

Oakway Academy

Off Oakway, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN8 4SD

Inspection dates

2–3 April 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and pupils' learning and progress are inconsistent. Some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Leaders have not ensured that some of their initiatives are applied consistently well.
- Those responsible for governance are not as effective as they could be in holding the school to account.
- Teachers sometimes do not ensure that pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, understand and use important vocabulary in different subjects.
- Sometimes, teachers do not use information about pupils' learning well enough. They do not address pupils' misconceptions or match work to pupils' abilities consistently well.
- Teachers are sometimes not effective in planning sequences of lessons, over time, that carefully build pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Pupils' writing is sometimes let down by weak spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Teachers are sometimes less effective in ensuring that pupils consolidate and apply their phonics skills in their writing.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders are improving standards. They are establishing a culture of higher expectations.
- Relationships are positive. There is an ethos of mutual respect.
- Children make good progress from their starting points in the early years.
- Staff promote pupils' personal development very well. Pupils are taught to have increasingly high aspirations for themselves.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well.
- Pupils behave well at all times of the school day. They have good manners.
- The quality of teaching is improving. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are making improving progress. Outcomes are improving.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is enhanced very well by a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:
 - further develop their initiatives and ensure that they are applied consistently by all staff
 - strengthen systems of governance to better hold leaders to account, including for the impact of additional funding.
- Build on recent improvements to further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and so pupils' progress and attainment, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - use information about pupils' learning more effectively to adapt teaching, address pupils' misconceptions and more carefully match work to pupils' abilities
 - have high expectations of the accuracy of pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation
 - teach pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, to understand and use important vocabulary in different subjects
 - more carefully plan sequences of learning, particularly in mathematics, that build pupils' learning over time
 - more effectively teach pupils to apply their phonics and reading skills in their writing.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal and senior leaders have an uncompromising drive and ambition to improve the school and address a legacy of underachievement. They are effective in bringing about improvements to all aspects of the school's work. They are establishing a culture of higher expectations that is shared by all staff. The quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes are improving.
- Leaders and other staff have been effective in improving pupils' behaviour, personal development and welfare, which are good. They have improved teaching and the curriculum in the early years. They have established secure foundations for continued improvement.
- Leaders have an accurate overview of the school's strengths and areas in which it can improve. The school improvement plan is rigorous and identifies focused criteria for success. Leaders check the learning and progress of all groups of pupils carefully. They, with teachers, identify pupils who may be falling behind and the actions needed to help them to catch up.
- Leaders ensure that staff receive a range of relevant training, for example in relation to the teaching of reading or a 'mastery' approach to the teaching of mathematics. Leaders identify where teaching is less strong and provide effective support, coaching and training. Leaders provide teachers with relevant targets for improvement and link these with pupils' progress.
- Senior leaders are strengthening leadership roles at all levels. Leaders have a clear vision for improvement and often have a research-based approach to the decisions they make. Middle leaders are enthusiastic and are being supported well to develop their expertise. Middle leaders check standards and support, and work alongside staff. They lead staff meetings, sharing findings from their work and leading new initiatives. They are increasingly effective in bringing about improvements.
- Leaders ensure that the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. Middle leaders have an integral role in leading further developments. The curriculum is very well supported by a diverse range of clubs and extra-curricular opportunities. These include the school choir and art, film and library clubs. Leaders' and other staff's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The coordinator for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) ensures that additional funding is used well to support pupils' learning. Pupils' needs are quickly identified and early help is put into place quickly. Leaders identify specific relevant approaches, for example teaching children social skills. Leaders and other staff review pupils' learning carefully. Pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium for primary schools is also used well. Leaders ensure that the proportion of pupils participating in sporting activities and inter-school events is increasing in all year groups. This is checked carefully by leaders. Leaders ensure that the school offers a wide range of sporting opportunities such as multi-skills, archery, gymnastics, dance and tennis. Leaders have focused on using the

funding to improve the quality of teaching to ensure sustainability. Many parents and carers commented very positively on the PE provision the school provides and pupils themselves are very enthusiastic. The school website was updated during the inspection and the school meets the requirements of what academies should publish.

- Leaders ensure that the pupil premium is used to increasingly good effect to improve the progress and raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, as well as improving their attendance. Leaders have acted on the findings of external and school reviews. The current plan is focused and additional teaching support is carefully targeted to meet pupils' needs.
- Leaders are outward-looking and draw upon external support where this is relevant. They work with other schools, both within and outside the trust, to share expertise to improve the quality of teaching and leadership. This has been particularly effective, for instance, in supporting improvements in the early years. The support of the trust's head of primary education has been effective in supporting improvements to leadership, the quality of teaching and other aspects of the school's work.
- The very large majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, or who spoke with the inspectors said their children are happy, making progress and enjoy school.
- Leaders and other staff have recently introduced, and are further developing or have planned, many initiatives. Leaders spoke of the forthcoming introduction of 'non-negotiable rules', for example to improve standards in relation to pupils' writing. However, leaders have not ensured that some of their initiatives are applied consistently by all staff to secure further improvement to the quality of teaching.

Governance of the school

- In the absence of a local governing body, trustees are fully responsible for governance of the school. The minutes of their meetings show that trustees visit the school to review, for example, the impact of provision for pupils with SEND. This provides trustees with insights into aspects of the school's work.
- The principal and the primary head of education, who is also the acting chief executive officer (CEO), ensure that those responsible for governance receive detailed reports and other relevant information about the school's performance. However, trustees are not as sharp as they could be in their understanding of the school's work. Consequently, they are unable to stringently hold leaders to account, including for the impact of additional funding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a strong culture of safeguarding.
- Leaders, including the designated lead for safeguarding, the attendance and welfare officer and the inclusion manager, work closely together. They share information effectively to decide how best to support pupils' needs. They are tenacious in involving external agencies where this is required.

- Leaders record carefully the rigorous checks they carry out on adults before they are able to start volunteering or working alongside pupils. These meet all statutory requirements, as well as additional safeguarding checks.
- The designated leaders for safeguarding ensure that all members of staff are kept up to date with the latest guidance on keeping pupils safe in education. Staff have received training on the government's 'Prevent' duty.
- All staff know the school's procedures for reporting any concerns. Leaders record these carefully, including the actions they take.
- The very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View and all those who spoke with inspectors said the school kept their children safe. All pupils who spoke with inspectors said the school kept them safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. Teachers are sometimes not as effective as they could be in checking pupils' learning and progress and adapting their teaching. Sometimes, work is too easy for the most able pupils and too hard for the least able. Teachers are sometimes not as effective as they could be in addressing pupils' misconceptions.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving. Teachers make increasingly effective use of visual imagery and physical apparatus to support pupils' learning as part of the recently introduced 'mastery' approach. However, sometimes, teachers do not plan logical sequences of lessons and this slows pupils' progress.
- Teachers ensure that pupils have opportunities to write increasingly at length. The quality of pupils' writing shows improvement over time. Teachers, particularly in Years 5 and 6, provide a clear structure of lessons that enables pupils to make good progress. However, again, this is inconsistent throughout the school.
- Teachers' expectations of the accuracy of pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation vary.
- Teachers ensure that pupils have increasingly positive attitudes to reading. The teaching of phonics is well structured and improving. Lessons are often lively and well paced. Teachers provide increasingly effective additional support for pupils who previously did not meet the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. However, teachers sometimes do not ensure that pupils, particularly the least able, sufficiently consolidate and can apply their skills in their writing.
- Teachers are committed and enthusiastic. They have sound subject knowledge and are often skilled in asking questions to encourage pupils to explain their learning.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well. They provide effective support for pupils' learning and behaviour.
- Teachers ensure that pupils have increasingly positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are keen to contribute and want to learn. There is a positive atmosphere in lessons.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are positive, confident and happy to talk about their work and learning. Many parents who responded to Parent View or spoke with inspectors commented on this. A typical comment made was, 'My daughter is leaving the school a very rounded and bright young adult.'
- Staff encourage pupils to have increasingly high aspirations for themselves. Pupils know that working hard will help prepare them for life beyond school. Pupils greatly enjoy the wide variety of roles and responsibilities the school offers. These include being members of the school council, eco warriors, librarians, sports crew and play leaders. Play leaders were observed organising games for children in the early years, which the children greatly enjoyed.
- Pupils know and understand the school's values well. Pupils are taught to be respectful of each other. Pupils know what makes a good friend. Pupils in Year 2 told an inspector the ingredients needed for a friendship recipe: 'You need 6g of kindness, 7g of generosity and 6kg of thankfulness!' Again, many parents commented on the school's work in this area, saying things such as 'The teachers help the children to achieve PRIDE (Passion, Responsibility, Independence, Determination and Enjoyment), demonstrating it themselves.'
- Pupils are taught well how to keep themselves safe, for example in relation to road safety or when online. Pupils explained to inspectors about peer pressure and their awareness of the dangers of gang culture.
- Pupils take increasing pride in their work and their school. They value the improvements staff have made to their classrooms and other areas. They value the many displays of their writing and artwork.
- Bullying is now rare. A small number of pupils said there still was some bullying but nearly all pupils and parents who spoke with the inspectors were emphatic that staff would resolve any problems or concerns. A small minority of parents who responded to Parent View also raised some concerns but inspectors could find no evidence to substantiate their views.
- Pupils are increasingly well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils in Year 5 explained to inspectors about the importance of voting and showed awareness of current political events. Pupils learn about a range of different beliefs and religions. However, some older pupils are not quite as confident as they should be for their age in their understanding of British values.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff use consistent approaches to managing behaviour. Older pupils were emphatic that behaviour had improved and could talk about the impact this has on their learning. Pupils in Year 6 told the inspectors how they now enjoyed their learning much more and that the school is 'a better environment for learning'. Staff ensure that the school is a calm and orderly place to

learn. Low-level disruption is rare and pupils only lose focus when work is not well matched to their needs.

- Pupils are friendly and polite. On many occasions, pupils offered to take inspectors to classrooms, held open doors or asked inspectors, 'Are you having a nice day?' They conduct themselves well at all times of the school day.
- Staff ensure that breaktimes are active, positive, social times. Inspectors observed pupils playing together, enjoying the wide range of exciting activities on offer at lunchtimes for example.
- Current attendance is slightly below the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils. The attendance and welfare officer and other leaders check attendance carefully, including that of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. Leaders have visited other schools to compare and develop their approaches to improving attendance. Leaders take a range of actions to emphasise the importance of attendance to parents. They work closely with families whose children have persistent absence.
- Staff plan and provide effective support for pupils who find behaviour more challenging. Leaders' actions, as well as improvements in behaviour management by all staff, have significantly reduced the number of fixed-term exclusions, which was formerly high.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2018, nearly all school performance measures showed improvement compared to the previous year. However, standards were below and sometimes well below the national averages in the following areas: at the end of the early years; for the proportion of pupils achieving the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check; attainment at the end of key stages 1 and 2; and progress in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2.
- There is a legacy of underachievement. Pupils' current work and school information show that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are making improving progress in reading, writing, mathematics and other subjects. Some pupils are making good progress. However, this remains too inconsistent across the school. Too many pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. Too few pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, progress to achieve the higher levels.
- In mathematics, pupils gain proficiency in key mathematical skills increasingly well over time. However, on some occasions, teachers do not ensure that work is matched well to pupils' needs. Sometimes, the least able and the most able pupils do not make the progress they are capable of.
- Standards in writing are improving. However, the quality of pupils' writing is sometimes let down by inaccurate spelling, grammar and punctuation. This reduces the quality of pupils' work.
- A systematic approach to the teaching of phonics and new approaches to teaching reading are having a positive impact. However, sometimes, pupils do not acquire and consolidate their phonics and early reading skills as well as they could. Sometimes,

pupils do not make the progress they could because they do not understand important vocabulary and concepts in different subjects.

- The quality of pupils' presentation of their work and their handwriting is improving. However, this is inconsistent.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language often receive effective support, particularly in the early years. These pupils make progress that is similar to, and sometimes better than, that of other pupils.
- Many parents commented positively on the progress their children were making, referring, for example, to improvements in reading and learning multiplication tables.

Early years provision

Good

- The proportions of children who achieved a good level of development in 2018 and in previous years were below the national averages. However, the large majority of children join the Reception Year with knowledge and skills that are below those typical for their age. School information and inspection evidence show that the majority of children, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress from their starting points.
- There have been significant changes in recent years in the cohorts of children joining the school. The proportions of children joining the school who speak English as an additional language, for example, are now much higher than in the past. The leader of the early years and other staff ensure that the needs of these children are met well. For instance, they use visual imagery very well to help children rapidly acquire necessary vocabulary and language.
- Leadership of the early years is effective. Leaders and staff carefully check the progress of all children and identify focused priorities for improvement. For example, leaders have identified that children's attainment and progress in reading are improving but writing is less strong. Leaders and other staff have designed a wide range of activities in the indoor and outdoor areas to promote writing, including improving children's physical development to develop the motor skills needed for writing.
- Teaching is strong in the early years. Teachers and adults are enthusiastic. They use questioning skills well to develop children's thinking and support their development and independence. Children were observed, for example, carefully building a 'walkway' using crates and planks, showing coordination, awareness of others and perseverance.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Staff have a consistent and effective approach to developing children's vocabulary.
- Leaders and staff plan learning activities well. Activities are well thought out and stimulating and engage the children's interest. Both the indoor and outdoor classrooms are well organised. There are rich opportunities across all the areas of learning. For example, a programmable robot was placed in a maze, encouraging the children to discuss, predict and develop their mathematical reasoning skills.
- Leaders manage transition arrangements well. Parents contribute effectively to assessments of children's learning.
- Staff develop children's personal development well. Children have positive attitudes to

their learning. They collaborate and are respectful of each other. Children's behaviour is good. They follow instructions quickly and routines are well established.

- Leaders ensure that the welfare requirements for the early years are met.

School details

Unique reference number	140853
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10087391

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	588
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	William Thallon
Principal	Clare Wallace
Telephone number	01933 678 714
Website	www.oakwayacademy.org.uk
Email address	harrise@hattonacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 June 2017

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Hatton Academies Trust. The school does not have a local governing body. The board of trustees is fully responsible for governance of the school.
- At the time of the inspection, the head of primary education for the trust was also the acting CEO.
- Oakway Academy is larger than an average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and of pupils who speak English as an additional language are above those seen nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is similar to the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 35 lessons, nearly all jointly with senior leaders. During these visits, the inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke with them to evaluate the quality of their learning. The inspectors also met with groups of pupils and listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors held meetings with the principal, vice-principal and assistant principals and other senior and middle leaders, including the inclusion manager and attendance and welfare officer. The inspectors met with trustees and the acting CEO of the trust, who is also the head of primary education.
- The inspectors spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. Account was taken of the 39 responses to Parent View, as well as the free-text responses. There were no responses to the pupil and staff questionnaires.
- A range of documents were scrutinised, relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and pupils' attainment and progress. The inspectors looked at plans for improvement, leaders' evaluation of the school's performance and the school's own parent and staff questionnaires. The inspectors also considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

Inspection team

John Lawson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Liz Moore	Ofsted Inspector
Janis Warren	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Capper	Ofsted Inspector

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