

The Oaks Primary School

Aster Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP2 0NR

Inspection dates

19–20 September 2018

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- High-quality leadership at all levels ensures that pupils receive an exceptional standard of education.
- The headteachers are determined and focused; they ensure that pupils get the best possible opportunities. Consequently, the school continues to improve.
- Teaching is consistently very effective. Teachers plan and deliver learning that develops, motivates and challenges pupils. Teachers are very well supported by the team of capable learning support assistants.
- Pupils make significant progress throughout the school. By the time they reach the end of Year 6, their progress in reading, writing and mathematics is well above average.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are very well supported. The additional funding is used very effectively to ensure that pupils make strong progress.
- The trust is highly effective. Leaders value the wide range of support and training, the leadership of the chief executive officer (CEO) and the challenge provided by trustees.
- They early years provision is outstanding. From the moment children join the school their needs are accurately identified; they make strong progress in a caring, well-organised and highly aspirational environment.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the school's curriculum is a key strength. They recognise the need to ensure that the leadership of all subjects is equally strong.
- Pupils are immersed in a broad, balanced and very effective range of curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary; they are polite, well mannered and friendly. Pupils enjoy learning and are very proud of their achievements.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are well looked after and kept safe. Pupils are very happy to attend the school.
- Parents hold the school in very high regard. Staff are proud to work at the school and are grateful for the opportunities that are open to them. Consequently, staff morale is high.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management, by:
 - continuing to provide high-quality support and challenge to middle leaders so all pupils continue to improve their rates of progress across all curriculum areas.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteachers have established a culture of ambition and high expectation for pupils. They want their pupils to 'have the best of everything'. Leaders are wholly focused on removing barriers to learning. They are committed to ensuring that all pupils leave The Oaks equipped with the skills, knowledge and aspiration needed to be successful in later life. Governors, teachers and other adults share this vision and they work tirelessly to implement it in a consistent manner. As a result, the quality of education that pupils receive is outstanding.
- Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One parent wrote: 'The staff all work incredibly hard to make sure the children are happy and making progress. The children are always encouraged to challenge themselves and take control of their learning and my children have thrived in the environment created at the school. I'm very proud to say they attend The Oaks Primary School.' A parent at the school gates described the teachers as 'amazing'.
- Leaders know their school very well. They are very accurate both in their assessment of the school's strengths and in the identification of areas for development. Improvement plans include demanding targets and they are effective in balancing the specific needs of the school alongside trust-wide priorities. Strengths are acknowledged, but they are seen as something to be built upon, not simply celebrated.
- Leaders are accurate in their evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching, learning and assessment. They use this evaluation to ensure that staff receive high-quality training that develops their individual areas of need and supports whole-school goals. Staff are grateful for the high-quality professional development they receive; they love working at the school.
- Newly qualified teachers are very well supported. Leaders are highly effective at 'talent spotting' and training future leaders. Consequently, the quality of middle leadership is strong and continues to improve. Leaders are aware that they must continue to check that the quality of leadership in other subjects is as highly effective as the leadership of English and mathematics.
- The school's curriculum is a key strength. Leaders are committed to ensuring that the study of English and mathematics is supplemented by a wide range of subjects that allow pupils to develop a depth of knowledge, understanding and skills. For example, all pupils in Year 5 are provided with their own musical instrument and participate in an end of year 'soirée', while pupils in Year 4 have a 'sparkling start' to their term's project by spending a day with visiting 'cavemen'. One pupil commented, 'We learn amazing things.'
- Pupils are very grateful for the wide-ranging curriculum that they are provided with and they talk proudly of the progress that they make in many subjects, for example using coding to design computer games. One pupil said, 'We do things here that we would never get to do otherwise.' The school curriculum is successfully supplemented by many extra-curricular activities.

- Leaders are very effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are taught to understand and celebrate differences and they undertake regular visits to places of cultural or spiritual importance. Pupils talk passionately about the importance of looking after each other and welcoming new members to the school community. Fundamental British values, such as democracy and the rule of law, are embedded within the school culture. For example, during 'circle group' sessions the whole school community, led by Year 6 pupils, come together every fortnight in small groups to share ideas and discuss ways of improving the school.
- Leaders have a very clear understanding of the barriers to learning that are faced by their disadvantaged pupils, and they effectively hold teachers to account for these pupils' progress. Teachers understand disadvantaged pupils' needs and track their progress closely, providing additional support when needed. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance, behaviour and progress are all significant strengths of the school.
- The SEN and/or disabilities coordinator (SENCo) ensures that the funding that the school receives to support its pupils is well spent. Pupils value their close involvement in the process. Their needs are identified quickly and a wide range of appropriate and thoughtful support is provided, either through teachers and learning support assistants, or links with other professionals. The SENCo provides staff with effective training that supports them to meet pupils' needs and she liaises closely with parents and carers. As a result of leaders' actions, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make rapid progress.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium is used very effectively. The director of PE and school sport provides pupils with high-quality instruction and offers invaluable training to other teachers within the school. Pupils understand how to keep themselves healthy; they enjoy their high-quality PE lessons, the wide range of sporting clubs on offer and the opportunities they have to represent the school successfully in sporting competitions.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well. They celebrate its many strengths and focus closely on its priorities for improvement. Governors receive regular training in relation to their specific roles on the governing body. Through governors' meetings and their visits to the school, governors offer leaders highly effective challenge and support. Governors ensure that their statutory duties, especially in safeguarding pupils' welfare, are fully met.
- The support and challenge the trust provides are very effective. The trust offers a wide range of training for leaders and teachers, for example through middle-leader networks and headteacher 'discussion sessions'. It also supports leaders to evaluate the impact of their actions in areas such as safeguarding. The trust contributes to the development and evaluation of leaders' high-quality improvement plans; it also holds leaders to account through regular and very effective meetings with the CEO. Leaders value the support and expertise that they gain from the trust; they also benefit from the experience of supporting other schools within the trust.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff at all levels receive regular safeguarding training and they know how to identify pupils who are potentially at risk. Staff understand, and follow, leaders' exemplary protocols for the reporting of any safeguarding concerns.
- School leaders ensure that safeguarding concerns are properly recorded and they are tenacious in making sure child-protection referrals are dealt with appropriately. The maintenance of child-protection files is very effective and leaders work well with representatives from other agencies.
- All required checks are carried out when recruiting new staff to work with pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- As a result of leaders' actions, the quality of teaching across early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2 is very high. Every parent who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, agreed that pupils are taught well; pupils who met with inspectors said that they enjoy their lessons and explained how they make strong progress across the curriculum.
- Teachers are very consistent in implementing leaders' classroom expectations. For example, in ensuring that learning activities are sufficiently challenging. This, coupled with pupils' drive, resilience and eagerness to improve their work, ensures that pupils make rapid and sustained progress.
- Accurate assessment ensures that teachers provide pupils with high-quality teaching that is closely matched to their needs. Pupils who do fall behind are identified promptly in regular pupil-progress meetings and they are provided with highly effective additional help to catch up. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress across the school from their different starting points.
- Teachers question individual pupils, and groups of pupils, very skilfully. They provide pupils with specific, helpful guidance about what they need to do to improve their work. Very strong subject knowledge allows teachers to challenge pupils and to provide additional support, where necessary.
- The well-established 'language of learning' allows pupils and teachers to communicate very effectively. Pupils confidently discuss their learning with their teacher, with other pupils or as part of whole-class discussions. Consequently, pupils deepen their understanding through discussion, reflection and debate.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are outstanding. Teachers consistently establish clear routines and have high expectations of pupils. Pupils respect their teachers and have very positive attitudes to learning. As a result, pupils are keen to get involved in activities and they are not afraid to take risks and make mistakes; one pupil commented that they are taught to 'face your mistakes and try again'.
- Learning support assistants provide very effective support to pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They plan closely with teachers and they understand the needs of

the pupils they support. Adults' effective questioning and explanation of tasks support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to make strong progress.

- The highly effective learning environment supports pupils to achieve very well. For example, pupils make effective use of wall displays that are designed to accelerate their progress. 'Book nooks', located throughout the school, encourage pupils to read frequently and fluently.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured and understand what is required to be successful learners; they demonstrate high levels of motivation and resilience. Leaders work hard to raise pupils' aspirations; the impact of this is evident in pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and their involvement in additional clubs and activities.
- Pupils are very well looked after. School staff know them well and consistently follow the school's procedures to keep them safe. Pupils know that there are certain, nominated staff who they can talk to if they have a concern. However, one group of pupils simply stated, 'You can talk to any teacher.'
- 'Circle groups' provide an excellent opportunity for pupils to build their confidence; they allow them to develop relationships with pupils of different ages and with members of the school staff who they may not otherwise encounter.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe in a variety of situations, including when using the internet. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school and that there is very little bullying; when it does happen, pupils say that it is dealt with quickly and effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons is exemplary. Pupils are friendly, polite and well mannered. They follow the instructions of their teachers closely and they have excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils also behave very well at lunch and breaktimes, where they are well supervised. Pupils enjoy socialising or playing sensibly in the very well-resourced outside areas.
- All staff share high expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, excellent behaviour is the norm. Pupils say that they come to school to learn. Incidents of poor behaviour and the use of fixed-period exclusions are rare.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, agreed that pupils are well behaved.
- Attendance has improved and is at the national average. Additionally, rates of persistent absence have decreased significantly. No groups of pupils are disadvantaged by poor attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils typically enter Year 1 with levels of prior attainment that are broadly average. They make rapid and sustained progress over time in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because of the high-quality teaching that they experience and their excellent attitudes to learning.
- In 2017, at the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the expected standard was higher than the attainment of pupils with similar starting points nationally. Provisional 2018 key stage 1 results suggest that this high attainment has been maintained at the expected standard, with a large increase in the proportion of pupils working at greater depth.
- This high level of achievement was sustained by those pupils who reached the end of key stage 2 in 2017. Progress in reading, writing and mathematics was well above average and in the top 10% of all schools nationally. Provisional 2018 key stage 2 results suggest that pupils' progress continues to be very strong.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the required standard in the phonics screening check for Year 1 in both 2017 and 2018 was above national average.
- Pupils across the school continue to make rapid progress. Pupils can confidently explain how their studies fit into a broader sequence of learning and how they are developing a wide range of knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged make excellent progress. Their different needs are quickly identified by staff and they are supported very effectively in their learning.
- Leaders' focus on developing reading skills is evident. Pupils who read to inspectors did so with fluency and expression; they talked passionately about their favourite books and authors.
- Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for education after The Oaks. Leaders' work to provide careers advice to pupils is exceptional. For example, the Year 5 'world of work' day provides pupils with significant understanding of a wide range of career options and the skills required to undertake them. Pupils value this highly. Leaders also organise a variety of transition activities so that that pupils are well prepared, both academically and personally, for their move to secondary school.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leadership of the early years is outstanding. The leader of early years has very high expectations of herself, her staff and the children who attend the provision. Children are very well supported by an experienced and well-trained team. Adults know each child very well, plan to meet their individual needs and work closely with families to support each child's progress.
- Children join the early years with knowledge, understanding and skills that are often well below those that are typical for their age. As a result of highly effective early assessment, leaders ensure that children's individual needs are identified quickly and accurately and that well-planned learning activities support their rapid progress.

- The early years leader, teachers, learning support assistants and nursery nurses use observations to assess precisely how well children are learning and developing. They quickly realise when children need additional support and put this into place very effectively. Therefore, children, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, make outstanding progress from their different starting points.
- Children are very well prepared for the transition to Year 1. A highly effective leadership structure ensures that the early years leader also leads key stage 1. As a result, links between the early years and the key stage 1 curriculum are well embedded and children's transition is managed very carefully. No time is lost as children move out of Reception.
- The quality of teaching in early years is outstanding. High-quality questioning supports children and offers them significant levels of challenge during formal teaching sessions, small group teaching and when they play. Activities are very well planned. Teachers, learning support assistants and nursery nurses receive regular, high-quality professional development. As a result, adults ensure that children constantly develop in a stimulating and varied environment.
- Adults ensure that children behave very well and they are safe. Children collaborate well, they listen attentively and they support each other; the very positive ethos and expectations that are evident throughout the school are clearly established in the early years. The environment is safe and adults are very well trained to care for and protect the children. Safeguarding arrangements are secure.
- Leaders' work with parents is excellent. Parents are welcomed at the start of the day, where they have an opportunity to meet with adults in the provision. The use of web-based assessment system has enabled parents to see the work of their children on a regular basis; this has been very successful, especially in communicating with parents who are less confident to come into school. Leaders' commitment to providing parental workshops is a key strength and successfully helps parents to support their children's progress.

School details

Unique reference number	141842
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10053410

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	432
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Eddie Casey
Headteachers	Jeremy Pentreath and Philip Palmer
Telephone number	01473 684994
Website	www.theoaksprimary.co.uk
Email address	admin@theoaksprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is the school's first inspection since it joined the ASSET Education Multi-Academy Trust in March 2015.
- Seven governors sit on the school's local governing body, two of which are directors of the trust. The CEO also sits on the board of directors but is not a member of the local governing body. There are currently 10 schools within the trust.
- The school is a larger-than-average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive SEN support is well above the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is in line with the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteachers, phase leaders, subject leaders, SENCo, early years leader, other school leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the trust.
- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Inspectors observed learning in 32 lessons, or parts of lessons, some jointly with leaders.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were looked at by inspectors throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in class and around the school at break and lunchtimes to seek their views about the school.
- Inspectors met with three groups of pupils more formally to discuss many aspects of school life.
- Inspectors heard pupils read. Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading habits and looked at their reading records.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents, including assessment information and the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness. Inspectors also scrutinised leaders' improvement plans and their records about behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 33 responses and 17 free-text comments made by parents to the Ofsted online Parent View questionnaire. Inspectors also spoke to some parents before school. Inspectors considered the 56 responses from staff to the Ofsted staff questionnaire and the seven responses from pupils to the Ofsted pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Daniel Gee, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Deborah Leahy	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Morley	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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