

# The Oaklands Primary School

Dolphin Lane, Acocks Green, Birmingham, B27 7BT

**Inspection dates** 18–19 November 2014

| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected as an academy |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--|----------|
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Good</b>                            | <b>2</b> |
| 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.

- Children get a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Activities help them develop their skills well, especially their personal and social skills.
- Pupils make good progress. As a result, standards throughout the school have risen in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils have made good progress in relation to their starting points.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They ask searching questions to check that pupils understand what they are learning. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do.
- Pupils behave well. They are polite and helpful to adults and each other. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and they try hard in lessons.
- Pupils feel safe in school and feel they can go to any adult if they need help. Pupils are taught how to stay safe in different situations outside school.
- The principal and senior leaders rigorously check how well lessons are being taught. They track pupils' progress and make sure that any pupil who is in danger of falling behind is helped to keep up.
- Leaders have made sure that identified groups of vulnerable pupils receive additional support. As a result, gaps between their achievement and other pupils are narrowing, and many have closed.
- The academy directors and academy council members check how well the school is doing. They visit regularly and ask senior leaders challenging questions to make sure they are improving the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While the most-able pupils make good progress overall, very occasionally they have to listen to explanations they already understand before having the opportunity to tackle new learning.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their writing skills in different subjects or in longer pieces of writing.
- While senior leaders check how well pupils are achieving in English and mathematics, other subject leaders have not yet developed the skills they need to drive improvement in their areas of responsibility.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 23 lessons or parts of lessons, nine of which were seen together with the principal or vice principal.
- Meetings were held with the principal, other staff, three groups of pupils and three members of the academy council, who were also directors of the academy trust.
- Informal discussions were held with parents.
- There was insufficient response to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to view the results, but the inspectors took account of the school's own questionnaires and the 15 completed staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's checks on its performance, its analysis and tracking of pupils' progress, records of behaviour and safety, school improvement plans, records relating to classroom observations and the management of staff performance, safeguarding arrangements and records of meetings of the academy council.
- The inspectors also looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and checked information on attendance.

## Inspection team

|                              |                      |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Susan Hughes, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Enid Korn                    | Additional Inspector |
| Wendell Gopaul               | Additional Inspector |

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Oaklands Primary School converted to become an academy school on 1 January 2013 when it joined the Ninestiles Academy Trust. When its predecessor school, also called The Oaklands Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement.
- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage start in a part-time Nursery class. Most of these children move to one of the full-time Reception classes at the beginning of the year in which they are five years old.
- Around half the pupils are White British. A higher than average proportion of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. At more than 20%, the largest ethnic minority group is Pakistani.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- At 18%, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is higher than average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (those supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority) is well above average at 63%.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The school is governed by the trust directors and the academy council. The academy council comprises directors, parents and members of the local community.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to raise standards by ensuring that:
  - work in lesson provides opportunities for all pupils, including the most able, to quickly tackle new learning so that they make even better progress, particularly in mathematics
  - pupils have more opportunities to practise their literacy skills in different subjects and through writing longer pieces of work.
- Strengthen leadership and management by making sure that all subject leaders have the skills they need to make judgements about the quality of teaching, so that they can support staff and drive improvement in their subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The school is well led by the principal and senior leaders. Through regularly checks on how lessons are taught, they have ensured improvements in the quality of teaching. As a result, pupils achieve well and standards have risen in reading, writing and mathematics. White British pupils and boys who were identified as starting to fall behind have received extra help and any gaps in attainment between them and other pupils are closing as a result.
- Senior leaders lead English and mathematics well and have contributed to the improvements, since the academy was formed, in both teaching and achievement in these subjects. Leaders of other subjects have recently started training to improve their leadership skills. However, they have not yet developed the skills to make judgements about the quality of teaching so that they can provide specific support in their subjects.
- The appraisal system introduced last year has contributed to the good teaching. Teachers' movement up the pay scale is dependent on the progress made by pupils in their class. Opportunities to develop skills through training and sharing good practice have helped teachers to improve their techniques and improve the quality of teaching in the school.
- The school is well supported by the academy trust. Good partnership working with other schools in the trust provides opportunities for staff to share expertise. It also means that pupils are able to work with, or compete against, pupils from other schools.
- The subjects pupils learn are exciting and interesting. They are designed to make pupils think and talk about different ways of life while developing new knowledge and skills. For example, themes such as 'Migration of people', studied by Year 5, and 'Rulers and Government', by Year 6, generated mature debates. Pupils discussed how immigration and the way countries are ruled affect peoples' lives. Underpinned by the school values of respect, tolerance and consideration, this prepares the pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The new primary sports funding has been used to improve pupils' participation in physical activities. The school's fitness suite is well used, especially when the hall is not available for physical activity sessions. Specialist coaches are employed to work alongside teachers in sports lessons. They provide high-quality coaching for pupils and advise teachers on techniques for use in their lessons. The coaches also lead active play at lunchtimes and run after-school clubs. As a result, pupils are much more active and the school's check of a sample group shows improved fitness levels.
- The school's development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is strong. The school values are consistently referred to and foster mutual respect and consideration. Pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds, faiths and cultures get on well and are keen to learn about each other's religions. Visits to different places of worship support their understanding. The school has built good links in the local community, and the school choir regularly entertains elderly residents and supports local events. The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination to enable all pupils to succeed equally well.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Directors visit the school regularly and use school achievement data to check how well it is doing. They are very knowledgeable about teaching and learning. They ask leaders challenging questions, holding them accountable for making sure that the school's standards continue to improve. Other members of the academy council do not visit so often but, in meetings, they ask challenging questions about different aspects of school life.
  - Directors manage the school finances well. They and council members understand how the pupil premium is helping disadvantaged pupils do as well as their peers. They know that the sports funding is improving physical education opportunities for pupils. Directors make sure that the appraisal system is used effectively to improve teaching and to provide training opportunities for staff to develop their

skills.

- Directors and council members ensure that the school meets the national requirement for safeguarding. They check that the site is safe and secure and they make sure that all adults are checked for suitability to work with children.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils move around the school in a calm, purposeful manner. Older and younger pupils hold doors open for each other without being asked. All pupils are very respectful to adults and each other.
- Pupils play together well. Older pupils enjoy helping supervise games for Key Stage 1 pupils at lunchtimes and they take these roles very seriously. School council members are equally responsible and are consulted about changes which happen in the school. During the inspection, they were helping to interview candidates for a new catering service.
- Inspectors observed good behaviour throughout the inspection, and pupils confirm this is typical at their school. According to the pupils, the school's system of rewards and consequences works well. They say it is fair and that everyone knows what is expected of them.
- Pupils who find it hard to behave well are given good support and lessons are rarely disrupted. Other pupils are tolerant and mature about how they can help to support these pupils.
- Pupils are positive about their learning and take care with their work. One told inspectors, 'Teachers help us learn something new every day.' Year 6 pupils wear their blazers and ties with pride. They see this as preparation for their secondary education, and their mature attitudes and behaviour in lessons reflect how well prepared the pupils are for the next stage of their education.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school because of the security fences and the teachers who are always there to help them. Parents who completed the school's questionnaire earlier this term agree that their children feel safe in school.
- Pupils know what bullying is. They know it can take different forms, such as physical, verbal and cyber-bullying. Those spoken to during the inspection said that there was very little bullying in the school and that any incidents were dealt with quickly by an adult. Pupils said they know they will always be taken seriously if they have a problem.
- Pupils understand how to stay safe on the road and when riding their bikes. Visitors to the school also help them understand what to do in case of fire and what 'stranger danger' means. Pupils were clear that the police were there to help them if they were ever lost or felt in danger.
- Some older pupils understand that they need to take safety precautions when using the internet. They appreciate why these are necessary. Younger pupils, however, were less clear about this.
- The school has worked closely with parents to improve attendance. Punctuality is now much improved and attendance is above average.

## The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They ask challenging questions to make sure, not only that pupils understand but also that they can explain clearly what they have learnt. Questions then lead pupils on to the next stage in their learning, building securely on what they already know.

- Other adults in the classrooms support pupils' learning well. The adults know what is expected of them and follow the good role models of teachers in the way they question pupils. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are often supported by additional adults, either in the classroom or in small groups as needed. They achieve well because the support they are given is checked regularly to make sure that it remains effective.
- Teachers encourage pupils to try their hardest. When organising activities in lessons, they offer different levels of challenge, and pupils respond well by striving for the most difficult task that they can achieve. Pupils are confident in 'having a go' at high-level work because teachers model what they expect beforehand. Pupils who find themselves in difficulty have a range of help they can draw on. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, one pupil quietly joined the group that the teacher was working with while others used resources and guidance around the room.
- Some of the pupil premium funding has been used to employ extra teachers. This means that pupils benefit from smaller groups and more time with the teacher.
- The most-able pupils achieve well in most lessons. Occasionally, however, especially in mathematics, work is too easy for them to make even better progress. Sometimes they start with work they already know and new learning is not introduced soon enough. For example, while teachers' modelling of how they would like pupils to complete work is very helpful for other pupils, the most-able pupils sometimes do not need this amount of help and have to wait until they can start the work which will move them on quicker.
- Work in writing books is regularly marked and pupils respond to the helpful guidance that teachers give them. This results in good levels of writing. Writing in other subjects, however, is not of such high quality as the same high expectations are not evident.
- Pupils have some opportunities to complete extended pieces of writing. However, these are not frequent enough for pupils to practise using their literacy skills and develop them, and their concentration, over longer periods of writing time.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have improved in both Key Stages 1 and 2. While standards at the end of the key stages in 2014 were still broadly average, they show good progress from pupils' below average starting points.
- The results of the 2014 national screening check on how well Year 1 pupils understand phonics (the sounds letters represent) were above average. Pupils read regularly in school and many read at home. As a result, they make good progress. During the inspection, pupils used their phonic skills well. For example, a younger pupil in Key Stage 2 successfully sounded out the words 'mitigating circumstances' even though she did not know what it meant.
- Disadvantaged pupils make particularly good progress. In 2014, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 were a term behind their classmates in reading and mathematics, and nearly two and a half terms behind in writing. Compared to pupils nationally, they were around half a term behind in reading and mathematics, and about a term and a half behind in writing. School data show that, throughout the school, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is closing. In Years 1, 2, 4 and 5, in 2014, there were no significant gaps at all. Pupils achieved either higher than, or within a term of, their peers.
- All groups of pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress. Pakistani pupils do especially well and many achieve higher than other pupils.
- The most-able pupils achieve well. They make at least as much progress as other pupils. More pupils currently in Year 6 are working at higher levels than in previous years. Throughout the school, there has been a rise in the number of pupils working above the level expected for their age.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their different starting points. Their individual learning needs are quickly identified and work is planned and set which

helps them to achieve well. They are supported, both in class and in small groups outside the classroom where they can practise specific skills. In this way, they are helped to achieve as well as their classmates.

### **The early years provision** is good

- Children start school with skills below those typical for their age, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. Their personal, social and emotional skills develop particularly rapidly. They soon learn to work together, share equipment and take turns. During the inspection, children chatted about their learning, asking each other what they were making, listening carefully to the answers and helping each other write words using the 'sh' letter sounds.
- Activities, both inside and outdoors, help children develop a range of skills. Activities are well planned to give children opportunities to practise and use in their play the skills they have previously learnt with an adult. For example, children used their mathematical knowledge of sharing things fairly at a toys' tea party.
- Teachers capture children's enthusiasm by making sure that activities build on what the children already know and what interests them. For example, Reception children investigated how different foods decay by looking at them change each day. Staff ensured that the food was safely stored while enabling children to see the changes.
- The early years classes are well led. Progress is checked regularly and records kept to make sure that all children develop the range of skills they need. This means that, by the time they leave the Reception classes, children are well prepared for their move to Key Stage 1. While they still have weaker skills in reading, writing and mathematics, the good progress they have made means that their skills are much nearer those typical for their age.

## 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

|                                |            |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 139183     |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Birmingham |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 451040     |

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

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                                |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy converter                      |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3–11                                   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 298                                    |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The academy council                    |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Terry Smith                            |
| <b>Principal</b>                           | Adrian Davies                          |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | Not previously inspected as an academy |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 0121 7062168                           |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 0121 7062168                           |
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