

Inspection of a good school: Oakwood Primary School

Sandpiper Road, Southampton, Hampshire SO16 8FD

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 March 2022

Outcome

Oakwood Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders use the banner of RESPECT to share their aspirations for pupils: resilience, empathy, strength, pride, excellence, curiosity and teamwork. Pupils try hard to live up to these values. Their sense of self-worth is tangible when staff overtly recognise their efforts. They are attentive learners and love the feeling they get when they are successful.

Pupils appreciate the school's attention to their well-being, particularly through times when there has been what they describe as 'a lot of overwhelming things in the news'. They feel comfortable sharing any worries with adults in school and learn how important it is to have strategies to stay calm.

At the same time, pupils learn real compassion for others. During the inspection, older pupils talked wisely about supporting people who have had to leave their homes because of the war in Ukraine. They knew why they were fundraising for Comic Relief and that it was much more than a crazy hair day.

Closer to home, pupils learn to be caring towards each other and tolerant of others, including those who sometimes find it more difficult to manage their feelings. Staff make sure that any unkind behaviour is dealt with promptly and followed up.

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

Despite the significant disruption the COVID-19 pandemic has caused in school, the new senior leadership team has successfully overseen a radical overhaul of the curriculum and their expectations of subject leaders. They are not where they want to be but have the right work in hand to get there in the coming months. Staff are fully on board with the changes, although there is more to do to strengthen how well some subjects are led. Governors, in their own words, have stepped up to the mark to ensure that they understand and support this aspect of the school's work and hold leaders to account.

At the same time, there is a strong focus on pupils' wider development. The school's values are woven through the personal, social and health education curriculum. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, how to protect their physical and mental health and keep themselves safe in different contexts. They understand that everyone is unique and should be respected. They behave well in lessons and around school.

Leaders are determined that pupils will become enthusiastic, fluent readers and confident and competent mathematicians. Work to improve the teaching of reading and mitigate the impact of the pandemic on pupils' learning is paying off, particularly for the youngest pupils. The teaching of early reading in Reception and key stage 1 is precise and teachers are skilful at picking up any pupils who need extra support to keep up. Pupils at the start of their school life have a feeling of achievement. Staff rarely hear the words 'I can't read that' anymore. Older pupils understand how important it is to be able to read well to succeed in other subjects and to be well prepared for secondary school.

Similarly, in mathematics, leaders' mindset is 'everyone can do this'. The curriculum is well thought out from Reception upwards and teaching is methodical. Teachers are adept at making sure that pupils really grasp what they are learning. In turn, pupils feel a sense of accomplishment and enjoy mathematics.

Ensuring that all pupils experience success is at the core of the school's work. The inclusion leader makes sure that wherever possible pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can learn alongside their classmates. She diagnoses their needs precisely to work out with staff which strategies will best support learning. Pupil passports are used to good effect. The inclusion leader works with staff, parents and pupils to set and review targets regularly to keep them relevant.

Across the school, teachers have clearly absorbed training on strategies to make sure that pupils understand and retain learning. Across different subjects, there is a constant focus on explicit teaching of vocabulary and recapping of learning from previous lessons. Trips and visitors into school are planned carefully to reinforce learning. Teachers know what pupils should have learned by the end of a topic, term or year, through early years and beyond.

The curriculum does not, though, routinely pinpoint the small gains in learning that pupils need to make along the way. Sometimes, the thinking is more about the activity or end product. It is not always clear what learning pupils need to carry forward from one topic to the next. This means that teachers do not necessarily have sufficient support to best plan teaching or to check on essential learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding leads work well as a team to look after pupils' well-being and safety. Staff are well trained to be alert to signs that something may be wrong. Pupils are explicitly taught how to report worries. Leaders know that some pupils may find it

difficult to articulate their feelings, so they make sure that they learn how to express themselves in other ways.

Leaders work well with other professionals, seeking advice and escalating concerns. Governors keep a watchful eye on safeguarding procedures to make sure that they meet requirements and work for pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, across early years and key stages 1 and 2, curriculum thinking is not sufficiently precise. It is left to teachers to work out how to develop and assess pupils' learning over a series of lessons to reach milestones. It is clear, however, from leaders' actions that they are in the process of reviewing curriculum planning and so the transitional arrangements have been applied. Leaders need to complete this work soon.
- Work to ensure that teachers lead subjects effectively is still a work in progress. Not all subject leaders have the experience and expertise to develop the curriculum further. Leaders need to train and support subject leaders to continue to develop the curriculum and monitor its effectiveness.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2016.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 school 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	116138
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	10200355
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Matt Maiden
Headteacher	Maria Whitmarsh
Website	http://oakwoodlive.net
Date of previous inspection	9 – 10 November 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Senior leaders began working together as a new team in September 2019 when they were promoted internally to acting roles. Over the course of 2020, they were appointed permanently to their posts.
- The chair of governors took on the role in January 2020, having been co-chair since September 2019.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector had discussions with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers and met with members of the governing body, including the chair and vice chair. She met with a representative of the local authority online.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. This involved discussions about the curriculum with the subject leaders and, in each subject, visits to a sample of lessons, talking with teachers and meeting with

pupils and looking at their work. She observed some individual pupils reading to teaching assistants.

- To complete the evaluation of the quality of education, the inspector also considered the curriculum in other subjects, spoke with the early years leader and visited additional lessons to gather evidence about provision for pupils with SEND.
- The inspector observed pupils at work and play, met with a group to talk about their experience at Oakwood and took account of over 200 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey. Similarly, online surveys provided information about the views of staff and parents.
- To determine the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector considered leaders' checks on adults in school and relevant policies and met with the designated safeguarding leads to talk about their work to keep pupils safe.

Inspection team

Alison Bradley, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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