupil, parents and staff all agree that behaviour and the arrangements for safeguarding of pupils are very good.
- Pupils have a deep understanding of what bullying is and are able to talk about it in a very articulate way. For example, one pupil described it as 'consistently mentally or physically hurting someone'. They are adamant that there is no bullying in their school. They say that there is sometimes 'a bit of falling out' but that this is dealt with quickly and effectively by the staff. School records of behaviour and incidents confirm this positive picture.
- Attendance at the school has been well above the national average for the last four years and still improving. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is negligible. Parents say attendance is so high because their children, 'like coming to school', and, 'do not want to stay off even when they are ill'.
- Pupils are keen to assume responsibilities and make a contribution to life of their school such as

serving on the school council or acting as Reception class buddies. They are very aware of other cultures and the needs of people in the wider community and the world and eager to do what they can to help.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders set high expectations and provide a calm and determined drive for continuous school improvement. Arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching and the tracking of pupils' progress are very rigorous. School leaders use this information and data very effectively to accurately evaluate the school's performance and plan effective actions to bring about further improvement.
- The monitoring of the quality of teaching and teacher performance is very rigorous and progression in pay is closely linked to teacher performance.
- The monitoring of standards of teaching and pupils' progress in English and mathematics is excellent. Middle managers are highly effective in identifying the school's strengths and setting clear priorities for further improvement. This is driving up standards. However, the arrangements for monitoring standards in other subjects are at an early stage of development and the opportunities for teachers to observe good practice within their own school to support their own teaching are too limited.
- The school systems for checking on the progress of pupils are highly effective. Pupils' progress is reviewed regularly and pupils who are falling behind or having difficulties with their learning are identified. Timely and well-targeted additional support ensures that pupils are making good progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely well catered for by a broad and rich curriculum which provides numerous enrichment activities. Sporting and creative opportunities during and after school are extensive and varied and contribute a great deal to pupils' enjoyment of school and their physical and emotional well-being. Activities such as 'Forest Schools' and the school's status as a 'Global Expert Centre' and involvement in the Comenius Project and Afri-Twin ensure that pupils are provided with a wide range of experiences which enhance their learning.
- Links with parents are very good. Parents say they are kept well-informed about their children's progress and about events in school. The vast majority are very happy with the education the school provides and feel their children are well-prepared for when they leave to start their secondary education.
- The local authority provides the school with 'light touch' support.
- All statutory safeguarding duties are fulfilled. Pastoral care is a strength of the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well-informed about the work of the school and its current priorities for improvement. They regularly and closely monitor the progress the school makes in meeting the planned objectives in the school improvement plan. They have a clear picture of the quality of teaching and its leadership and of the progress made by pupils. They oversee arrangements for performance management of teachers and make considered decisions regarding pay progression. Clear strategies are agreed for the use of additional funding for pupil premium pupils and sporting provision. The impact of such funding is evaluated and the school held to account for its actions.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	111230
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	426239

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Barrowcliff
Headteacher	Alan Brown
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2008
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