

Overleigh St Mary's CE Primary School

Old Wrexham Road, Handbridge, Chester, Cheshire, CH4 7HS

Inspection dates 15–16 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- In all its work, this much improved school fully lives out its vision of 'Children First'.
- Outstanding leadership from the headteacher and a highly effective governing body are key strengths.
- From their starting points, all groups of pupils make at least good progress in their learning.
- The achievement of pupils is good and has improved rapidly since the last inspection.
- The current Year 6 pupils leave the school with standards in English and mathematics that are high in comparison to the expectations for their age.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding because children develop a love of learning and make rapid progress.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good and an increasing amount is outstanding. Central to this is the outstanding care and support, provided by all the adults, for pupils' individual needs.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They learn well, are polite, articulate and extremely respectful towards adults and one another.
- Pupils say, and their parents overwhelmingly agree, that they feel extremely safe and well-cared for in school.
- The rich vibrant curriculum, managed exceptionally well by the deputy headteacher, provides extremely well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Strong teamwork and a relentless drive to improve are central to the rapid improvements evident in teaching and learning and pupils' progress.
- All staff and governors have a determination to make the school outstanding. As a result, the school is well placed to continue to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Marking in books does not consistently guide pupils as to what they need to do to improve their learning and achieve the best they can.
- Middle leaders are not fully involved in checking that all groups of pupils achieve the best they can in all the subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 17 lessons or parts of lessons. They also, carried out a learning walk in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 and they observed two lessons jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff, members of the governing body, a group of parents, and a representative of the local authority as well as with groups of pupils.
- The inspectors listened to pupils reading in Years 2 and 6 and spoke informally to pupils during playtimes and lunchtimes.
- They took account of the 63 parent responses received at the time of the inspection from the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) as well as the views of the parents that inspectors spoke to and those expressed through the school's own parental survey.
- Inspectors took account of the 23 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Clare Henderson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Diane Auton	Additional Inspector
Terry Bond	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an above average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. (The pupil premium funding is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that marking in books is consistent in guiding pupils about what they need to do to improve their learning and achieve the best they can.
- Provide more opportunities for middle leaders to check that all pupils achieve the best they can in all the subjects of the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children begin school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are in line with those typical for their age. They make outstanding progress because of the strong emphasis adults give to developing children's reading, writing and mathematical skills through exciting play opportunities. Their achievement is outstanding and they are very well prepared for Year 1.
- In 2013 and in the current school year, in the Year 2 national tests, standards are consistently above average for all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good progress.
- At the end of Year 6, although standards were above average in the national tests in 2013, too few pupils gained the higher Level 5. The school worked hard to improve this by providing extra support and tuition. As a result, standards have risen significantly and in the 2014 tests, so that standards are high in reading, writing and mathematics, with an above average proportion gaining the highest Level 6 in mathematics.
- Overall, all pupils, including the most able in Years 1 to 6, are making at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, there are some missed opportunities for all pupils to make outstanding progress because marking is not used consistently well to provide pupils with the next steps they need to help them achieve the best they can.
- In 2013 and 2014, a large majority of pupils reached the expected standard in the Year 1 check on their knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics). This success is linked to the consistent approach to the teaching of letters and sounds. Furthermore, opportunities for pupils to apply their reading skills to their writing and regular input by parents supporting their children's reading at home contribute significantly to their success in reading.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are confident, fluent readers. Pupils are able to talk knowledgeably about authors they like, books they have enjoyed, those they would recommend to others and why.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make at least good progress in their learning. This is because of the very effective additional support and guidance they are given by teachers and teaching assistants.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make at least good progress. In 2013, eligible pupils in Year 6 were about two terms behind other pupils in the standards they reached in reading, writing and mathematics. These standards were below those reached by similar pupils nationally. The rate of progress of pupils currently in the school known to be eligible for free school meals across year groups is rapidly improving. The gap between their achievement and other pupils is closing rapidly and, in some cases, these pupils now achieve better than their classmates.
- Those pupils from minority ethnic groups and those learning to speak English as an additional language make progress at least as good as that of their classmates. This is due to the excellent support provided to meet their learning needs.
- Overall, there is little difference in the progress made between groups of pupils currently in the school. This clearly demonstrates the school's commitment to and success in tackling discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- In the Reception classes, children make excellent progress because of the wide-ranging and interesting activities provided both indoors and outside. They enjoy learning, for example, in following their own interests when playing by themselves or in imaginary play as they empathise with and follow clues to help baby tiger find his mummy.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and specialist teachers, for instance for physical education and music, ensure that pupils make outstanding progress in these subjects.

- Questioning is used effectively to test and extend pupils' knowledge and skills. Teachers use information about how well pupils have learned to plan future work at the right level for them. This has improved well since the last inspection because checks made on how well pupils are learning are now more rigorous.
- Literacy is taught well and pupils now make at least good progress in writing and reading. A contributing factor is the many opportunities provided to extend pupils' literacy skills in different subjects. An example of this during the inspection was the Year 6 Middlepool project in which pupils become members of an imaginary village and take on the roles of the residents. As a result, they develop the skills of resilience, confidence and performing, whilst extending their geographical and historical knowledge, skills and understanding extremely well.
- In Year 2, pupils were enthusiastically and skilfully making a video to advertise Tobago as a travel destination. They review and comment upon confidently and accurately each other's work, using technology confidently to select photographs and music from the Internet to customise their adverts.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved, particularly for the most able. These pupils are provided with additional support and activities which stretch their mathematical skills very effectively; for instance, in Year 6 they were given very challenging algebra problems to solve. Pupils are helped to develop wider mathematical understanding because they have opportunities to apply their numeracy skills in the other subjects they study.
- A very strong feature of teaching is the contribution made by the skilled teaching assistants. They effectively support pupils who are disabled, have special educational needs or are at an early stage of learning English. This targeted and nurturing support enables these pupils to make at least good progress.
- Marking systems are of a good quality overall and are often used effectively by teachers. However, this is not fully consistent in all year groups and work in pupils' books is not always marked in a way that provides them with helpful advice to extend their learning further.
- Parents overwhelmingly believe that their children are well taught.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are extremely proud of their school and this was seen in the impeccable way they move around the school, behave in assembly, the way they take care of each other and the school equipment.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is shown in their excellent attendance and punctuality which is well above average.
- Pupils are eager to get on with their work. They organise themselves quickly and work very well with partners. Pupils say that, 'teachers are really friendly,' and that, 'they help you if you get stuck with your work.'
- Pupils' behaviour in and outside lessons is outstanding. Inspectors noted pupils moving around the school in an orderly, quiet manner. They observed them at break enjoying a time when they could socialise in a pleasant way with each other.
- Pupils are extremely polite and courteous at all times and form excellent relationships with each other and adults. Pupils say that behaviour is normally extremely good.
- Staff manage the behaviour of all pupils consistently well in lessons and around the school. The well-being logs are an excellent record of how pupils are feeling.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school because of the excellent care they receive from adults. They also said that they are confident to seek help, should they need it, from any adult in school.
- Pupils are provided with excellent opportunities to represent their class and school through, for instance, school council or playground leaders. The highly successful green team and gardening club was influential in setting up the recent Farmers' Market and pupils are very knowledgeable

about healthy eating and lifestyles.

- Adults are confident enough to allow pupils to take a risk because of the school's thorough risk assessment procedures. For example, residential visits to France and Wales are two of the trips pupils benefit from.
- Pupils are taught effectively how to identify the potential dangers associated with fire, strangers, and the use of the Internet. Records over time support the fact that name-calling and incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils talked about the various types of bullying and have a clear understanding of homophobic bullying.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning is threaded meaningfully through the curriculum. 'Number one' assemblies, opportunities in lessons to talk about their concerns or to learn about the many languages and cultural differences of pupils in the school mean they have an outstanding knowledge of and respect for a wide variety of cultures and beliefs.
- Parents and staff are right in their belief that pupils are well behaved, feel safe and are looked after extremely well.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, effectively supported by the senior leaders, makes an outstanding impact in the school and on pupils' achievement. Parents and staff praise this leadership as 'visible and inspiring'.
- Staff share the senior leaders' view of how successful the school can be and have worked together closely to achieve the areas identified for improvement at the last inspection.
- The school's recent and accurate information about pupils' performance show that pupils are on track to continue to make at least good progress, with a higher proportion of pupils achieving better than expected and to attain higher standards over the next two years.
- Senior leaders provide carefully planned training for all staff, particularly in checking that all groups of pupils in their class achieve the best they can. Teaching has been supported effectively. As a result, the quality of teaching in English and mathematics has improved over the last two years.
- Middle leaders are clear about their duties and responsibilities. However, they are not fully involved in checking that all pupils achieve as well as they can in all subjects of the curriculum.
- Effective procedures are firmly in place to check how well the school is doing and to identify areas for improvements. Leaders' judgements about the school's performance are fully accurate.
- Excellent leadership from the special educational needs leader ensures that those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make at least good progress in all year groups.
- Performance management is well managed through effective appraisal, and pay awards are dependent upon teachers' performance in relation to pupils' progress.
- Pupils find the curriculum topics very exciting and promote their love of learning well. What the school does to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding and evident in many lessons.
- The subjects taught are enhanced by many extra-curricular opportunities such as playing an instrument in the orchestra, belonging to the school choir or the many clubs, for instance, sport, drama or gardening.
- The primary school sport fund provides more sporting opportunities for pupils through better trained teachers, the use of professional sports coaches and more resources. These are ensuring that pupils are taught skills more effectively and have more opportunities to participate in sporting events involving other schools. As a consequence, pupils are developing healthy lifestyles.
- The local authority has provided effective support since the last inspection and has confidence in the leaders' ability to carry on making improvements.

- The pupil premium funding has been used successfully to provide additional support to enable this group of pupils to access the whole curriculum and make at least good progress in their learning.
- Links with parents are extremely strong. They appreciate what the school does for their children and say the school is well managed.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are extremely ambitious to see the school improve further and have worked tirelessly and successfully with senior leaders to achieve this. They are frequent visitors to the school, so they get first-hand experience of the life of the school, including the quality of teaching. They understand how teachers' performance is managed, and how any underperformance is tackled. They contribute well to identifying priorities for improvement and to making sure that plans to improve the school are effective.
 - As a result of the training they have received, they are proficient in understanding what information on pupils' performance tells them about how well the school is doing compared to others nationally. This means they are able to hold school leaders to account to improve the school further. Governors oversee the school's budget well and understand how extra funding, for example from the pupil premium, and school sport funding is spent, and to what effect. They have an excellent range of skills and are keen to extend their expertise and have undertaken extensive further training. They meet legal requirements for safeguarding?

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	111290
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	432113

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	421
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Tucker
Headteacher	Anthony Hadfield
Date of previous school inspection	13 November 2012
Telephone number	01244 981700
Fax number	01244 981719
Email address	head@overleighstmarysce.cheshire.sch.uk

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