

Tribal
Kings Orchard, One Queen
Street, Bristol
BS2 0HQ

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0117 311 5323
Direct email: suzy.smith@tribalgroup.com

18 March 2015

Mrs Jane Foyle
Headteacher
Oakwood Primary Academy
Magnolia Drive
Eastbourne
BN22 0SS

Dear Mrs Foyle

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Oakwood Primary Academy

Following my visit to your academy on 17 March 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and the time you took to discuss behaviour in your academy.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with the no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the Chief Inspector was concerned about behaviour at the academy.

Evidence

The inspector considered evidence including:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including discussion with pupils
- documentary evidence
- discussions with academy leaders and staff.

Having evaluated all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers have taken effective action to improve behaviour and secure consistently positive attitudes to learning.

Context

Oakwood Primary Academy is a large academy with 404 pupils on roll. About a quarter of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups. A very small minority speak English as an additional language. Nearly half are entitled to free school meals. About a fifth are included in the register of special educational needs. About 5% of these have statements, some of which are for behavioural, social or emotional needs. A significant proportion of the pupils leave or join the school during each academic year. The staff is relatively stable and there are no vacancies currently.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' attitudes to learning nearly all of the time and in the vast majority of lessons are good. Pupils listen carefully to teachers and teaching assistants, and to each other. Teachers and teaching assistants respect the pupils and take great care of them. This has resulted in good relationships based on trust. Pupils take pride in their work and look after their books. This is most evident in the time taken to present their handwriting neatly. The academy provides good models for this in the presentation of its high-quality wall displays. However, when teaching is less effective, pupils spend long periods of time in quite cramped conditions, sitting on the carpet just listening. This means that they become uncomfortable, restless and fidget. Occasionally this means they bump into each other. Some respond appropriately but a few react aggressively.

Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. They move to and from the playground, classrooms and the dining hall quietly, sensibly and in good order. Teachers and teaching assistants firmly but politely insist that they follow the well-rehearsed routines for lining up and walking. The school has clear routines for lunchtime, and the behaviour, at table, of all pupils, including the youngest, is exemplary. Adults help pupils maintain the high standards by gentle encouragement of good table manners. Playtimes and lunchtimes are managed well by a combination of adequate supervision, a sensible division of 'sittings' and careful timetabling of play spaces such as the 'cage' for football. Leaders have acted decisively to create a simple system of rewards. This means that there is a positive emphasis on good behaviour. Pupils like this. Pupils also enjoy the opportunities to act as leaders or as mentors to younger pupils. This helps them act maturely and with pride.

The vast majority of pupils rarely disrupt their own or others' work. However, a small minority of pupils have very challenging behaviour. This is addressed extremely skilfully and compassionately by teachers or teaching assistants when it occurs. They are adept at deciding when to remove the pupil from lessons, when to ignore attention-seeking behaviour and when to respond. The academy is committed to the view that 'all behaviour is a form of communication'. Intense personal work is undertaken with those with the most challenging needs and leaders rightly decide when professional assistance is needed from experts in other settings. Leaders have also set up a nurture facility. Pupils with the most challenging behaviour are supported in this setting. As a result they are learning to behave more appropriately in their main classes.

Around the time of the last full inspection, the Aurora Academies Trust appointed a teacher with particular expertise in behaviour management. The impact of this behaviour specialist has been extensive already. She provides good-quality training to all teachers and teaching assistants. She has built a good system for tracking the behaviour of pupils and uses this information to provide additional support where it is most needed. This senior leader also manages well the work of individual needs assistants (INAs) so that it is sharply focused on improving behaviour for all pupils. Leaders also welcome the support provided for these pupils by a range of external agencies. The behaviour specialist quickly developed a sensible plan, once appointed. The plan shows clearly by when improvements will have been achieved. The plan is reviewed regularly and updated constantly. As a result behaviour is kept in the forefront of everyone's thinking.

Leaders have acted effectively to improve site security. Since the inspection the perimeter has been made secure with a very good fence. All gates are operated by a number code so that access to the academy is tightly controlled now. Parents and the local community like this. Nearly all parents indicated through a recent survey that they believe the academy keeps their children safe.

Parents were less confident about the academy's work in relation to bullying. Pupils know what bullying is and they also know about different types of bullying. Pupils know that the use of some 'names' is wrong but a few still choose to use derogatory language from time to time. Leaders deal with this robustly and have excluded pupils for abusive language aimed at members of staff. This means that the school has relatively high levels of exclusions. Leaders accept this as a necessary means of challenging poor behaviour.

Pupils' attendance remains below average despite leaders' continual work to improve it. The introduction of rewards for good attendance has helped. So far the academy has not used a full range of strategies, such as issuing fixed-penalty notices, to support its work in this area.

Priorities for further improvement

- Reduce further the occasions when pupils become restless and fidget by decreasing the amount of time they spend sitting on the carpet in close proximity to each other.
- Use the full range of strategies available to help improve attendance.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services, to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the local advisory board and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Dr Simon Hughes
Her Majesty's Inspector