

Olney Middle School

Yardley Road, Olney, Buckinghamshire MK46 5DZ

Inspection dates

28–29 November 2012

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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils achieve well, especially in reading and mathematics. Their ability to apply mathematical skills to real-life situations is particularly strong.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They feel secure and happy. They enjoy learning.
- Pupils have good opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills as well as a rich and varied range of opportunities to develop their experience of practical subjects such as art, design, music and food technology.
- Teaching is good in most lessons. Some is outstanding. Teachers use group work and discussion well to help pupils to learn effectively, as well as developing their social skills well.
- Leaders have ensured that improving the quality of teaching is a high priority. This has resulted in the development of lessons that are interesting and include a variety of activities to encourage pupils' learning.
- The focus given to writing is leading to some good examples of report writing and other writing styles, especially for younger pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in writing are still not as high as those reached in reading and numeracy.
- Some more able pupils are not stretched enough.
- Although the majority of pupils with special education needs are making good progress, a few are making only average progress.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the progress that individual pupils are making but their systems for tracking how well all pupils are doing over a longer period of time are not rigorous enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They visited 28 lessons. Three observations were made jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspection team held meetings with governors, staff, a parent, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspection team observed other work of the school, including the school's plans for improvement, safeguarding information, assessment records, attendance information and the school's information on the progress made by pupils.
- Account was taken of the responses in 24 questionnaires completed by members of staff and 41 responses to the on-line parental questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

David Bray, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Brigid de Rivaz	Additional Inspector
Gay Tattersall	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized middle school (although it provides education for pupils within the Junior age range). There are three or four classes per year group.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs and who receive enhanced support in school (school action plus) is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (extra government funding to support disadvantaged pupils) is much lower than the national average.
- In 2012, the school's results in national tests for 11-year-olds met the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further by:
 - ensuring that the small number of pupils with special educational needs who are making average progress do better by providing more carefully planned individual support
 - ensuring that activities in lessons enable the more able pupils to consistently make better progress
 - developing the teaching of writing further so that it is more effective at enabling pupils to produce work of consistently good quality.
- Refine the use of data so that leaders are able to track the progress of all pupils over time more effectively.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils start school with above average levels of attainment. They leave school achieving standards that are well above average in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils become skilled in applying their mathematical knowledge to solving problems. They are able to use resources, such as beads or counters, to help them test ideas. This enables them to use mathematics in a secure and confident way.
- Pupils read widely and with confidence. Less competent readers make good progress in their reading skills.
- Pupils start school with good writing skills but these are not as advanced as those in numeracy and reading. By the time they leave school, writing skills have improved but are still not as developed as other aspects of English. The school has made the development of writing a priority and this has resulted in improvements. Although progress is being made, especially for younger pupils, more needs to be done to ensure that writing uses a consistent style.
- The large majority of pupils with special education needs who have statements and are identified as requiring extra support (school action plus) are making good progress. This is especially the case for younger pupils. A few have only made average progress in the past. Pupils who are identified as requiring some extra support in class (school action) are making good progress.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium are making better progress than similar pupils nationally and in many cases they are achieving as well as other pupils in the school. The points score achieved by these pupils is similar to that of other pupils in the school.
- Pupils are able to use their literacy and numeracy skills effectively across a wide range of subjects and themes. For example, in work that brings subjects together into a theme, pupils are able to write about a range of topics without relying on adult help.

The quality of teaching is good

- Much of the teaching is good and some is outstanding. This has resulted in consistently good progress being made by the large majority of pupils throughout the school.
- Across the school, there is a high level of consistency in the development of activities which help learning. For example, the use of discussion is almost always very good. Pupils work very well together to talk about information and develop ideas. In many lessons, they are asked to discuss ideas or topics with other pupils and they do this very effectively.
- Most lessons contain a good variety of activities. Teachers keep learning moving at a brisk pace, so that pupils are constantly engaged and interested in what they are doing.
- Teachers give pupils good quality verbal and written feedback about their work. As a result, pupils know how well they have achieved and what they need to do to improve. The majority of pupils respond to this by adjusting or improving their work.
- In a few lessons, the more able pupils are not stretched enough. This is usually because the activities they do stop them being able to explore ideas on their own in enough depth.
- Teaching assistants work well with teachers to ensure that identified pupils or groups are engaged and making good progress. Additional support activities outside lessons are very effective in helping pupils to increase their understanding.
- Teachers give good attention to ensuring pupils understand the features of effective writing, such as the use of interesting adjectives, adverbs and words that connect sentences. They do not always ensure that pupils are able to put these features together convincingly to produce high quality writing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school site. Parents and pupils agree that behaviour is good. Pupils play well at lunchtime and breaktime, managing the limited space available very well.
- Bullying is not an issue in the school. Pupils spoken to said that they understood that bullying or name calling could take place but they had not experienced it. Pupils get on well with each other, with older pupils supporting and helping younger pupils. Pupils feel safe in school.
- Pupils are courteous and have good manners. They are respectful towards each other and the adults they come into contact with at school.
- Pupils respond well to the wide range of opportunities they have to consider moral and social issues. Links with a school in Sierra Leone provide good opportunities for pupils to explore a different culture and understand how other children live their daily lives. Pupils respond to this with a good level of sensitivity and understanding.
- Attendance is high because pupils like coming to school.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders have focused on developing the quality of teaching across the school. They have been successful in achieving a high level of good or better teaching and have shown they have the skills to bring about further improvements.
- Teaching is reviewed effectively and this has enabled the school to develop effective systems to check on the performance of staff.
- There is a good range of activities offered to pupils. The addition of practical subjects such as art, music and design and technology provides many interesting opportunities for learning. Sessions to support pupils' reading also provide good opportunities for them to develop their thinking and the chance to record ideas about books on a blog.
- The school promotes strong values of fairness and respect. Pupils are able to develop a good understanding of different faiths and cultures. The links with a school in Sierra Leone are particularly strong and effective.
- The school spends the funding received for pupil premium by giving pupils opportunities to participate in residential trips, music lessons and out-of-school activities that require funding. It also pays for additional teaching assistant support in classes and for pupils to be taught in small groups or individually so that they can catch up on specific skills. The actions taken to support pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding have been effective.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the progress made by individual pupils. The systems for monitoring longer term progress across whole year groups are not as rigorous as they could be.
- The school works well with a range of external agencies to support pupils, and links with the community are strong and developing well.
- The local authority has identified that the school does not require a high level of support and maintains limited contact.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have received suitable training to update and enhance their skills. They have a good understanding of how well the school is performing but do not have enough information on the longer term progress made by different year groups or classes. They have ensured that they understand the amount of money received for the pupil premium, how it is spent and have started to evaluate its impact. They have ensured that the performance of staff is reviewed and that decisions about teachers' salaries are made on the basis of how well pupils make progress.

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	110352
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	403113

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	382
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helena Newbold
Headteacher	Phil Allman
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2008
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