

Oakwood Primary Academy

Magnolia Drive, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN22 0SS

Inspection dates	12–13 July 2016
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 head of school and executive headteacher provide determined and focused leadership. As a result, the school has significantly improved since its last inspection and now provides a good standard of education for its pupils.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan activities that interest and engage pupils and promote an enthusiasm for learning.
- Pupils learn well and make good progress overall from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards of attainment have risen and, in the current Year 6, most pupils are working at or above the expectations for their age.
- Good teaching is now supporting the good progress of all groups of pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour is typically good. They participate well in lessons and are proud of their school. The Oakwood values, such as kindness and aiming high, are embedded throughout the school and pupils are considerate to each other and adults.
- Children make great strides in their learning when they start their education because of the exceptional care and opportunities offered in the early years. They make good progress and build skills across all areas of learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. British values are woven throughout the extended curriculum and pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their lives.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all staff are sufficiently well trained in the use of phonics (the sounds that letters make) to support all pupils in making rapid progress in reading and writing during key stage 1.
- More remains to be done to help some parents to work closely with teachers to enable their child to get the best from all the school has to offer.
- Leaders' systems for tracking pupil progress are not yet refined enough to enable governors to challenge improvements in the provision for different groups of pupils.
- Attendance, although improving, is still below average and there are still differences between the attendance of some groups and their peers.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders should continue to improve the quality of teaching towards outstanding so that standards continue to rise, by:
 - ensuring that all teaching and learning consistently matches the best in the school
 - improving tracking systems to enable governors and senior leaders to offer more robust challenge and support to teachers and middle leaders
 - addressing the needs of all pupils more effectively in order to improve engagement and eliminate any off-task behaviour.
 - improving the transition from Reception Year into Year 1
 - raising the standard of the teaching of phonics in key stage 1 to match the good practice that exists in Reception Year.

- Promote outstanding progress for all groups of pupils by supporting all parents to work with the school to ensure that their child attends reliably and learns well.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The caring and approachable head of school knows the pupils well and is passionate about wanting the very best outcomes for all of them. A warm and welcoming culture with a shared drive for continual improvement is evident from the top down. Leaders, teachers and pupils are proud to be a part of Oakwood's success. Pupils value the recent improvements made to the school buildings and appreciate how behaviour has improved.
- Senior leaders know their school very well. Their self-evaluation of every area of its work is accurate and this has driven good development planning around entirely appropriate priorities. Their evaluation of the quality of teaching is perceptive, accurate and keenly diagnostic. The head of school has implemented systems which clearly link staff professional development and performance management to the school's development plan. Consequently, all staff feel involved in whole-school improvement and staff morale is high.
- The academy trust provides effective training to leaders at all levels, including middle leaders who are responsible for phases and subjects, which has helped senior leaders improve the quality of teaching. Monitoring and review visits from the academy trust take place, which usefully affirm the quality and impact of this improvement work.
- Middle leaders are an enthusiastic and cohesive team. They use a wide range of strategies to collect a range of useful information on the quality of pupils' learning. This includes frequent short visits to lessons and longer lesson observations, and they play a part in the more detailed scrutinies of pupils' work. Subject coordinators use the information obtained to model and share good ideas, which have rapidly and effectively driven improvements to pupil outcomes.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well led. The handover between the current deputy headteacher, who is retiring, to the new special educational needs coordinator has been well planned. They both have good knowledge of these pupils and their needs. Together they have used findings from monitoring to improve provision and teaching and, consequently, pupils' outcomes.
- The needs of pupils entitled to support through pupil premium funding are well met because leaders are ambitious for them to achieve highly. The additional funding is allocated effectively to ensure that the academic, social and emotional needs of these pupils are provided for. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make strong progress and are working at broadly similar levels to other pupils in the school.
- The range of subjects offered to pupils is broad. A very well-planned, creative and engaging curriculum provides pupils with a purpose for learning within meaningful contexts. Regular exposure to challenging questions, coupled with rich learning experiences, are provided in order to promote deep thinking and the application of pupils' literacy skills across different subject areas. For example, in the Year 5/6 classroom a large display posed the question, 'How do changes in society affect individuals?' and pupils had been considering various cultural, technological and economic changes during the 20th century and their impacts.
- Creativity and enterprise is encouraged by challenging each class to engage in fundraising to increase their attendance award money in order to raise significant funds for local charities. One Year 3 class spoke with pride about their plans to raise funds to support a local hospice.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is woven throughout the curriculum. Teachers and teaching assistants skilfully promote spiritual and social development in their questioning and encouragement of a reflective approach. Singing makes a good contribution towards children's social and cultural development, as could be seen in a key stage 1 assembly where children were clearly engaged in singing in French. A range of extra-curricular sporting and cookery clubs, together with school visits and trips, enrich and extend these opportunities.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of British values. They understand and value the class and school rules, consider the consequences of their own behaviour and enjoy taking on responsibilities such as student leaders, school councillors and play leaders, which provide opportunities to learn about democracy and the rule of law.
- Sports funding is used appropriately and has impacted on pupils' engagement and participation. The school employs a qualified sports coach to work with the children and promote teamwork, collaboration, fitness and skills in a wide range of sports. The children that inspectors spoke to enthused about sports, with football and 'Climb and Jump Club' being particularly popular.
- Leaders have developed an inclusive environment where equality of opportunity, ambition and

compassion are at the heart of the school's values. School leaders have invested significantly in the development of the 'Treehouse' nurture area where experienced staff skilfully support vulnerable pupils and equip them with the necessary skills and self-confidence to flourish both in school and in preparation for the next steps of their education.

- The school works well in partnership with other schools in the academy trust, and trustees support collaboration so that the schools are working together on validating and checking each other's work. Leaders also work well with local services to support those few pupils who need additional support and help to attend.
- There are good systems in place to ensure that the school is a well-ordered and safe place where everyone knows what they should be doing and why. This is because school policies are effectively and consistently implemented.
- Leaders have worked hard to implement a new system this year for tracking pupils' progress to meet new requirements. Individual pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is checked regularly and if they are not doing as well as expected they are provided with additional support to help them make better progress.
- Leaders have not made provision in their new tracking system to account for the higher than average numbers of pupils who enter or leave the school during the year. This means that it is not yet accurate enough to analyse any trends in the rates of progress made by different groups of pupils.
- The school offers a welcoming and friendly place for parents and visitors. However, a significant number of parents commented directly to inspectors and through Parent View that communications are not as good as they could be and some expressed concerns related to behaviour and bullying. Responding to these concerns, inspectors scrutinised records, observed behaviour and conduct around the school and interviewed pupils both formally and informally. Inspectors judge that behaviour has improved significantly over the past two years. Bullying is now rare and pupils told inspectors that when it does occur they trust the head of school to act decisively and quickly to resolve any issues. Senior leaders are aware that there are some parents who are not happy with their dealings with the school. Leaders acknowledge that they could do more to reach out to these parents and involve them more closely in the school's work.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governors and trustees discharge their statutory duties well. They share the leaders' vision for the future of the school and make a strong contribution towards strategic leadership. The layers of accountability within governance are robust.
 - Governors know the school well and have an accurate view on the quality of teaching and its impact on pupil progress. They ensure the fair and consistent application of policies and that only the best teaching is rewarded with pay increases.
 - Governors have successfully challenged leaders to raise the quality of teaching and learning and hold them to account for further improvements. However, the lack of accuracy in the school's progress tracking means that governors are not yet supplied with sufficient detail to be able to challenge leaders and teachers to ensure that all groups make rapid progress.
 - The chief executive officer of the Aurora Academies Trust has used his experience and expertise in education to challenge and support the school. He works in partnership with school leaders to drive school improvement. This adds to the capacity of the school to develop further.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There are good systems in place to secure the well-being and safety of pupils. All staff and governors receive regular high-quality training and are able to carry out the school's policy and procedures well, ensuring a culture of vigilance. Leaders work hard to engage wider expertise to help pupils in need of additional support, and accurate records of liaisons with outside agencies are kept. Staff and pupils agree that the school offers a safe, secure and inclusive environment.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers share the head of school's commitment to helping all pupils achieve their very best. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and are now good. Very high-quality displays of pupils' work in every classroom and throughout the school celebrate success and promote a culture of high aspiration.
- Teachers know pupils' strengths and weaknesses well and have high expectations for progress over time. Staff use their strong subject knowledge to good effect to design and deliver engaging lessons. Access to accurate and detailed information about pupils' achievement enables teachers to provide very effective

additional support and challenge within and outside lessons to all groups of pupils.

- Pupils receive regular verbal and written feedback on their work that gives them helpful advice on how to improve. Inspectors saw many examples where pupils responded to this advice well to integrate teachers' suggestions into their own drafting and redrafting in order to improve their written work.
- Teachers' planning is effective and teachers and other adults work well together to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teaching assistants skilfully support pupils to solve problems by breaking down complex tasks into a series of smaller steps and encouraging them to persevere to find a solution. As a result, pupils gain confidence and their learning has improved.
- The most able pupils usually receive work that has been adapted to meet their particular needs. They are always encouraged to deepen their understanding, often comparing different styles and frequently synthesising different ideas from different subjects into their own very high-quality explanations. Year 6 pupils were being challenged to apply their literacy skills to produce exceptionally high-level extended writing, for example instructional texts on how to make a gargoyle, descriptive and explanatory writing linked to the Renaissance inventions and persuasive recruitment adverts seeking applicants to work in the cotton mills.
- Mathematics is taught with a good emphasis on developing fluency and encouraging pupils to spot relationships and patterns. This has helped to raise current pupils' achievement. Pupils take a pride in their work and their books clearly evidence the progress that they make. Leaders are aware that occasionally the teaching of problem-solving is not as effective and they have already developed plans to address this.
- Reading is taught well in early years and in key stage 2 because teachers skilfully encourage pupils to try out different approaches. For example, in Year 3 the teacher used high-level questioning and the effective modelling of reading skills to support pupils to gain confidence in promoting emphasis in their reading.
- The teaching of phonics in key stage 1 is less effective than it is in early years. This compromises the impact of teaching on the reading skills of younger pupils and on older pupils who still struggle with reading.
- Teaching of writing has improved and this is impacting strongly on pupils' writing skills. Pupils' work clearly demonstrates the improvements that they make in handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar and they take pride in their work. In some classes, more opportunity to develop writing skills across the curriculum would help to embed these skills and extend pupils' understanding.
- A very small minority of pupils, usually boys, occasionally waste time in some lessons. This usually involves chatting or being slow to settle into new activities. Teachers and teaching assistants respond well by using agreed and effective responses, which move these pupils on with their work quickly and minimise any disruption to their peers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good
- Oakwood Primary Academy cares a great deal about pupils' achievement and personal development and so working relationships between staff and pupils are very strong. Pupils told inspectors that they particularly value the support that staff willingly provide. As one Year 5 pupil commented, 'I love how if you are upset there is always someone to talk to and they will make you feel better'.
- Pupils are safe and secure in the school and they feel content here. The 'Treehouse' nurture centre offers a relaxed setting providing effective help and support to vulnerable pupils, which enables them to develop emotional resilience and improved social skills. An overwhelming majority of pupils affirmed that they feel happy and well looked after at school. Their faith in Oakwood is well founded; this is a very caring community.
- Pupils value the opportunities that they have to learn about keeping themselves safe, in and around the school, as well as online. Learning about e-safety is given an appropriately high priority.
- All year groups are represented on the school council and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for looking after each other in other ways, such as by becoming student leaders who support school events or play leaders that support younger pupils in the playground.
- Pupils have a clear understanding about the importance of staying healthy through regular exercise and eating healthily. Pupils of all ages were observed eating fruit and vegetables at breaktimes and they spoke positively to inspectors about their enjoyment of sport and physical education.

- The Oakwood values are understood by staff and pupils and they underpin a safe and trusting learning culture within the school. The vast majority of pupils have good attitudes towards learning and approach their lessons with enthusiasm. They engage well in lessons and confidently participate in discussions to share ideas and answer questions.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils know and understand the behaviour system and are very clear about what is expected. They are respectful to each other, staff and visitors and enjoy the pleasant and secure environment the school offers.
- Some parents expressed concerns about the impact of some pupils' behaviour upon learning and safety. However, pupils' behaviour is typically good when they are learning together in the classroom and when they are playing together at breaktime. Pupils have a sensible and caring attitude towards the very few pupils who find it more difficult to manage their own behaviour. They recall that initiatives like the 'Treehouse' nurture centre and individual needs assistants, 'have made things much better because pupils with issues get help.'
- Incidents of bullying and use of derogatory language are rare. Pupils of all ages are very confident that any concerns can be shared with adults in the school, who then make appropriate responses. Leaders tackle issues so that pupils are able to learn about what is right and wrong. Pupils are helped to think about and learn about important virtues, such as understanding, respect and tolerance.
- In most lessons, pupils show an enthusiasm for their learning and engage well in the tasks they are given. In a very small minority of lessons, behaviour is less impressive. In these lessons, not all pupils receive the challenge they need to maintain their interest or keep them fully engaged in their work. Where this happens, it tends to be a small number of the boys who can disrupt learning with chatter or off-task behaviour.
- Exclusions for poor behaviour are falling. In the past, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have had higher exclusion rates than their peers. School leaders have implemented better systems to support these groups of pupils, and behaviour and attitudes have improved. There were three permanent exclusions this year. However, leaders tirelessly sought to support these pupils, exhausting all available routes designed to meet their needs in school before resorting to permanent exclusion as the last available option.
- Attendance has risen and is now in line with the national average. Disadvantaged pupils, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, have contributed disproportionately to absence levels in the past, but there are good indications that this is being addressed, although gaps do remain.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils make good progress in their academic and wider development, enabling them to be well equipped with the skills needed to flourish at secondary school and in the world.
- Pupils achieve well in reading and mathematics. In 2016, attainment improved in both subjects at the end of key stage 1. This year, by the end of key stage 2, pupils have made strong progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportions reaching and exceeding the expected standard for their age in reading and writing were above, or in line with, the national figure and mathematics was only slightly below the national figure. This is was a notable improvement from 2015, particularly in reading and writing, where standards had previously been low. As a result of improved teaching, pupils currently in the school typically achieve well in all three areas.
- Teaching of phonics is effective in Reception Year but less so during key stage 1. In 2016, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening test in Year 1 fell well below the national average. Additionally, in 2016 very few pupils who retook the test in Year 2 reached the standard. However, inspectors identified that pupils' work in their books represents a higher level of achievement over time than these test results indicate.
- Disadvantaged pupils typically make the same or better progress than their peers in reading and mathematics. Additional funding is used effectively to provide specific targeted help and to enable pupils to participate fully in school life.
- Pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities make strong progress. Extra support sessions help those who need them to develop their reading, mathematical and social skills. School information shows that these pupils make at least reasonable progress and many progress extremely well.
- The most able pupils achieve well. As these pupils progress through the school they are taught to use an

increasingly wide variety of grammatical devices to communicate effectively in different subject areas, and they develop sophisticated writing skills. Frequent opportunities for them to develop their mathematical reasoning help them deepen their understanding in mathematics. However, they would benefit from more opportunities to engage in mathematical problem-solving and from being more consistently challenged to the degree necessary to make outstanding progress.

- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress.

Early years provision

is good

- Children get off to a flying start in Nursery and Reception. They make good progress, many from low starting points, and leave well prepared for Year 1.
- The proportion of children that reached a good level of development in the early years foundation stage profile exceeded the national figure in 2015 and it has done so again this year.
- Leadership is strong and regular training is provided for all staff. Leaders have a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the 'Foundation Village' early years provision. They have high aspirations and are determined that all children should make good or better progress. They are clearly focused on providing high-quality teaching and rich learning experiences for children. They have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are sound. Other schools have visited Oakwood to learn from their good practice.
- Children benefit from a bright and stimulating environment which offers a wealth of easily accessible, interesting activities that promote child-centred learning. In the indoor environment, a wide range of writing materials encourage children to practise writing skills, and children concentrate as they choose from a plentiful selection of books in the attractive reading area. The well-resourced outdoor area encourages investigation and exploration but offers fewer opportunities for children to independently access mathematical or literacy-based learning.
- Teaching in the early years foundation stage is very good, with adults using clear questioning to ensure that all children are challenged. Children in Reception Year have mastered sounds and are using them to blend together to make words which they link to form sentences. They make a good start in learning to read because the teaching of phonics is effective. Leaders are aware that improved liaison with key stage 1 teachers is needed to improve the teaching of phonics and ensure that pupils continue to make progress at the same rate during Years 1 and 2.
- Well-structured teaching sessions and child-initiated learning support good progress. Staff discussions with children help them develop their communication skills and extend their learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work well as a team to assess children's progress and then identify and plan suitable next steps.
- Children have well-developed social skills for their age and interact quietly and collaborate sensibly. During the inspection, children were seen confidently working collaboratively and independently on tasks, including small world role play, drawing, and mathematics number and pattern matching.
- The needs of disadvantaged children and children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are carefully considered and catered for. Staff know the children really well and meet their needs and liaise well with parents. This highly individualised focus, coupled with effective teaching, ensures that these pupils make strong progress from typically low starting points.
- Communication with parents is effective. Parents contribute well to assessment of their children's progress and celebration of achievement. They are positive about the provision.

School details

Unique reference number	138391
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10012325

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	428
Appropriate authority	The local advisory board
Chair	Brian Hampson
Headteacher	John Greenwood (executive headteacher) Jane Foyle (head of school)
Telephone number	01323 501521
Website	www.oakwoodprimaryacademy.mosaicaeducation.com
Email address	opaoffice@auroraacademies.org
Date of previous inspection	April 2014

Information about this school

- Oakwood Primary Academy is a larger than average-sized primary school located in a residential area of Eastbourne. The academy opened in September 2012 and is sponsored by, and is part of, the Aurora Academies Trust, which operates four academies in East Sussex.
- Oakwood Nursery offers childcare and Nursery provision from the age of six months old on the same site. The Nursery shares buildings known as the 'Foundation Village' with the school.
- Nearly half of all pupils are disadvantaged and eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or children looked after). This is almost double the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is slightly above average. Approximately one sixth of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is slightly above average.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils join or leave the school during the school year.
- Governance of the school is organised into two parts. At a local level, the local advisory board acts as a critical friend to school leaders and undertakes a strategic role in challenging and supporting school leaders. At a higher level, the Aurora Academies Trust oversees educational policy and the management of financial and human resources. The Trustees hold school leaders to account and may also sit on the local advisory board.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils in 22 lessons in order to gather evidence to contribute to inspectors' evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment. Many of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed pupils in assembly.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and looked at the work in pupils' books across a range of subjects. They spoke to pupils on the playground and during lessons. They met with two groups of pupils more formally to gather their views.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about reading and heard some of them read.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, a range of middle leaders including those responsible for subjects and government funding, staff members with a range of responsibilities, the chief executive of the Aurora Academies Trust and two governors.
- An inspector spoke to a number of parents at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors also considered the views expressed in 51 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, which included 16 written comments.
- Responses to the staff questionnaire and feedback from a survey of pupils were also taken into account.
- A range of school documentation was scrutinised, including that relating to policies, strategic planning documents, safety, self-evaluation documents, pupil achievement and behaviour and attendance information.
- Inspectors reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children.

Inspection team

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