

Ottery St Mary Primary School

Longdogs Lane, Ottery St Mary, Devon EX11 1HY

Inspection dates

14–15 June 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, ably supported by the newly appointed assistant headteachers and pastoral manager, holds high aspirations for pupils and staff. This has led to rapid and sustained improvements in this school.
- The governing body provides effective support and challenge for leaders. Governors have a secure knowledge of the school and use this to inform their work.
- The headteacher and governors have developed an effective team of senior leaders who work diligently together to ensure that pupils achieve well in English and mathematics. However, the leadership of other subjects is less strong and, consequently, pupils do not achieve as well in these subjects.
- Teaching across the school is of a high quality. Teachers plan engaging activities that capture pupils' interests and motivate them in their learning. As a result, pupils make good progress from their different starting points.
- Pupils develop a secure understanding of mathematical concepts. However, the most able pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to deepen their knowledge and apply their skills.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They make strong progress in all areas of the curriculum and leave Reception well prepared for Year 1.
- The teaching of early reading is strong across the early years and Year 1. Pupils develop a secure understanding of phonics, which they apply consistently in their reading.
- The pastoral manager provides strong support for pupils. This removes barriers to learning and secures good personal development and well-being.
- Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the understanding of British values are extensive. The respect and tolerance displayed by pupils are a strength.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is good. Strategies are well devised to support their learning and personal development. However, the reporting of the impact of additional funding is not sufficiently thorough.
- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders are proactive in reviewing their provision. Systems in place are rigorous and understood by staff and pupils. This ensures that pupils are as safe as possible.
- The majority of parents are positive about the school and, in particular, the support that it provides for its pupils and families. However, some parents have concerns about communication and the level to which they have been kept informed of developments in the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching and learning, by:
 - providing the most able pupils with more opportunities to deepen their understanding and apply their mathematical skills across a range of contexts
 - ensuring that teachers focus on the progression of skills in subjects other than English and mathematics so that pupils make sustained and substantial progress in the wider curriculum.
- Develop leadership and management further, by:
 - ensuring that middle leadership takes a greater role in the development of the wider curriculum
 - improving systems of communication and increasing levels of parental engagement
 - adding rigour to how the school publicly reports the impact of the additional funding it receives for disadvantaged pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The effectiveness of leadership and management is good. Since the last inspection, the leadership of the school has been restructured with the recruitment of two assistant headteachers and a pastoral manager. Together with the headteacher, these leaders have been rigorous and relentless in driving up standards. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and, consequently, pupils' outcomes have increased significantly.
- Leaders have established a secure vision for the school, which is upheld by staff, pupils and parents. The three learning challenges of 'explore', 'challenge' and 'learn' are at the heart of the school's work.
- The governing body has been proactive in seeking external support and challenge for senior leaders. This has been provided effectively by the local authority, a national leader of education and a local headteacher, who is currently advising the school in an executive headteacher capacity. This support has underpinned improvements in the school, particularly in leadership and management, and secured the capacity for further improvement.
- All leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. The plan to improve the school is well focused and ensures that key issues are tackled swiftly and effectively. Success is measured in terms of the impact developments are having on raising pupils' outcomes.
- The assistant headteachers provide strong and effective leadership of English and mathematics. They have led the development of teaching and learning in these subjects skilfully and with great determination. This has been instrumental in raising expectations and improving pupils' outcomes across the school. The leadership of subjects other than English and mathematics is less developed. Governors recognise this and plans are already in place to develop the capacity of middle leadership.
- Leaders have established effective systems to evaluate the quality of teaching through the management of staff performance and the frequent monitoring of pupils' learning. Leaders regularly check the progress pupils are making. They evaluate a range of evidence including scrutinies of pupils' workbooks and discussions with pupils. Staff are held stringently to account for the progress pupils make and records show that leaders deal effectively with staff underperformance.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding effectively to aid both the learning and personal development of disadvantaged pupils. Led by the pastoral manager, the school has a good understanding of the barriers to learning faced by individual pupils and plans effective strategies to support them. Current information on pupils' outcomes indicates that these pupils are making good progress and the differences between disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and those of and their peers are diminishing.
- The school has ensured that the additional funding available to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is spent effectively. As a result of the high-quality provision pupils receive, the majority of pupils who have special

educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, which enables them to catch up with their peers.

- The headteacher is providing strong leadership of the school's provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. He has ensured that systems for the early identification of additional needs are streamlined and has distributed responsibility for this to class teachers.
- Additional sports premium funding is used effectively to enhance pupils' experiences of physical education and sport. Pupils talk positively of the opportunities they receive both within lessons and in the range of extra-curricular clubs on offer. Funding has also been used to support teachers in their delivery of the curriculum but leaders have not yet evaluated the impact of this training.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have access to a broad and rich curriculum, which enables them to gain a wide breadth of knowledge and understanding. However, pupils' acquisition of subject-specific skills is less developed. For example, pupils learn about, scientific concepts, historical periods and geographical features but do not have sufficient opportunities to develop the skills required to be a scientist, a historian or a geographer. This limits the progress pupils make in these subjects.
- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is a strength. There is a strong programme of planned activities, which are delivered in classes and through assemblies. Pupils participate in local events and have a good understanding of local cultures and history, for example tar-barrel rolling.
- The majority of parents are pleased with the progress that their children make and the support they receive. Parents spoken to on the playground and those who commented on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were positive about the school's work. One parent, typifying the view of many, wrote, 'My children have thrived in this school and have surpassed my aspirations.'
- Some parents, however, believe that communication could be improved. In particular, they feel that they have not been kept suitably informed about the school's plans for improvement. Governors and leaders recognise that more work needs to be done in engaging with parents and members of the wider school community.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has worked extensively with a range of outside agencies to strengthen its work and that of senior leaders. Governors articulate a clear vision for the school and have a secure understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement.
- The governing body is reflective about its own effectiveness and proactive in addressing identified gaps in expertise. This ensures that, collectively, governors have the knowledge and skills required to hold leaders to account in all aspects of their work.
- Governors are well informed about pupils' outcomes and challenge leaders about the information they receive. They contribute to plans to raise attainment and actively pursue lines of enquiry to ensure that leaders' actions lead to improvements.

- Governors have a detailed understanding of how the additional funding the school receives for disadvantaged pupils is spent. They monitor the impact this spending is having on diminishing differences between pupils' outcomes. However, their reporting of this impact, for example on the website, lacks the required level of detail.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and statutory requirements met.
- The designated leaders responsible for safeguarding are proactive in ensuring that pupils are as safe as they can possibly be. They regularly review their practice in light of published recommendations and, where necessary, swiftly amend school policy. For example, in light of a recently published serious case review, leaders have revisited the school policy for following up unexplained absences.
- Staff have a good awareness of safeguarding issues and the procedures to follow should they be concerned about a pupil's welfare. All staff have had training which is at least at the level required for their role and those spoken to were knowledgeable about the indicators of radicalisation, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation.
- Leaders work closely with parents and a range of external agencies to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils and their families are well supported.
- Governors have ensured that record-keeping is comprehensive and systematic. Recruitment procedures are secure with all the appropriate checks made.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching across the school is good.
- Teachers have a secure understanding of their pupils' learning needs. Work in books shows that pupils make good progress from their different starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Staff have high expectations of their pupils, both of their academic achievement and of behaviour. Pupils say they enjoy their learning. This is because most teachers plan lessons that grab their pupils' attention and motivate them to learn. The school is a calm and purposeful learning environment.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They ask probing questions which develop and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Across the school, pupils are encouraged to think deeply about their responses before answering in fully articulated sentences. This focus on the development of language is underpinning the improvements seen in the quality of pupils' writing.
- Teaching assistants are highly skilled and work in partnership with class teachers to ensure that pupils of all abilities are supported and challenged. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. Pupils' needs are identified early so that they receive help quickly. Assistance is carefully planned and pupils are encouraged to remain independent in their work.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are strong and built upon mutual respect. In keeping with the school's vision of 'explore', 'challenge' and 'learn', pupils feel safe to

make mistakes and this contributes to their willingness to tackle new learning with confidence.

- Pupils are clear about how to improve their work and are given time to do this. The school's marking and feedback policy has recently been revised and is now followed consistently by most class teachers. This contributes to the good progress pupils make.
- Work in pupils' books is of a high quality. The strong emphasis that the school has placed on developing pupils' writing skills and improving presentation is paying off. A systematic approach to the teaching of English grammar, punctuation and spelling is contributing to the quality of pupils' writing and pupils of all abilities demonstrate a consistent application of the skills taught.
- Pupils' writing in subjects other than English is of an equally high standard. Teachers provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across different genres and subjects. For example, Year 5 pupils have written insightful diary entries as Queen Victoria and Year 3 pupils have written in great detail about different aspects of Hinduism.
- In mathematics, teachers skilfully adapt their teaching to meet the needs of all pupils. They provide pupils with a carefully planned range of tasks which support, develop and challenge their understanding and skills. In addition, 'pause' and 'push' opportunities give pupils further reinforcement and extension activities. Pupils make good progress in their acquisition of mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Leaders recognise that pupils need to deepen further their mathematical understanding and to apply their mathematical skills across a range of different contexts. This will further increase rates of progress, especially for the most able pupils.
- The teaching of phonics is a strength. Pupils heard reading by inspectors were competent using their phonics skills to decode unfamiliar words. Pupils are confident readers who read with fluency and a secure understanding of the text. The well-resourced 'library bus' is enjoyed by pupils of all ages and this is further developing pupils' love of reading.
- The quality of teaching in subjects other than English and mathematics is effective and pupils gain a breadth of knowledge. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the school's curriculum and the range of interesting activities which engage them in their learning. However, pupils' opportunities to develop subject-specific skills are limited and, therefore, pupils' progress in these subjects is not as strong as it is in English and mathematics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The pastoral manager plays a significant role in supporting more vulnerable children and families within the school. There is a determined focus to support every aspect of pupils' well-being and this demonstrates the school's proactive approach to understanding the needs of pupils and keeping them safe.

- Pupils are confident learners with positive attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic and enjoy talking about their work. They listen attentively to teachers, work cooperatively with their peers and persevere when work challenges them. They are proud of their achievements and of their school.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They say that bullying is rare but are confident that when it does happen, it is taken seriously and adults deal with it effectively. This is supported by school records. A small number of parents who completed the Ofsted online questionnaire expressed concerns about bullying in the school. However, inspection evidence does not support their views.
- Pupils are able to discuss personal safety and the actions the school has taken to keep them safe. This has included visits from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Pupils spoken to demonstrated a good awareness of how to stay safe online.
- Pupils are tolerant and respectful of people's differences and well prepared for life in modern Britain. The school has very carefully and delicately developed pupils' understanding of national events in an age-appropriate way. Older pupils were able to talk to inspectors about extremism with one explaining that 'Extremists have beliefs that they have taken too far.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff set high expectations and pupils respond appropriately. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other and adults.
- Pupils work well together during lessons and move around the school in an orderly manner. Pupils who spoke to inspectors were very clear that behaviour is consistently good.
- At break and lunchtimes, pupils behave well on the playground and in the dining hall. Despite the school's size, there is a family atmosphere. 'It's really friendly here' was a view shared by a number of pupils. One Year 5 girl added, 'Break and lunchtime are great because there's so much to do and other children behave well and get on with each other.'
- Overall attendance is above the national average. However, absence rates for some disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have, in the past, been too high. During this academic year, the pastoral manager has put in place robust strategies for tracking attendance and takes swift action to support pupils if their attendance dips. Consequently, absence rates are reducing for these groups of pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- All groups of pupils currently in the school are making good progress from their different starting points.
- In the 2016 national results for key stage 2, pupils did not make sufficient progress in writing or mathematics. However, current pupils' written and mathematical work is of a good standard and demonstrates strong progress since the start of the academic year.

In reading, writing and mathematics, most pupils are working at the level expected for their age with a high proportion working above this. As a result, teachers' assessments indicate that 2017 key stage 2 results will show an improvement. These assessments are supported by the work seen in pupils' books.

- Key stage 1 pupils make good progress from their different starting points. In 2016, the proportions of key stage 1 pupils achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics were broadly in line with national averages. However, the proportions working at greater depth were below national averages in each of these subjects. Improvements in the quality of teaching and greater accuracy in the checking of pupils' attainment has led to larger numbers of current pupils working at the higher standards.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress which is at least comparable to other pupils with the same starting points. The needs of pupils are assessed, and carefully planned targets and teaching strategies are put in place to reduce barriers to learning and enable them to catch up with their peers.
- Phonics is well taught and pupils use their knowledge of sounds to read unknown words. Books are generally well matched to pupils' reading abilities and this enables them to grow in confidence and make good progress with their reading. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check has been consistently above the national average for the past three years. Teacher assessments indicate that this will continue to be the case in 2017.
- Children make strong progress in the early years, particularly in the acquisition of early writing skills. The proportion of children leaving Reception with a good level of development is consistently above the national average. This prepares them well for key stage 1.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get a good start to their education as a result of strong teaching. Adults use discussion and questioning to develop children's thinking and engagement in learning. They adapt activities quickly to ensure that children maintain interest and good learning takes place.
- Children enter the Reception Year with skills which are broadly in line with expectations for their age and make strong progress across all areas of the curriculum. This is evidenced in their learning journals. There is a particularly strong focus on the development of reading, writing and number.
- The early years is well led. The leader has a detailed and accurate understanding of the strengths in provision and where it needs to be improved. For example, she has established strong links with pre-school settings to better support the transition into school. This is proving particularly effective in developing early writing skills.
- A strong focus on the development of speaking and listening skills is having a positive impact on children's outcomes. Adults have high expectations for children's use of language and, during learning activities, model high-quality vocabulary for children to

use in their own speech. As a result, children develop concentration and the ability to speak clearly and articulate their ideas.

- Children benefit from a wide range of both indoor and outdoor resources that provide exciting and stimulating learning opportunities. Children are encouraged to explore ideas in practical ways to enhance their understanding. The well-planned learning environment provides good opportunities for children to develop their writing skills. For example, writing menus for their ice cream shop and descriptive labels for the models they build during construction activities. This is proving effective in encouraging children, and especially boys, to write independently.
- Children feel safe and standards of behaviour are good. Children understand the routines and expectations. They take turns to share equipment and respond readily to adults' instructions.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent progress from low starting points. This enables them to catch up with their peers and be well prepared for Year 1.
- Parents are seen as important partners in their child's learning and are given opportunities to engage in learning activities. Parents talk positively about the information they are given regarding their children's achievements. Parents spoken to on the playground were pleased with the school's early years provision and the level of care and support provided by adults. 'The staff very quickly get to know the children individually,' said one parent.
- Safeguarding practices in the early years are effective. There are no breaches of statutory welfare requirements. Children are supported and cared for and teachers and teaching assistants are attentive to their needs.

School details

Unique reference number	113105
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10033120

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	408
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Oliver Helm
Headteacher	Mark Gilronan
Telephone number	01404 812977
Website	www.otteryprimary.co.uk
Email address	admin@ottery-primary.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2–3 July 2015

Information about this school

- Ottery St Mary Primary School is a larger than average-sized primary school. There are 14 classes.
- The school is part of the SMILE Trust. Senior leadership is currently being supported by an executive headteacher from another local school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is also in line with that found nationally.

- The school had met requirements on the publication of specified information on its website by the end of the inspection.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms and many of these visits were made jointly with senior leaders. Pupils' learning was observed across the school.
- Discussions were held with school leaders, staff, members of the local governing body and the local authority. Inspectors also took into account responses to questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.
- Inspectors looked at the school's evaluation of its own performance, its improvement plan, a number of key school policies and the minutes of meetings of the local governing body. They also considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection to seek their views and listened to a selection of them read.
- Inspectors took account of 123 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including a number of free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke to a number of parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

Jonathan Dyer, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Martin Bragg	Ofsted Inspector

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