

Inspection of Othery Village School

Othery, Bridgwater, Somerset TA7 0PX

Inspection dates: 10–11 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The quality of education pupils receive is inadequate. Leaders and the trust have not acted quickly enough to stem the decline in standards. The curriculum has not been well thought out. As a result, pupils do not achieve well and are not well prepared to succeed in the next stage of their education.

There are minimal opportunities for pupils to broaden their horizons. This is because the curriculum is very weak. Pupils are not well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils told us curriculum enrichment activities are boring. Half of the pupils who completed the pupil survey would not recommend the school to a friend.

Behaviour is not good. At times, pupils do not behave as well as they could. This is because the behaviour policy is not followed. This contributes to pupils' low achievement. Pupils say that they feel safe and that bullying is rare.

Pupils and many parents and carers are positive about the new headteacher's approach. However, some parents are concerned about the help provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils are not supported well. The curriculum does not meet their needs. Consequently, they do not reach their full potential.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

In the last four years, the school has had four headteachers. This has been an unsettled time. This instability has still not been addressed. The current headteacher is not permanent. He has accurately identified the many weaknesses in the school. However, actions taken have not yet had any significant impact. This is because these problems are deep-rooted, and hard to resolve quickly.

The trust has failed to deal with the weaknesses found during the previous inspection. Over time, the trust, local governors and senior leaders have not worked in unison to halt the decline in standards. Governors have not ensured they have fulfilled their statutory responsibilities. Information provided by senior leaders to the local governing body is not precise enough. This means that governors do not know how well pupils are achieving.

The curriculum is not fit for purpose. No one has a clear overview of what pupils are expected to learn. Pupils do not receive their full entitlement of subjects and are poorly prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils do not follow a programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE). Teachers teach the subject content that they want in an unsystematic way. Pupils in mixed-age classes repeat work that they have already completed the previous year. For example, in modern foreign languages, pupils in Year 6 do the same work that they did in Year 5. There is no order to the way subject content is taught. Pupils do not build their knowledge and skills in a coherent way to help them remember what they have learned. This contributes to pupils' weak achievement across the curriculum. Some

pupils' poor behaviour in lessons further hampers their learning and the learning of others around them.

Subject leaders are establishing their roles. The interim headteacher has secured training for the leader for English and mathematics. However, the training is very recent and has not led to improvements in the quality of education. Furthermore, subject leaders do not have any oversight of their subject because they do not have time to check.

Pupils with SEND do not achieve well. This is because staff do not have the necessary skills to provide the support that pupils require. These pupils are not getting their full curriculum entitlement. Pupils' individual plans are not being turned into reality.

The teaching of phonics is better structured than other curriculum areas. Teachers follow a step-by-step programme. As a result, pupils secure the necessary skills required for early reading. However, once pupils complete the scheme, the teaching of reading is weak. Activities designed to develop pupils' reading skills are not well thought out. Pupils told us that the range of books available to them is improving. However, books are not routinely matched to pupils' reading ability. This hampers their achievement.

In early years, children's learning is hindered because the resources that are available are not fit for purpose. Children cannot access the outside learning area unless there is an additional adult available. Too often, there is no additional support. Nevertheless, the early years leader works well, given the limitations beyond her control. Teaching is mostly effective, particularly the teaching of early reading. Children are focused and well behaved in early years. This is because the early years leader has high expectations. However, these high expectations are not maintained as children progress through the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

However, leaders' checks on the suitability of staff need to be more stringent. Before the end of the inspection, appropriate measures were taken to rectify weaknesses in record keeping.

Leaders have ensured that all staff are trained to identify risks to pupils' welfare. Staff know how to report any concern they may have. Leaders and staff take appropriate action to ensure pupils are kept safe from harm. They work closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils and families receive the appropriate support and guidance.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is weak. Urgent action needs to be taken by leaders to devise a curriculum that will provide opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and skills across all subjects. It is imperative that leaders check that subjects are taught in their entirety, enabling pupils to be well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils' behaviour is not consistently good. Where behaviour is weaker, it is because there is an inconsistent use of systems and policies. Leaders need to ensure that all staff follow the school's behaviour policy.
- The trust has not secured improvements since the last inspection. Trustees and governors need to work together to ensure that the school has sustained, stable and effective leadership.
- Governors do not have a clear understanding of their statutory responsibilities. They need to ensure that the Equality Act 2010 is being fully met. Governors do not gain all the information they need from leaders. Governors must ensure that school policies, procedures and guidance are understood and implemented by all staff, so that the school improves rapidly.
- Pupils with SEND do not reach their full potential. Teachers need to ensure that pupils have access to a high-quality curriculum and that their needs are well met. Leaders need to hold staff to account for ensuring this occurs. Leaders need to ensure that the content of pupils' individual plans aligns with the provision they are receiving. Leaders need to ensure that staff can support pupils with additional needs effectively, enabling pupils to reach their full potential.
- Until very recently, there has been no subject leadership. There has been insufficient training for these leaders. This has hampered their ability to develop teachers' subject knowledge and ability to deliver a broad curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that all subject leaders have the capacity to improve the quality of education in the subjects they lead.
- The early years provision is not ensuring children reach their potential. The learning resources are tired and limited. The outside provision does not promote children's physical development. Leaders need to ensure that resources are readily available and are of a high quality. Staffing levels need to be adequate to enable children to have access to the full curriculum.
- It is recommended that the school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	141801
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10111557
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	54
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Jackson
Headteacher	Christopher Rutland
Website	www.middlezoyandotheryschools.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 January 2018

Information about this school

- A new interim headteacher was appointed in June 2019.
- The chair of the local governing body took up her post in September 2019.
- Othery Village School is part of The Levels multi-academy trust. The school is one of four schools in the trust. The interim headteacher oversees the work of another school in the trust.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of 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.

- We met with the headteacher, subject leaders, the leader with responsibility for pupils with SEND, the early years leader and a sample of teaching staff. The lead inspector also met with the chief executive officer of the trust.
- The lead inspector met with one trustee and the chair of the local governing body.
- We examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans and documentation relating to the safeguarding, attendance and behaviour of pupils.
- We scrutinised records, tested staff's safeguarding knowledge and spoke with pupils. The lead inspector also met with the designated safeguarding leader.
- Inspectors considered the 22 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. An inspector also met with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors took into consideration the 14 responses to the staff survey and 31 responses to the pupil survey. Throughout the inspection, we met with many pupils from across different year groups.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, science, modern foreign languages and writing. This included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, meeting with senior and subject leaders and discussions with teachers and pupils. On day two of the inspection, we looked further into the quality of education in geography, history, design, art and mathematics.

Inspection team

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jack Lacey

Ofsted Inspector

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