

# The Oak Tree Primary School

Newham Grange Avenue, Stockton-on-Tees, County Durham, TS19 0SE

**Inspection dates** 25–26 September 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Pupils' achievement is inadequate due mainly to weak teaching. Pupils do not make the progress they should in developing the skills of reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, attainment in these subjects is low.
- Wide gaps exist in the performance of different groups of pupils. For example, those with special educational needs in mainstream classes and those eligible for the Pupil Premium funding underachieve.
- The actions of school leaders to improve inadequate teaching have been ineffective. Leaders, including governors, have not addressed the issues identified at the last inspection. Consequently, the quality of teaching has declined since that time.
- The curriculum and work provided for pupils do not adequately meet their learning needs.
- Governance is inadequate. Governors do not have a good enough understanding of the school's weaknesses to provide sufficient challenge to leaders and hold them to account for pupils' underachievement.
- The school does not have the capacity to improve. Leadership relies too heavily on the new headteacher and the deputy headteacher who have not had sufficient time to demonstrate the impact of their actions.
- Persistent absence rates are high and disruptive to pupils' learning. The school has not done enough to improve the attendance of pupils who are persistently absent.

### The school has the following strengths

- The newly appointed headteacher has quickly gained the confidence of staff, governors and parents. She is committed to raising achievement and has prioritised the need to improve the quality of teaching.
- Effective teaching of phonics ensures that pupils in Year 1 make good progress overall in their reading.
- Good support in the special provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties helps them to make better than expected progress.
- The school has effective partnerships for supporting pupils with emotional difficulties and is rigorous in ensuring pupils are safe.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, of which two were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff, parents and groups of pupils.
- The inspection team looked at arrangements for safeguarding, pupils' welfare and assessment records, pupils' work, monitoring records and the school's planning documents.
- Inspectors took account of the five responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), together with the school's own analysis of parents' feedback, and 15 staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Kevin Dodd, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Declan McCauley	Additional Inspector
Graeme Clarke	Additional Inspector

## Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the Pupil Premium is high at more than twice that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is well above the national average.
- The school has specially resourced provision to support a number of pupils who have moderate learning difficulties including those referred from other schools.
- The school has achieved Healthy School status, the Activemark, the Information and Communication Technology Mark and the Artsmark.
- The school does not meet the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has had a lot of staff changes recently and a significant number of teachers and leaders are new in post.
- The current headteacher took up her post three months before the inspection.

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

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - ensuring that all teachers plan what they expect pupils to learn more carefully so that the work provided is better matched to meet pupils' learning needs
  - planning challenging work for the more able pupils in writing lessons
  - checking that all teachers use more effective methods to teach basic reading, writing and mathematics skills, and that pupils have more opportunities to apply these skills frequently, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1
  - providing high quality feedback and marking to pupils in lessons
  - ensuring that pupils are given time to respond to suggestions and to improve their work
  - providing more challenging learning targets for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and checking pupils' progress towards achieving them
  - eradicating all inadequate teaching.
- Raise attainment and accelerate all pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - setting targets based on an accurate assessment of pupils' needs and reviewing these regularly with pupils and parents to ensure that all pupils make at least comparable progress to pupils nationally
  - checking that the more able writers do not fall behind
  - using records of the progress of different groups of pupils to quickly spot any underachievement so that action can be taken to close gaps in learning.
- Improve the capacity of leadership at all levels to make improvements by:
  - ensuring leaders carefully monitor and improve the quality of teaching and evaluate more accurately its impact on pupils' progress
  - providing prompt feedback and support to teachers following lesson observation to help

them improve their practice

- supporting leaders at all levels to take a consistent approach to school improvement by ensuring that actions and measures of success are focused more on pupils' achievement
- setting high expectations of attendance and taking more effective action to reduce levels of persistent absence.

■ Improve governance by:

- ensuring governors understand how to interpret and use the school's records of pupils' progress in order to hold leaders to account for improving pupils' achievement
- ensuring that the governing body is more directly involved in checking the performance of pupils and teachers so that it is better able to measure the rate of school improvement
- ensuring that the governing body asks questions to determine the impact of the Pupil Premium on the achievement of pupils who attract this funding.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- Pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics have declined over the last three years and attainment is low by the end of Years 2 and 6. Records of pupils' assessments in Year 6 in 2012 show that most made less than the expected progress in English and mathematics.
- Attainment is lower in English than mathematics, and boys do less well than girls. This is especially the case in writing, where a lack of monitoring by leaders has prevented improvement. Although unvalidated, national test results show that by the end of Year 6 in 2012 many pupils had not closed the gap between their attainment in reading and that of pupils nationally, and the gap for writing has widened, especially for boys, the more able pupils and those supported by the Pupil Premium funding.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills significantly below those expected for their age. They are given insufficient opportunities to develop skills in reading and writing. Consequently, the children make inadequate progress overall and enter Year 1 with attainment that remains well below average, particularly in reading and writing.
- Test results show that in 2012 effective teaching in developing skills and knowledge of letters and sounds resulted in pupils, by the end of Year 1, making better than expected progress in reading. However, in spite of strengths observed in the teaching in Year 1, pupils in Year 2 do not make enough progress in reading, reflecting inadequate teaching.
- There are wide variations in the achievement of pupils in reading in Years 1 and 2. Some pupils are enthusiastic and better readers than others whilst others do not use the most effective ways to break down words or the sounds of letters when reading unfamiliar words. Those who have support from home read better and more fluently with confidence and they enjoy reading more than those who struggle with their reading and receive ineffective teaching in school.
- Pupils in Year 6 have generally positive attitudes to reading, but the less able boys have not developed a sufficient grasp of word building skills to enable them to make adequate progress in both reading and writing.
- Inspection evidence confirms that, across the school, pupils' attainment in reading is below that of pupils nationally. Attainment in writing is too low and pupils make inadequate progress, particularly the more able readers, because they do not have enough opportunities to write more extensively or improve the accuracy of their writing.
- The progress of pupils identified with moderate learning difficulties in the specially resourced provision is good due to effective support and teaching. However, pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes make inadequate progress because teaching is not good enough to close the gap with comparable pupils nationally. This is because the information kept on how well interventions are working is not managed well enough to help teachers and support staff plan pupils' learning to improve their development of basic literacy skills.

**The quality of teaching is inadequate**

- Inspectors found that, as a result of weak teaching over time, pupils make inadequate progress. Despite recent efforts by senior leaders to improve teaching, it remains inadequate because of significant weaknesses in the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills.
- The quality of teaching has declined since the last inspection. The monitoring of lessons lacks rigour and support for teachers to improve their practice is ineffective. However, teaching in the specially resourced provision is good due to teachers using assessments of pupils' learning to plan tasks that meet pupils' specific learning needs. Teaching is stronger in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage, and is better in mathematics than in English. The quality of teaching for boys and the more able pupils in writing is particularly weak.
- In the weaker lessons, the pace of learning slows when teachers talk for too long and time is not used well enough to help pupils learn. Opportunities to extend pupils' learning are missed and teachers do not always expect enough of the pupils or intervene sufficiently during lessons to ensure that they are actually learning and making progress when working on their own.
- The use of personal learning targets, together with the steps pupils need to reach these targets, are helping pupils to understand what they have to do to achieve the next level in their work. However, the use of targets is not consistent practice in all classes, particularly for reading and writing. Where they are set, targets are not always available for pupils to refer to and use when they are working.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly, but teachers do not consistently provide specific guidance on how pupils can improve their work or give them adequate time to make corrections.
- In lessons where teaching is most effective, teachers plan interesting activities that encourage independence and are well matched to pupils' needs. In these lessons teachers have high expectations, ask good questions and use resources effectively to ensure pupils' learning is on track and moves at a brisk pace.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement**

- Attendance is currently below average and high rates of persistent absence disrupts the learning of some pupils. The number of pupils excluded for poor behaviour has reduced over the past year.
- Behaviour in lessons was good when tasks were well matched to pupils' interests. In one assembly, the pupils' behaviour was exemplary; however, where teaching is weak and the pace of learning too slow, many pupils lose interest, stop concentrating and sometimes misbehave.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and are confident that an adult will sort out any problems they may have. Inspectors agree with parents and carers that their children are safe. Staff and pupils comment that behaviour has greatly improved.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying, of which they say there are few instances. They are confident that any inappropriate behaviour is dealt with swiftly.
- Pupils willingly take on new responsibilities, such as being members of the school council. They demonstrate positive attitudes to staff and to their learning, especially when teachers provide interesting experiences which they can enjoy with their classmates.

**The leadership and management are inadequate**

- Since the previous inspection, the school's leaders and governors have failed to make improvements and pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching have declined. The newly appointed headteacher has a clear view of what needs to be done to reverse this decline and has acted quickly to gain the support of staff and governors. In the short time since her appointment she has made numerous changes designed to improve performance, but recognises that due to these being very recent, the school cannot yet show sustained improvement.
  - Many leaders are new in post and the headteacher, through performance management, is now supporting them in their monitoring of teaching and learning. This is starting to improve the consistency and quality of the leadership of teaching across the school.
  - The monitoring of teaching and evaluation of actions to improve pupils' learning and progress are not rigorous enough to sustain improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in all classes.
  - Improvement planning generally identifies the right priorities, but is not sharp enough to bring about rapid change because plans are not clearly linked to improving pupils' achievement.
  - The curriculum is not meeting the needs of many pupils. It does not promote high levels of achievement or develop pupils' basic skills well enough. An enquiry-based approach to learning is not embedded sufficiently in all classes to ensure that all pupils make enough progress. This means that teachers do not always expect enough or encourage pupils to reflect or share ideas with others to enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
  - Leaders at all levels, including the governing body, ensure that safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements; they foster good relations and tackle discrimination. The school's promotion of equality of opportunity, however, is inadequate, because too many pupils, including those with special educational needs, do not make enough progress in English and mathematics.
  - There is good identification and effective support for pupils with emotional difficulties through established links with relevant agencies, including a counsellor who visits regularly.
  - The local authority has provided support that has led to some improvement but this has not yet had sufficient effect on reversing a legacy of underachievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
- the governing body is not effective in challenging the school's leaders because its members do not have sufficient awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and pupils' achievement
  - most governors have too little understanding of the school's assessments and records of pupils' learning and progress
  - the governing body has not been sufficiently involved in deciding how the school's Pupil Premium funding is spent, nor has it monitored the impact of this funding on the quality of teaching and the achievement of the pupils it is intended to support.

## 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>	131658
<b>Local authority</b>	Stockton-on-Tees
<b>Inspection number</b>	402491

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	420
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ray Stephenson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Beth Atkinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 February 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 602029
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