

Ottery St Mary Primary School

Longdogs Lane, Ottery St Mary, EX11 1HY

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Pupils' achievement over time is not good. In Key Stages 1 and 2, too few pupils make good progress from their different starting points.
- In Key Stage 2, the achievement of girls in mathematics lags behind that of boys.
- Gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of others in the school and nationally are still too wide.
- Children in Reception classes are not fully prepared for Year 1 because teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of their behaviour.
- Teachers in early years do not use information about how well children are doing to plan future work.
- In a small number of classes throughout the school, teachers do not plan lessons that capture pupils' interests.
- Teaching is inconsistent and has not been good enough over time. In some classes, teaching does not always provide pupils with the challenge they need to learn well and make the best possible progress.
- Until recently, senior leaders and governors did not rigorously check on the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement. They did not focus sharply enough on how well different groups of pupils were learning. They have taken too long to identify weaknesses and ensure that they are fully resolved.
- Teachers do not always insist on the highest standards of presentation and handwriting and pupils do not always show sufficient pride in their work.

The school has the following strengths:

- Teaching of reading is good and pupils achieve well. The proportion of pupils achieving high standards is above the national average.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors now know the school's strengths and weaknesses and are tenaciously pursuing improvement.
- The school provides a rich and interesting curriculum. It provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the quality of the subjects taught.
- Pupils are well behaved and want to do well. They get on well with each other in the classrooms and on the playground.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good and pupils and parents and carers agree.
- The vast majority of parents are very happy with the school's work and with the progress their children are making.
- The effective use of the additional sports funding is supporting improvements in pupils' overall health, well-being and sports skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons throughout the school and scrutinised a range of pupils' work from all year groups.
- Inspectors observed an assembly and a lunchtime club and talked with parents at the start and end of the school day.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors held a meeting with a group of pupils and talked to pupils during lessons and at breaktimes to find their views of the school.
- The inspection team listened to a range of readers.
- The inspection team held meetings with the headteacher, middle and senior leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors also took account of the 46 questionnaires which staff returned.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of information provided by the school including self-evaluation and planning documents. They looked closely at the school's records of performance, behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- The school website was viewed and the results of the 106 replies to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, were analysed.

Inspection team

Stephen Bywater, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mark Anderson

Additional Inspector

Deborah Marklove

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are organised into two classes of single-age classes.
- In the early years, children are taught in two Reception classes and attend full time.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well below average. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils who are eligible for free school meals or children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the achievement of pupils so that:
 - all pupils make good progress from their different starting points
 - the proportions of pupils making expected and better than expected progress compare favourably with national averages
 - the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils closes
 - the difference between girls' and boys' achievement in mathematics is eliminated.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good by:
 - setting work at the right level for all pupils so they are challenged to fulfil their potential
 - ensuring that all lessons are engaging and interesting for pupils
 - ensuring that standards of behaviour are equally high in every classroom and with every member of staff
 - ensuring that teachers in Reception classes develop more fully the children's personal and social skills so they respond to teachers' instructions and questions more effectively.
- Improve leadership by:
 - challenging weak performance of teachers through regular and rigorous checking of the school's work
 - supporting the key subject leaders in English and mathematics to effectively lead improvement in their subjects
 - developing subject leaders' understanding of how to use the information resulting from checks on pupils' progress to improve the quality of teaching and learning
 - undertaking regular checks of teaching in all subjects, modelling best practice and identifying appropriate training opportunities for all staff.

The leadership and management **require improvement**

- The headteacher has an accurate view of the school and his self-evaluation recognises that the quality of teaching and learning has been too variable over the last few years. However, it is only recently that leaders have taken action to secure effective teaching to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress.
- Although the leadership and management have now secured improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment, they are still judged to require improvement. This is because the actions taken to address identified weaknesses have not yet resulted in raising pupils' achievement and raising the overall quality of teaching to at least good.
- Senior and middle leaders do not check rigorously enough on the impact of teaching by looking at the progress of different groups of pupils in lessons and in their books. The checks they make on the quality of teaching do not focus sufficiently on the impact on pupils' learning. As a result, they do not always identify and resolve any weaknesses in practice between classes in the same year group and across the school.
- Some newly appointed leaders have not had enough time and have too little experience to contribute to school improvement in their subject areas, for example in mathematics.
- The local authority has been timely and effective in challenging the school to improve pupils' achievement. It has supported leaders to develop an effective action plan and effective systems to check how well pupils are doing. The school is now using this information well to identify where performance is dipping and providing the necessary support to help pupils catch up.
- Staff benefit from the increasingly effective whole-school training and individual training to increase their skills, for example in mathematics. This has been a recent school improvement priority. Teachers have good opportunities to learn from other teachers, such as those in partnership schools, in order to increase and improve their teaching.
- The school provides a rich and interesting curriculum and pupils speak with appreciation of their enjoyment of visits and visitors. The curriculum teaches pupils to understand right and wrong, to get along with other people and to understand the similarities and differences of life in different cultures. Pupils learn about democracy through the election process for the school council as well as through the curriculum. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the range and quality of the subjects taught. This is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and visits, including residential experiences to broaden the pupils' horizons.
- The school has a clear commitment to equality of opportunity and to tackling any form of discrimination. However, the inconsistencies in achievement of pupils, including girls in mathematics, the most able and disadvantaged pupils, means this is not fully successful.
- In past years, the pupil premium funding has not been used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils but these pupils are now being given extra support to help them catch up with their classmates.
- The primary sport funding is used well to increase the amount of time provided for pupils to take part in sport during and after school, and its use has increased opportunities for pupils to compete against others. As a result, the funding is supporting improvements in pupils' overall health, well-being and sports skills development. A greater proportion of pupils take part in exciting sports such as cyclo-cross, biathlon, tag rugby and athletics.
- Safeguarding requirements are fully in place and are effective in ensuring pupils' safety. Leaders, including governors, make sure that statutory responsibilities are met.
- The vast majority of parents who expressed a view are very happy with the school's work and with the progress their children are making. Overwhelmingly they would recommend the school to others.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body displays an ambition for improvement which can be recognised from governors' determination to 'get behind the headteacher and his team with passion, drive and excitement and deliver the best possible outcomes for the pupils'.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's performance and the quality of teaching. However, until recently they did not challenge the headteacher sufficiently well about the achievements of all groups of pupils.
- They now have a very clear understanding of the priorities for the school, as detailed in the school action plan, and carefully check its progress. For example, the Chair of the Governing Body has weekly update meetings with the headteacher.

- Governors are provided with a wide range of detailed information collected by the headteacher, which they discuss and consider well at their meetings. They visit the school often to monitor improvements. This gives them the clear understanding required to drive further improvements forward.
- Governors embody high expectations for the school to improve and have a clear vision of the next steps. They now work closely with the headteacher and provide effective support for leaders.
- Governors fully understand the arrangements for checking the performance of teachers and its link with teachers' salary progression. They link the headteacher's pay to appropriate targets and are helped by the local authority representative to do this. Recent evidence of improvements in teaching confirms their effectiveness in tackling underperformance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school has a warm, welcoming atmosphere and an ethos that has a very positive impact on all aspects of the school's work.
- Pupils behave well in and around the school. They are friendly, polite and courteous with adults, and treat each other with respect, cooperating well with each other during lessons. This ensures that the school is calm and purposeful.
- When the teaching is good, pupils are keen and enthusiastic learners who display a very positive attitude. Teaching is rarely affected by distracting behaviour but there is some passive behaviour and lack of interest when the teaching is not engaging and teachers' expectations are not high enough. Some pupils in Key Stage 2 do not always produce sufficient work which is neat and well presented.
- The school's behaviour log confirms that the number of incidents is few and reducing. Pupils' behaviour is usually managed well. Very little time is wasted having to deal with inappropriate behaviour. However, there are a few occasions in Key Stage 1 when pupils are too noisy, do not settle into their work quickly enough and speak when the teacher is speaking.
- Pupils value highly the opportunities they have to take responsibility, including acting as sports leaders, school councillors and buddies, caring for the woodland environment and looking after the school chickens. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils showed immense skill and organisation in leading an art club for their younger schoolmates.
- In the words of one pupil interviewed, 'I can't see how we can make the school better!'

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Most parents and staff agree with this and pupils say that they feel safe in school. Staff are available to talk to parents at the start and end of the day which many parents said helped them to keep up to date with how well their children are doing.
- Pupils explained clearly to inspectors how the school helps them to understand how to behave and to recognise whether anyone is being bullied. They know that teachers will always provide help if they need it. Staff keep a close watch on pupils at all times of the day, including during break and lunchtimes.
- Pupils told inspectors about the different ways that they have learned to keep themselves safe, such as recognising and knowing what to do to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- Attendance has remained broadly average over a number of years. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and the vast majority attend regularly and on time.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good or better in increasing the rate of some pupils' progress and raising attainment.
- Pupils' work and school records show that there is some good, and some outstanding, teaching in Year 6 and in individual classes in a number of other year groups. However the effectiveness of teaching is uneven across a number of year groups. The inconsistencies in the teaching mean that pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics has not improved quickly enough in the past or over time.
- Nevertheless, the school's records show that over the last few terms teaching has improved. Close scrutiny of the quality of teaching and clear guidance by the headteacher and local authority representative have also helped teachers to improve their practice.

- Most teachers have high expectations and set work at the right level of difficulty for individual pupils. In these lessons the children are highly motivated and keen to learn. This was very evident in a Year 4 lesson about Haiku poetry. Pupils were inspired and keen to ask and answer questions because of the teacher's enthusiasm, challenge and cajoling. Pupils did not want the lesson to stop.
- Further good teaching in a Year 3 mathematics lesson challenged pupils' thinking and enabled them to develop a thorough understanding and a secure knowledge of mathematical methods. Pupils skilfully used a variety of methods to solve multiplication problems.
- However, on some occasions throughout the school, teachers do not have high enough expectations and plan work which is too easy for many pupils, especially for the most able. Some lessons lack excitement and enjoyment because teachers do not plan activities that increasingly hold pupils' interest or motivate pupils to try hard in their learning.
- Sport is taught well. In the teaching of gymnastics, a teacher demonstrated his deep subject knowledge and a thorough understanding of how to develop pupils' skills. Pupils spoke with delight of their enjoyment of sports lessons and it is clear why they feel this way.
- The quality of phonics teaching in Key Stage 1 is good. Staff ensure that the teaching of phonics helps those who are struggling to learn sounds and letters to fully catch up by the end of Year 2.
- The teaching of reading is good. Teachers encourage pupils to read widely and frequently. Pupils are happy to express their pleasure in reading and why they have chosen their particular books. Teachers develop pupils' comprehension skills systematically through well-focused activities.
- The teaching of writing requires improvement because teachers do not always provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise their writing at length outside of literacy lessons.
- The teaching of mathematics requires improvement because there are too few challenging investigation tasks and too few opportunities for pupils to use resources to consolidate their understanding. Many teachers use questioning well to correct misunderstandings and misconceptions, but some teachers do not encourage pupils to give detailed answers. As a result, pupils do not get to hear enough of other pupils' answers and this restricts their own understanding.
- The challenge provided by staff for the most-able pupils is inconsistent. While almost all teachers ensure that they do at least as well as others in their reading, teachers do not always provide tasks and activities that are well suited to their level of skill and ability in writing and mathematics. There is still more to do to raise standards further.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who fall behind in their work are provided with good opportunities to learn well in small groups or on a one-to-one basis with staff.
- Teachers' marking is generally of a good and consistent quality. It ensures pupils are provided with advice and guidance that they generally act on and this helps them to correct mistakes and refine their work. However, teachers do not always encourage all pupils to take sufficient pride in their work and do not routinely address untidy work.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although standards compare favourably with the national picture at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' achievement requires improvement. This is because, over time, groups of pupils have not made enough progress from their individual starting points.
- In Key Stage 2, the number of pupils that make expected progress in mathematics, reading and writing is in line with the national average. However, too few pupils do better than this. The progress of girls in mathematics is significantly lower than that of boys.
- There is some unevenness in pupils' achievement between classes, but better progress rates over the 18 months or so are leading to higher standards of attainment in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Reading is a particular strength. Pupils read well. Younger pupils know how to sound out unfamiliar words and by Year 6 pupils are mature readers, with a growing number reading at the higher levels. The most able pupils read fluently and competently and discuss in depth their favourite books and authors.
- In writing, not all pupils take sufficient pride in their work and the quality of their handwriting is variable. They do not always extend their skills fully by writing for longer periods across subjects.
- Achievement in mathematics shows improvement on previous years but is still not good enough. Pupils demonstrate competency in their calculation work but their thinking is sometimes limited by a lack of resources and challenging investigation tasks. The school's own data on pupils' achievement for 2015 show that the proportions of pupils making expected progress and better than expected progress in mathematics by the end of Year 6 have risen and are now broadly average.
- The proportion of most-able pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in reading and writing in 2014 was higher

than in other schools nationally, but the proportion achieving Level 5 in mathematics was below average. Very few pupils achieved the highest Level 6 in any subject. This is indicative of insufficient challenge for the most able pupils over time since Year 2.

- Inspection evidence, the school's own data and the work seen in pupils' books indicate that pupils are beginning to make better progress in acquiring their literacy and numeracy skills. Although this is an improvement, there is still more to do to raise standards further, especially in writing and mathematics for the most able pupils.
- There is only a small proportion of disadvantaged pupils. However, these pupils do not achieve as well as other pupils in the school. In 2014, at the end of Year 6, disadvantaged pupils were between one and two terms behind their classmates in reading and mathematics and three terms behind them in writing. Compared to other pupils nationally, they were one term behind in reading, one and a half terms behind in writing and two terms behind in mathematics. They are currently making rates of progress which are similar to those of their classmates throughout the school, but this gap is not closing rapidly enough in some year groups.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their different starting points owing to their needs being identified accurately and effective strategies being put in place to aid their learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have worked together effectively to ensure they receive the precise help that they need to be successful. Consequently, these pupils are making better progress through small-group activities and through individual support.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Achievement in the early years requires improvement because, during their time in Reception, children do not make consistently good progress from their various starting points. The proportion of children reaching the early learning goals is above average but when children start in the early years many already have skills at levels typically above those expected for their age.
- Children are generally well prepared for Year 1, especially in their communication, reading, writing and number skills.
- Most children learn to behave well, have good attitudes and share resources sensibly. The behaviour of some children is over enthusiastic and their ability to consistently follow instructions, maintain concentration and respond appropriately to the teacher's questions is not fully developed.
- There is a good balance between adult-led activities and those that children choose for themselves. Role-play areas are of high quality and adults are enthusiastic play partners and share children's delight in activities. Every child is included in all learning and play activities. The early years staff work well with small groups of children and individuals and encourage them to communicate so that they make good progress in their communication and development of vocabulary.
- Children are kept very safe, both indoors and outdoors, and staff ensure resources are clean and well maintained. Staff skilfully adapt learning to match children's abilities. The most able children can write sentences with capital letters and full stops and all children make good progress in learning the names and sounds of letters.
- The leadership and management of the early years require improvement because systems for checking whether all children are making enough progress in each area of learning are not rigorous enough.
- Teaching also requires improvement because the information about children's learning is not used precisely enough to identify and close gaps in their knowledge and skills. For example, some children who have special educational needs are supported and are able to participate and engage in learning with greater independence. Others are not supported well enough and do not make enough progress.
- There are strengths in the way adults teach early reading skills and develop children's understanding of sounds. In a delightful moment one child helped another to self-correct: 'No, roast is not five sounds it is five letters!' Children learn to read effectively and there are good links to writing words and simple sentences.
- Children certainly enjoy their learning and the positive relationships encourage them to get on well together, to become confident in asking for help and to join in with the organised activities.
- Good attention is paid to children's welfare and the children are kept very safe.

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	113105
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	456244

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	413
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rob Baldry
Headteacher	Mark Gilronan
Date of previous school inspection	May 2012
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