

Oaklands School

Weedwood Road, Walderslade, Chatham, Kent ME5 0QS

Inspection dates

6–7 February 2018

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 headteacher and his senior team have established clear systems across the school. These are understood by staff and pupils and have provided the consistency of expectation which has driven successful school improvement.
- Governors are now highly effective partners in this improvement process. They ask the right questions to provide support and challenge to leaders.
- Phase and subject leaders have secured improvements across their teaching teams and subject areas. Regular monitoring and review ensure that their actions have been effective.
- The reviewed curriculum provides meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop historical, technical and scientific skills. Leaders acknowledge that some other areas of the curriculum are not as well developed.
- Most teachers plan lessons which engage pupils and are well matched to their needs. In the few remaining classes where teaching is not as effective, this is because expectations, particularly of the most able pupils, are not consistently high enough.
- In 2017, the percentages of pupils attaining both expected and higher levels at the end of key stage 2 national assessments in reading, writing and mathematics were above those seen nationally. This represented strong progress from their starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils across the school make good progress from their starting points. Similarly, pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are making better progress than in the past. However, they do not make the same good progress as their peers.
- Most pupils behave well. They are kind and caring. They support each other well in both their play and their learning. On the few occasions when pupils display challenging behaviour, they are supported effectively by a wide range of highly skilled staff.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. The stimulating learning environments support their play and exploration well. Children make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and number. In this way, they are prepared well for Year 1.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise expectations, particularly for the most able pupils, in the few remaining classes where teaching is not consistently strong enough to secure good rates of progress.
- Ensure that the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities continues to rise to at least match that of other pupils.
- Further develop the curriculum to ensure breadth and depth across all subject areas and include opportunities to deepen pupils' cultural understanding.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and his senior team have a clear and ambitious vision for the school. The steps towards achieving this vision have been sequentially mapped out in tightly focused plans. Systems have been reviewed and developed so that everyone has a shared understanding of how things are done at Oaklands. This clarity and shared understanding have helped everyone to pull in the same direction so that the school has gone from strength to strength.
- Senior leaders are individually highly skilled and work effectively as a team so that staff have the support, challenge and training that help them to improve. Phase leaders model and share good practice with their colleagues. In this way, there is a culture of continuing professional development across the school. Everyone is committed to further developing their skills to best support the pupils.
- Subject leaders in English, mathematics and science have led the effective development of their subjects across the school. They monitor the teaching and learning in their subjects carefully through looking at pupils' work and observing teaching. As a result, standards in these areas have risen.
- The additional funding received by the school as sports premium and the pupil premium grant is carefully spent and effective in supporting the needs of pupils. The pupil premium mentors keep a watchful eye on the progress and attendance of disadvantaged pupils. They support them effectively in all aspects of school life. In this way, they are well supported and make good progress from their starting points.
- Since taking up her post a year ago, the assistant headteacher for inclusion has reviewed and developed the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. This has ensured that pupils' needs are more accurately identified and that support for pupils is more effective. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making increased progress from their starting points. Some further refinements are needed to ensure that adult support is consistently well focused and that rates of progress continue to rise to be in line with those of other pupils.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced in most subject areas. Skills and knowledge are developed well in science. Pupils learn about key scientific concepts, and scientific skills such as investigation and classification are developed well. Technical and scientific vocabulary is evident in pupils' work, and this further develops their writing. Pupils can interrogate a range of historical sources and create chronologies. This is well linked into writing, for example by using chronology to support the writing of a biography. However, leaders acknowledge that some curriculum areas, such as geography, art and music, are less well developed.
- Leaders ensure that pupils develop spiritually, morally and socially through a wide range of opportunities to contribute to the wider life of the school. Assemblies promote reflection on attributes such as self-confidence. Pupils' cultural development is less prominent, although some knowledge of a range of faiths is evident in pupils' books. Leaders have identified the potential to deepen cultural understanding alongside the curriculum areas which they have identified as in need of development.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. The chair of governors has supported colleagues well in developing the range of skills they need to hold leaders to account. Following a skills audit, additional team members have been recruited to fill gaps in specific areas such as finance. As a result of these actions, the governing body is now an effective and integral part of school improvement. Sources of information used to evaluate school performance are wide and well understood. These are checked through appropriately focused school visits.
- Governors have completed all the necessary training to help them ensure that pupils are kept safe. They fulfil their responsibilities effectively in respect of school policies and finance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a culture of vigilance, care and support throughout the school. Staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding. They are aware of what to do if they have concerns about pupils. Any concerns they raise are considered carefully by school leaders. Actions to keep pupils safe and provide families with the support they need are appropriate. Any further referrals are well supported by meticulous record-keeping.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors feel safe at school. Regular opportunities to learn about road safety, internet safety and anti-bullying help pupils to develop the knowledge and skills they need to keep themselves safe both in school and in the wider world. Most parents and carers who spoke to inspectors and most of those who completed the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, agreed that their children are safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers use questions well to assess pupils' understanding or to encourage pupils to extend their thinking. Many questions start with the phrases 'How do you know...?' or 'Why do you think...?' As a result, pupils can confidently explain their reasoning and thinking.
- Pupils enjoy their learning. This is especially the case when teaching helps abstract concepts to be made more meaningful to them. For example, in a science lesson, fruit and vegetables were used to help pupils understand the comparative sizes of the planets – Jupiter was a lettuce, Earth a tomato and Mercury a blueberry.
- Effective learning is underpinned by good relationships, both between pupils and between pupils and adults. Pupils are keen to answer questions and explain their thinking. These thoughts are positively received by teachers and used effectively to identify misconceptions or build on learning.

- High expectations of writing are evident across the curriculum. This ensures that pupils' skills and vocabulary are being consolidated and extended, for example, by using technical vocabulary such as 'variables' and 'hypothesis'. As a result, pupils' writing demonstrates proficient skills and an awareness of purpose.
- The effectiveness of teaching assistants across the school is variable. The pupil premium mentors are having a positive impact on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. In most classes, skilled teaching assistants provide effective support, for example supporting pupils to use manipulatives to understand mathematics problems. However, in some cases, including in some of the support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, additional adults do not redirect pupils to learning or stretch their thinking sufficiently.
- Most teachers plan lessons which are well matched to pupils' abilities and build effectively on what pupils already know. This supports good progress and the development of age-appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding across most areas of the curriculum. In a few classrooms, teaching is not as consistently well matched. When this happens, expectations are too low, particularly for the most able pupils who are not provided with the challenge they need. Consequently, there are a few classes in which pupils' progress does not match the strong progress seen across much of the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are confident in their own skills as learners. They work well together to edit and improve their work. As a result, they develop skills as independent and self-motivated learners that prepare them well for the next stages in their education.
- Pupils enjoy good relationships with each other and the many adults who support them. This promotes emotional well-being and enjoyment. Pupils have a go at challenging tasks or new experiences, confident that they will be supported and encouraged by others. Pupils who spoke to inspectors are happy at school. Comments such as 'School makes you feel comfortable and confident' are typical of those received.
- Pupils told inspectors that they have trusted adults they can speak to if they have worries or concerns. They told inspectors, 'Adults ask us how we feel.' Pupils have confidence in the adults to keep them safe around school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In most lessons and around the school, pupils behave well. They demonstrate high levels of kindness and consideration for each other and listen well to adults. Where pupils have particular behaviour support needs, these are

met well in classrooms by highly skilled staff. This ensures that any disruption is well managed and kept to a minimum.

- There is a clear and consistent rewards and sanctions system. This supports pupils well in understanding and developing appropriate behaviour.
- Pupils told inspectors that on the playground, 'Ninety percent of us behave, but some pupils need to work on it.' However, during the inspection, pupils were observed to be playing appropriately. They enjoyed a range of games and were well supported by adults.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that bullying is rare, and that when it does occur 'teachers sort it out'. School staff record and monitor the few incidents meticulously, and effective action is taken to support pupils.
- Most pupils attend school regularly. Attendance has risen to be in line with national average percentages. Effective support from the pupil premium mentors has helped more disadvantaged pupils to attend school regularly. Despite this support, there are still a few disadvantaged pupils whose attendance at school is not yet good enough.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In the 2016 end-of-key-stage 2 national assessments, the percentages of pupils attaining both the age-related and higher levels were above national proportions in writing and mathematics. In 2017, this attainment strengthened further so that percentages of pupils attaining both age-related and higher standards were above national proportions in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents rapid progress from pupils' starting points.
- In the 2017 end-of-key-stage 1 national assessments, the percentages of pupils attaining the age-related standards in reading, writing and mathematics were in line with national proportions.
- Because pupils leave each key stage with increasingly high skill levels in reading, writing and mathematics, they are well prepared for the next stages of their education.
- These high levels of attainment and progress were seen during the inspection in current pupils' workbooks across most of the school. In the few instances where progress was not as rapid, this was linked to teaching which does not consistently challenge pupils, especially the most able pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points across the curriculum. The additional pupil premium funding is well used to support their needs. Their progress is tracked and reviewed carefully in regular meetings.
- Pupils read widely and often. Pupils who read to inspectors demonstrated fluency and comprehension skills appropriate for their age, and often beyond. Pupils are excited and inspired by the school library, which is well stocked with attractively presented texts.
- Pupils attain well and make good progress from their starting points in mathematics. A consistent focus on developing early number skills and times tables has provided pupils

with firm numeric foundations. These are effectively built on so that pupils' workbooks show pupils' ability to apply mathematical reasoning and check their work using, for example, inverse operations.

- Pupils attain well in the national phonics screening check in Year 1. A higher percentage of pupils attained the standard than national proportions over the last three years. Current pupils are making good progress in their acquisition of letter sounds and blends.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making increasingly good progress from their starting points. However, they do not make as much progress as other pupils.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They make good progress from starting points which are often below those seen typically for their age in reading, writing and number. Generally, this results in higher percentages of children reaching a higher level of development than seen nationally. There was a slight variation in this in 2017 when percentages dipped slightly below national proportions. However, currently, children are making the good progress more typically seen.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are making good progress from their starting points. Skilled staff focus on their development to ensure that their needs are met well. Additional provision, such as speech and language support, is effective in addressing specific needs and building children's confidence.
- The learning environment and focused teaching sessions develop children's skills in early number and writing effectively. During the inspection, children in the Nursery were using the rhyme 'five currant buns in a baker's shop' to explore and develop their understanding of number in a fun and meaningful way. In another effective activity led by a teaching assistant, children developed both motor and number skills using tweezers to move and count pom-poms.
- The teaching of phonics is regular, systematic and effective. This supports children well in both their reading and writing.
- Opportunities to write are plentiful, both inside and out. Children form letters well and are keen to write sentences including basic punctuation. They are well supported in this by adults who model writing and encourage them to use their phonic knowledge to link sounds and letters.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors have noticed the good progress their children make in these early skills. A parent told inspectors, 'I am amazed. When she comes home, she already wants to read and write.'
- Children play well together. During the inspection, a group of children in Reception worked well together to build a structure using wooden bricks and pipes, which they then used to form a track for their cars. They are keen to help each other and the adults, even at packing-away time!
- The early years leader ensures that planning across the early years is well sequenced and responds to children's interests. All the necessary training and safeguarding

requirements are in place.

- Leaders acknowledge that including parents' observations and input into their children's learning journals is not yet well developed. They are exploring a range of ways of supporting this.

School details

Unique reference number	118437
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10040940

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	451
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Veen Rama
Headteacher	Barry Symons
Telephone number	01634 333820
Website	www.oaklands.medway.sch.uk
Email address	office@oaklands.medway.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26– 27 January 2016

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- A much higher proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium than seen nationally.
- A greater proportion of pupils than seen nationally have SEN support, although until recently no pupils had an education, health and care plan.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The school has two classes in each year group, and a Nursery, which has morning sessions for older children and afternoon sessions for younger ones. Year 6 is grouped into three classes.
- The headteacher joined the school in April 2015. The chair of governors joined in November 2016.

- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with staff, parents and leaders. The lead inspector met with governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation including development plans, minutes of meetings and progress information.
- Inspectors observed pupils around the school and in their classes. In the classes, they observed teaching, looked at books and spoke to pupils about their work.
- Inspectors met with pupils to obtain their views of the school and heard pupils read. They took account of parents' views at the school gate and considered 35 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, including 51 free-text responses.
- Inspectors also considered the school's own parental survey information and staff survey.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Liz McIntosh	Ofsted Inspector
Rosemary Keen	Ofsted Inspector

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