

Offord Primary School

Millers Close, Offord Darcy, St Neots, PE19 5SB

Inspection dates 10–11 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders, including governors, have rapidly identified key priorities during a time of staff and leadership changes. They have successfully maintained good teaching and make sure pupils achieve well.
- Behaviour is good and attendance is above average. Pupils say they feel safe and value their small school community because everybody knows each other.
- Leaders quickly identify what teachers need to do to improve their work and make sure they receive effective training and guidance.
- Teaching is good. Teachers build well upon previous learning and make sure pupils understand. They link subjects together well to make learning interesting.
- Pupils achieve well and make good progress. By the end of Year 6, they reach standards that are well above average overall.
- Children in the Reception year achieve well and make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in writing are not as high as in reading and mathematics. Teachers do not always expect pupils do their very best whenever they write.
- Some teachers' marking does not always help pupils to understand how to improve.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) is not consistent.
- Leaders do not yet fully share the good and outstanding practice they identify in the school to help all staff to improve.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in six lessons, of which four were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at samples of work from all age groups, spoke to pupils about their work during lessons and listened to pupils read.
- The inspector held meetings with a group of pupils, members of the governing body, leaders and staff and spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of written comments from parents and 21 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspector also spoke to parents during the inspection.
- The inspector analysed the response from 11 questionnaires completed by school staff.
- The inspector observed the school's work, looked at progress and attendance information, improvement plans, evidence of the monitoring of teaching and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Vivienne McTiffen, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White background.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is equivalent to less than one pupil in 10. This is below the national average.
- The pupil premium funding, which provides support for disadvantaged pupils, supports less than one pupil in 20. This is well below the national average.
- Children in the Reception year attend full time. They are educated in a class with Year 1 pupils. The other classes in the school are also mixed-age.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced staff and leadership changes. The deputy headteacher has been acting headteacher since January 2014. She has been appointed as headteacher from January 2015.
- The school shares its site with a pre-school and after-school provider. As these facilities are not managed by the school's governing body, they are subject to separate inspection

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise standards further by making sure teachers:
 - improve pupils' writing so that it matches the high standards of their reading and mathematics
 - adopt a consistent approach to marking pupils' work that gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve
 - teach phonics effectively
- Strengthen leadership and management by making full use of the best practice in the school to help staff to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders, including governors, have successfully seen the school through a time of change, making sure that teaching and pupils' achievement remain good. Leaders involve staff in understanding the school's aims and helping it to keep moving forward.
- The acting headteacher knows how well the school is doing and has quickly identified what it needs to do next. She has rapidly devised effective systems to check how well pupils are doing and improved the teaching of reading. As a result, pupils' attainment in reading is rising. Good use is made of effective external and local authority support to aid school improvement.
- Leaders involve all staff in checking the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders, including those responsible for subjects and aspects of the school's work, offer good guidance on how to improve and set targets that are closely linked to the school's priorities. Staff receive relevant training and work with teachers from other schools to develop their expertise.
- Leaders are evaluating various methods of assessing how well pupils are doing as the new primary curriculum is implemented. Current methods to check pupils' progress are used well to identify those who need extra help. All are given equal opportunity to succeed. The pupil premium funding is spent wisely on additional resources and staffing to best meet the needs of individuals; this is having a positive effect on closing any gaps in performance.
- In this small school, staff work together well to provide a range of interesting experiences, enhanced by trips and visitors to the school. The primary sports funding is used effectively to broaden sports and games opportunities for pupils, leading to increased participation, enjoyment and improved team building skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. Staff help pupils to understand those with backgrounds and beliefs that are different to their own. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Staff discuss fairness, tolerance and respect in lessons and assemblies, developing pupils' understanding of British values and preparing them for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders do not always make the best use of existing good practice already in the school to iron out any inconsistencies in teaching, for example in teachers' marking.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses and set clear priorities. They make sure the aims of the school focus on the promotion of values and a culture of respect. Governors understand their roles and offer good guidance to those who are new to the governing body. When they visit the school, they pay attention to the school's priorities. Governors check how well pupils are doing, including those supported by the pupil premium, and ask questions if pupils are not doing well enough. Governors know how good teaching leads to good achievement and how this links to teachers' pay. They check the performance of the headteacher and set realistic targets. Governors are keen to develop further their links with parents and have responded well to points raised by a recent survey to gather parents' views. Governors ensure that the school's safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. From the time they start school in the Reception year, children are interested in their learning and have positive attitudes which contribute strongly to the good progress they make as they move through the school. Behaviour is well managed. Pupils say they enjoy school, reflected

in above average attendance.

- Pupils understand the school's rules and sanctions and they have a strong sense of right and wrong. The school's logs show that good behaviour is maintained over time. Pupils say they value the discussions they have with staff about making sure behaviour is good because they 'need to learn and it will help in later life.'
- Pupils mix well together and value their friendships. They say they like their small school because 'everyone knows everyone.' They talk sensibly about any disagreements that might arise. Pupils recognise that their work on the school council helps the school to create systems that are fair to all.
- Pupils willingly take on responsibility to help each other and the staff. They recognise their role in helping the school's smooth running and understand that everyone has a part to play in the school community.
- Pupils' positive attitudes are not yet sufficiently developed by teachers to result in an outstanding response to learning.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders make sure systems and procedures are adhered to consistently. They give staff the training they need to keep pupils safe.
- Pupils say they feel safe and they have confidence that any issues that do arise will be dealt with effectively by staff. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe because of the guidance they receive from the school.
- Pupils are clear about what bullying is. They say it has happened once or twice but it is not an issue in their school. They are developing their understanding of the different forms of bullying. Pupils know about cyber bullying and how to keep themselves safe when using the internet because of what they learn in lessons. Incidents of bullying are very rare but any that do occur are followed up quickly by the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers establish good relationships and make the most of pupils' positive attitudes to learning. They give pupils opportunities to express their views and explain their answers. Teachers link subjects together well and set the right level of challenge for all abilities to succeed. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress.
- Teachers make it clear from the beginning of lessons what pupils are working towards. They set targets and expect pupils to decide for themselves how best to achieve them. For example, during the inspection, pupils in the Year 5 and Year 6 class worked on adjectives. They enjoyed deciding for themselves how complex they would make their writing. The most able pupils pushed themselves to achieve to the best of their ability. Teachers often remind pupils to use what they know about punctuation, spelling and grammar when they write.
- Teachers frequently give pupils challenging tasks to consolidate their knowledge and practise their skills. For example, in the Year 1 and Year 2 class, pupils made good progress in understanding fractions. By using suitable resources in 'hands-on' activities, pupils discovered how to find a half or a quarter of a given quantity or a shape.
- Pupils make good progress in reading because they are taught consistently well. Staff inspire an enjoyment of books and stories. Teaching assistants work effectively with groups of pupils, which is having a positive effect on raising attainment in reading.
- Teachers plan well for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They provide tasks that are well matched to pupils' abilities and ensure that they receive the right level of adult support in class or when working in a small group.

- Teachers check pupils' understanding through relevant questions. They pick up and correct misconceptions well during lessons. They re-visit activities and modify them to make sure pupils understand. Teachers mark pupils work regularly. There are some good examples of teachers giving pupils good guidance on how to improve but this varies between classes and from subject to subject.
- The teaching of phonics has not been sufficiently consistent to ensure pupils reach the expected standards. The school is at the early stages of ensuring adequate resources and a unified approach in all classes, including in the Reception year.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start in the Reception year with skills that are broadly typical for their age. As they move through the school, they make good progress. By the end of Year 2, and also by the end of Year 6, standards are above average. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils write for a range of purposes. For example, a whole school topic of Castles and Knights inspired boys and girls to write factual accounts and descriptive stories. In mathematics, pupils calculate competently and use their mathematical skills in problem solving and practical tasks.
- Pupils do best of all in reading. They talk keenly about books they enjoy. They are inspired by stories and show a good understanding of plots and characters. Pupils read texts that are well suited to their ability. Those in danger of falling behind receive extra and regular help so they make good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. They receive the right level of support, including from external agencies, and resources in order to work towards their personal goals. Leaders make sure these pupils are suitably prepared for their move to the secondary school and involve parents when setting targets for pupils to work towards.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to help individual pupils to do well in their learning and their personal development. The help they receive enables them to catch up with their classmates. Because of the small numbers involved, it is not possible to comment on these pupils' relative attainment without risk of identifying individual pupils.
- The proportions of the most able pupils who achieve the higher National Curriculum levels at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average in reading and mathematics. These pupils receive work that is well pitched to their ability. In 2014, the end of Year 6 test results show they did not do so well in writing. The school's information and work in books show that the most able pupils are now making accelerated progress in writing.
- Pupils' progress in writing is on an upward trend because of the school's focus on improvement. Leaders make sure pupils write for a range of purposes. However, pupils are not always expected to maintain the same good levels they achieve in their English lessons, or work towards the same targets, when they write in other subjects.

The early years provision

is good

- Leadership of the early years is good. Leaders make sure there is a consistent approach between staff and give them sufficient time to plan and discuss children's learning. Leaders use the information on how well children are doing to ensure none are falling behind. There are good arrangements for children starting in the Reception year and various ways in which parents can be involved in their children's learning.
- Children behave well. They mix happily with each other, and the older pupils in the class, and share resources well. They listen to their teacher and develop confidence in speaking to others. They use the indoor and outdoor areas safely. Their independence develops well and they decide for themselves which tasks they will choose to do.

- Teaching is good. Staff provide interesting activities that inspire children to 'have a go'. They create a good balance between tasks that are led by adults and those that children choose for themselves. Staff plan across all the areas of learning and pay extra attention to reading, writing and communication so that children make good progress in developing basic skills. They note children's responses and collate evidence of how well children are doing in Learning Journeys.

- Children achieve well in all areas of learning. They make the best progress in their personal development, reading, writing and communication which are weaker areas when they start school. By the time they get to the end of the Reception year, they are confident learners. They acquire good speaking and listening skills and develop basic reading and writing skills. As a result, they are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.

- Children are not yet making the sustained and rapid progress that leads to outstanding achievement.

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	110682
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	448416

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	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debbie Woo
Headteacher (Acting)	Roz Amner
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2010
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