

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Miss Julie Sheppard
Headteacher
Oaklands Infant School
Butler Road
Crowthorne
Berkshire
RG45 6QZ

Dear Miss Sheppard

Short inspection of Oaklands Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 7 June 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in March 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You focus effectively on improving the quality of teaching and learning within the school. Your motto of 'deep roots for future growth' is borne out in the good and improving start pupils make in the early years. Staff say they are proud to work at the school and share your ambition for further improvement. Parents say their children enjoy coming to school, and they appreciate the strong moral values staff instil in their children. They feel that the school helps their children to be inspired to find out more about the world around them and that the school community is strong and welcoming.

Pupils enjoy their learning at school and work hard in lessons. They develop a love of learning because leaders ensure the curriculum provides enriching experiences through relevant visits to places of interest and inspiring visitors. Leaders show a strong commitment to developing pupils' care, concern and respect for others. The characters linked to your core values, such as 'Ivy' who rises to challenges and 'Goldie' who encourages respect for all, positively influence pupils' attitudes towards others. Pupils show a desire to learn and behave well both in and out of lessons. They are able to articulate strong levels of care and concern for others.

You and other senior leaders use the information you hold about what children know and can do to develop the teaching that pupils receive. You tailor additional support effectively to meet a range of needs. There are a small number of

disadvantaged pupils in the school, making it difficult to draw valid national comparisons regarding their performance. In 2015, these pupils achieved well.

You have tackled the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection well so that pupils know what they need to do to be successful in their work. They use the prompts teachers share with them to make their work more accurate. Pupils' punctuation and grammar is practised and reinforced in all their writing activities. In the early years, teaching has ensured that a high proportion of pupils start key stage 1 well prepared in reading, writing and number because activities focus closely on the skills with which pupils need the most support.

Although pupils' overall achievement is good at the end of key stage 1, teaching does not always build quickly enough on the strong start pupils make in the early years, particularly in phonics (letters and the sounds that they make), to enable pupils to make rapid progress in reading and writing.

There are a number of new governors this year. They have challenged leaders appropriately to secure swift improvements to aspects of the school's performance such as phonics in Year 1. However, governors do not always have all the information they need about the current performance of pupils to hold leaders fully to account for the impact of their actions. Leaders' evaluations are sometimes anecdotal or lack precise measures to gauge impact.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding training is updated and that practice in school reflects the latest national guidance. All staff follow the agreed procedures if they are concerned about any pupil. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Concerns are addressed quickly and leaders liaise well with the other professionals to reduce any risk of harm. Pre-employment checks on staff meet requirements, although during this inspection some paper-based checks had not been fully transferred onto the electronic single central record. This was a slip-up rather than being indicative of any shortcoming in the checking procedures. Attendance is above the national average and very few pupils are persistently absent.

Inspection findings

- Your commitment to improving the quality of education further at the school came through clearly in my discussions and work with you. You have ensured that pupils learn in a safe, happy environment and are well cared for by the staff that teach them. Parents are pleased with the education their children receive during their time with you, with very few exceptions.
- Governors support leaders well and are increasing momentum for future improvements. New governors ask increasingly challenging questions of leaders and have begun to gather parent and staff views more regularly to check the impact of leaders' work.

- Performance management is linked closely to your planned improvements. Staff receive appropriate training, support and guidance to strengthen their work. Improvements to the teaching of phonics, for example, have meant that the proportions of pupils set to meet the expected standard at the end of Year 1 are significantly higher this year.
- Leaders rightly identify that pupils' achievement in writing by the end of key stage 1 is not as strong as that in reading. Work scrutiny shows that punctuation and grammar are accurate and careful presentation of work is supported by regular handwriting practice. In Year 2, pupils begin to incorporate more adventurous vocabulary choices in their writing and write for a range of purposes. However, some Year 1 work does not build quickly enough on the start they make in the early years by helping pupils use the sounds they know accurately in their writing.
- Children leave both the early years and key stage 1 with above-average attainment in reading. Pupils who read to me were keen to share their love of books. They talked about reading regularly both at home and at school, and samples of home reading records confirmed this. Some parents provided feedback to a recent governor survey to say that books can be too easy for some pupils. Scrutiny of teachers' records shows that some pupils do not move on to more complex texts as quickly as they should, given their starting points, particularly the most able pupils.
- The very small number of pupils with special educational needs and those who are disadvantaged receive effective support. Leaders have a clear grasp of pupils' individual needs and evaluate the difference additional support makes to pupils' progress.
- Pupils were animated when discussing the wide range of opportunities they have to learn from the visits they make and visitors that come into school. They recently enjoyed a visit from the Rabbi, who set up a synagogue experience for them in school. They looked at special objects and clothing that play an important part during worship and experienced making a Seder plate to gain a great understanding of the traditional Passover meal.
- Curriculum leaders consider carefully the range of opportunities provided to develop pupils' knowledge of both local and more distant communities. 'Language of the half term' has been a popular initiative this year with pupils, who enjoy celebrating the widening range of languages spoken by pupils in the school community. A recent themed week saw pupils investigating language, dance, art and musical traditions from a range of countries across continents including Hawaii, Russia, Sri Lanka and Egypt.
- Values are threaded through the curriculum and other areas of school life. All pupils spoken to, without exception, understood the core values and could explain how they endeavour to 'do the right thing' in their work and play. Pupils said they enjoy taking on additional responsibilities such as being part of 'Goldie's Army' during playtime. They appreciate the rewards they receive and share them with pride.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching in key stage 1 builds rapidly on the good start children make in the early years so that pupils use complex sounds accurately when writing and the most able readers experience demanding texts which challenge their reading abilities
- evaluations of school effectiveness, linked to precise impact measures and current performance information for pupils in the school, are shared regularly so that governors can hold leaders to account even more effectively.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Wokingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Abbie Wilkinson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, other leaders, pupils and five governors. I also met with a representative of the local authority. We visited classes in the early years and key stage 1 together. I met with other leaders to review samples of pupils' work in writing and to sample pupils' reading records. I also heard Year 1 pupils read. I took account of 13 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 31 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, I considered a further 29 written comments from parents. I spoke with a group of pupils from across the school. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' checks on pupils' current performance, the school improvement plan and safeguarding policies and procedures. I reviewed leaders' records of behaviour and their response to incidents. I discussed your own evaluation of the school's performance with you.