

Offham Primary School

Church Road, Offham, West Malling, Kent, ME19 5NX

Inspection dates 19–20 May 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Offham is a very caring and nurturing school in which pupils thrive. In the words of many parents, this is a very 'happy family school'. They say it deserves 'a very big thumbs up'.
- The outstanding headteacher is an inspirational leader. She is highly ambitious for the school and the pupils. The headteacher is supported well by the deputy headteacher, senior staff and a highly committed staff team.
- Relationships throughout the school are excellent. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding.
- Pupils' attainment is outstanding. At the end of Year 6, all groups of pupils, including the most able, are reaching standards which are well above the national average.
- As a result of outstanding teaching children in the early years get off to a flying start.
- Teachers and skilled teaching assistants work together effectively as teams. Staff are particularly effective in using their questioning skills to check pupils' learning and to make sure that pupils think hard. Staff are now concentrating on all pupils applying the advice they are given in their marking feedback
- Leaders and managers, together with governors, are fully committed to providing a high standard of education for all pupils. They work closely alongside each other with a common aim. Their actions have had a direct and positive impact on the high quality teaching and the excellent achievement of pupils.
- Governors are a real strength of the school. They are very knowledgeable about the school's strengths and its priorities for improvement. They provide a good balance of support and challenge and are ambitious for the continued success of the school.
- Pupils feel totally safe at the school; a view that is strongly supported by their parents. Pupils flourish and develop into confident and assured young people who leave the school with high aspirations, an enthusiasm for learning and excellent academic results.
- Outstanding teaching and learning in each key stage enable pupils to make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, all groups, regardless of their level of ability, are doing well throughout the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 16 lessons, over half of which were visited jointly with either the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with pupils, senior school leaders, subject leaders, members of the governing body, a representative from the collaboration of schools called Mosaic, and a representative of the local authority. In addition, inspectors looked at pupils' work in books and listened to them read.
- Inspectors met informally with parents at the beginning and end of the school day. They took account of the 64 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and individual communications from parents. The responses to 18 staff questionnaires were also considered.
- A number of documents were viewed, including the school's information about pupils' progress and the school's evaluation of its work. Inspectors scrutinised checks on teachers' effectiveness, reports from the local authority and records relating to attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Gay Whent, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jackie Edwards

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Offham Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Reception children attend full time.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after) is lower than the national average.
- The school is part of Mosaic, a collaboration of eight local primary schools. The headteacher is currently supporting one of the schools in the collaboration.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all pupils respond to and act upon the advice given in teachers' marking feedback.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- In the words of a member of staff 'to be part of this school that enables all children and staff to reach their true potential and to feel very valued as a team member is a real privilege'. The headteacher is a determined leader who inspires all members of the school's community to work their hardest to develop an outstanding school. Staff, governors, pupils and parents speak glowingly about her effective leadership.
- Fostering good relationships is a shared responsibility for everybody in the school's community and is key to its success. Pupils say 'we work together as a team here'. The vast majority of parents say they would recommend this school to others.
- The headteacher's robust leadership has created a culture in which teaching and good behaviour can flourish. The headteacher's understanding of how to monitor and improve lessons with a focus on pupils' progress has been successfully modelled in another school and its impact externally evaluated as successful.
- School leaders have an honest understanding of the school's performance which enables them to lead school improvement with clear direction. The whole school staff meet with governors for a day every September to review the school's achievements and agree the priorities for the next academic year. Everyone has an accurate view of the school's strengths.
- Additional government pupil premium funding is used highly effectively to support the needs of eligible pupils. As a result of the carefully matched support these pupils receive, they achieve as well as, or better than, other pupils nationally.
- Leaders at all levels, including middle and subject leaders, focus sharply on making sure that all pupils of whatever ability or need succeed as well as possible. Equal opportunities are promoted well and any discrimination is addressed proactively. As a result, pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds and with a wide range of abilities and interests get on very well together and make rapid progress.
- The curriculum is vibrant and interesting and effectively engages pupils' interests. It contributes well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Basic skills are brought to life for the pupils, for example, pupils in Year 5 developed their writing through their recent, hugely enjoyed, visit to Carrotty Wood. The curriculum also promotes pupils' understanding of British values well and prepares them for life in modern Britain. This is seen when older pupils consider if they wish to be put forward for election as a prefect. They discuss the similarities between their preparation and the recent national election, highlighting the process of democracy.
- Primary school physical education and sport funding has been used effectively to extend the range of sports on offer. The school is building upon its excellent reputation in playing korfbal at a highly competitive level. The funding is enabling many pupils to have healthier lifestyles. There is now a clear progression of skills throughout the school and a greater emphasis on outdoor learning in all subjects.
- The local authority recognises the improvements in pupils' achievement and the headteacher's effective leadership. The authority provides very light touch support through an officer who works alongside the headteacher. In addition the school has received good support from an external adviser linked to the Mosaic collaboration. Both have validated the school's judgements through observation and checking the school's data on pupil progress. They have encouraged the school to share their expertise more widely. The headteacher and two members of staff are already working in this capacity.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. This is highly effective as a result of all policies, a set of robust procedures and logs being both accurate and up-to-date. The school is highly committed to keeping pupils safe, a view which all parents, staff and pupils endorse.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are highly committed and are a real strength of the school. They carry out an active role in monitoring and rigorously hold the school to account. Parents are aware of who governors are owing to their attendance at key meetings. They listened to parents' views about homework. As a result, this was improved for the benefit of all.
- Governors fully understand how well pupils achieve through their participation in a whole staff training day when national data are published in the autumn. They have high expectations and are very knowledgeable not only about achievement but also about attendance and the quality of teaching.
- Governors ensure that teachers' pay is linked to performance. They set challenging targets for the headteacher and ensure that the same is true for all other teachers in the school. Governors know what is being done to reward good teaching and tackle any underperformance. All teachers and teaching assistants have a target linked to their specific leadership roles.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This is a very happy school. Pupils are friendly, enthusiastic learners. They can think of very few aspects of the school they wish to improve and say, 'We really enjoy coming to this school – all of us!'
- Pupils look out for each other at play and lunchtimes to make sure that 'no one is ever left out'. Older pupils enjoy being a buddy to the youngest children when they start school. They take their responsibilities very seriously and understand that they need to help the younger children to become independent as soon as they can. Parents like this approach and say that it is very successful.
- The exciting and varied curriculum ensures that pupils' attitudes towards learning are outstanding. Pupils think carefully about the questions they are asked in class. They concentrate well and listen carefully to adults as well as each other. Pupils learning to play the ukulele show this as they learn new chords, listen to their peers and apply their learning to great effect.
- Pupils say that behaviour is 'always like this' and that 'our teachers manage behaviour that isn't good very well; they soon sort it out'.
- While the presentation of written work can be immaculate, the school has recognised that this is an area for whole school improvement. Books of all older pupils of all abilities and homework presented by the oldest pupils are of exceptionally high quality. A whole school training day has already been organised in order to share, model and ensure best practice is consistently applied.
- Pupils' rates of attendance are above average and punctuality is good.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. All parents have every confidence their children are safe and well looked after.
- Parents are full of praise for the headteacher's solution to the early morning traffic problem. Every morning the headteacher greets the children from the family car allowing the parent to drive away. One wrote, 'This means that she says hello personally to my son and me every morning and this is a great start to the day. She even does this when it is freezing cold and raining.'
- The school's curriculum is used to promote e-safety through teaching all pupils beginning in early years to know how to keep safe when using the internet.
- Pupils unanimously agree that if there were any cases of bullying of any kind it would be dealt with immediately. They trust all adults in the school and would go to any member of staff if they needed help, 'probably our teacher first'.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teachers are enthusiastic, have excellent subject knowledge and have high expectations of pupils. They set tasks that are interesting and enable pupils to achieve their best.
- The impact of teaching on learning and achievement in literacy, reading and mathematics is seen through the pupils' outstanding attainment which is above national values. The school's current data reflect this trend with outstanding progress in all subjects. There is a strong emphasis on using and applying these skills in all subjects. For example, reading and writing skills were taught effectively in a Year 4 lesson on time conjunctions, pupils linked this work with their history study of the life of Boudicca and the sequence of activities which led to the fall of the Iceni. They are all totally absorbed in the study and apply their learning exceptionally well.
- The oldest pupils in the school create a vivid sense of atmosphere when they compose detailed descriptions of a 'solitary island' which 'stands alone, the ruler of all the sea.' Year 2 pupils discover a mysterious egg shaped object on the playground and suggest where it has come from. They believe it may be from 'a frightened dragon, living on a distant planet'.
- Effective monitoring ensures the needs of all pupils are met emotionally, socially and educationally. Pupils say that teachers 'will always help you if you get stuck so you don't have to worry if you don't understand'. Pupils find marking very helpful. Not all pupils throughout the school are acting upon the improvement points they are given and applying them. This is a key aspect for improvement.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the learning and progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs as well as those who find learning more of a challenge. All support given is planned carefully. This, together with the thorough checks on pupils' progress, ensures that all

support is highly effective. Consequently, these pupils make at least good progress.

- Pupils like the 'Bronze, Silver and Gold' challenges that they receive at the start of any lesson whatever the subject. Teachers, together with their teaching assistants, use questioning skills to move learning forward. This enables pupils to deepen their understanding.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Achievement is outstanding across the school. Consistently good and outstanding teaching, together with carefully targeted support, ensures that all pupils make good or better progress from their different starting points.
- From their different starting points, the proportions of pupils who make rapid progress in writing and mathematics were higher than national figures in 2014. The progress of older pupils across reading, writing and mathematics is already exceptionally high in 2015 as a result of high expectations and excellent teaching. In a lesson where the oldest pupils in Year 6 write using detailed descriptions, they reflect on the impact of using varying techniques. In one group pupils ask each other if they have created the right 'sense of mood'. In this lesson, the whole class works at a higher level than expected for pupils of their age.
- During the mathematics week pupil rose to meet the challenges and applied their skills to different mathematical problems. This event organised in February this year proved to be a great success all round. Unusual mathematical activities and challenges were carried out throughout the week across the whole school. While the visit by the 'maths magician' was much enjoyed by pupils, this also proved to be extremely popular with a much larger than expected audience of parents at the end of the school day.
- Teachers set a range of increasingly difficult activities for the most-able pupils in all subjects which they choose themselves. They do so readily and make very good progress while applying their learning in different ways.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good or better progress. The school has a very good understanding of pupils' individual learning needs. The support they receive is targeted carefully to ensure that they achieve their best.
- The most-able pupils achieve exceptionally well. They are highly motivated by the challenges they are set and they strive to meet ambitious targets, applying their learning in different ways. The oldest pupils say that their parents are able to help them as their targets are always explained at parents' evenings.
- The few pupils eligible to receive support through additional funding make good or better progress in line with their peers and in comparison with other pupils nationally in all year groups and in all subjects. As there were no eligible pupils in Year 6 in 2014, their progress and attainment are not reported.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children get off to a flying start because they are looked after very well in a caring and stimulating environment. Parents are full of praise for the way in which their children quickly settle in and are encouraged to be confident learners. This helps pupils make a good start to their learning.
- Children start in early years with skills and abilities which are generally typical for their age. Staff have high expectations. Children make very good progress from their starting points. This progress has led to outstanding achievement where most children reach their early learning goals.
- Assessment includes a wide variety of evidence. Assessments are checked and evaluated by the senior leadership of the school and staff in the Mosaic collaboration to ensure that they are accurate.
- Teaching is outstanding. As a result of the very good teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make), children confidently apply their knowledge to their writing. Planning from children's interests ensures that the unique nature of early years education is never lost. This is clearly evident in delightful diagrams of the children's favourite mini-beasts where a spider's 'tummee' and a ladybird's 'spot' and 'anteni' are part of the labels they have created.
- Teachers take special care to engage all families in their children's learning. Home learning is valued and responded to by teachers. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress.
- Children play happily and extremely well together, both inside and outdoors. A wide range of interesting activities ensure that learning is constantly reinforced everywhere. Children use the outdoor space well because their behaviour is excellent and they feel very safe everywhere.
- Leadership and management are of a high standard. The attention leaders give to the early development

of reading, writing and mathematics ensures that children are very well prepared for their entry into Year 1.

What inspection judgements mean

School	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	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. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	118308
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	449754

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	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Macdonald-Gay
Headteacher	Ruth Powell
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 November 2009
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