

# Oakwood Primary School

117 Tennyson Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU1 3RR

## Inspection dates

12 to 14 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The trustees, governors and leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met. Trustees and governors do not have a secure understanding of their responsibilities within the independent school standards.
- Leaders', including governors', capacity to make and sustain improvements in teaching, learning and assessment have been hampered by staffing changes and challenges to recruitment.
- Leaders' monitoring of the school's work is not sharp enough. This limits leaders' and governors' ability to make precise judgements about the progress pupils make.
- Teachers do not use assessment consistently effectively to plan activities that meet pupils' needs, including the most able and in early years. Consequently, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. This leads to pupils not making consistently good progress.
- Staff training is underdeveloped for leaders, governors and staff. This inhibits adults' ability to be highly effective in their roles.
- Early years outdoor provision does not give children sufficient opportunities to develop and apply their learned skills.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have acted on the areas identified in the previous inspection, most notably in improving the quality of phonics teaching.
- Parents value the school and appreciate the hard work of leaders and staff in taking care of their children.
- Pupils value their education, behave well and appreciate the high-quality support for their emotional well-being.
- Pupils epitomise the values of respect and tolerance. Leaders prioritise this within the curriculum.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - increasing trustee and governor awareness and current knowledge of all legal requirements and the independent school standards
  - ensuring that systems in place to check compliance with requirements, upkeep and maintenance of the school building are well considered, rigorous and implemented
  - increasing the capacity of trustees and governors to challenge and support leaders effectively to bring about further improvements without overly relying on information from the headteacher
  - establishing a well-considered programme of continuing professional development to equip staff with the skills to be highly effective, in leadership, governance and in teaching roles
  - precisely and rigorously monitoring the quality of education provided, the progress that pupils make, and enhancing leaders' understanding of their impact in raising standards.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that:
  - assessment systems are used accurately to ensure that teachers have high expectations of what all pupils are capable of achieving
  - activities are planned carefully to meet the individual needs of pupils, including the most able pupils, so that they make consistently good progress.
- Improve the quality of provision in early years by:
  - ensuring that assessment is used well by all adults to plan activities for children that ensure they make good progress from their starting points
  - considering the use of the outdoor provision for both the Nursery and Reception classes so that children have opportunities to develop and use their learned skills in all areas of learning.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Over the past year, the school has had significant leadership and staff changes, and has faced challenges recruiting leaders and governors. This has reduced leaders' capacity to undertake essential strategic work and has, consequently, limited the school's overall effectiveness.
- During this time, the headteacher and early years manager have been carrying out multiple roles. This has resulted in slippage in the rigour and detail of checks to ensure that all the independent school standards are met, particularly with regards to health and safety standards of the school premises.
- Leaders and governors have not been diligent in undertaking compliancy health and safety checks in the building. For example, fire exit signage did not meet with legal requirements as it did not ensure that all staff and pupils were made explicitly aware of their nearest fire exit. Following inspectors' initial observations, some areas were tended to and rectified during the inspection. However, leaders are not routinely ensuring that all aspects are compliant.
- Information available for parents is not easily accessible. The school website is a long time out of date. This limits opportunities for parents to find out current information about the school. Furthermore, leaders were not able to provide specific information for inspectors following requests for information such as the achievement of pupils. Although a new website is being launched, up-to-date information is not readily available for parents.
- The headteacher and early years manager are not supported well enough by all other leaders. This is because other leaders have not had appropriate training to ensure that they understand their strategic role. They are not clear about how to support senior leaders so that they contribute to school improvement and, subsequently, raise standards.
- Leaders have not ensured that professional development has been utilised sufficiently to support and improve teachers' practice, especially in key stages 1 and 2. While there are performance management processes in place, these do not include appropriately focused training to improve teaching. As a result, leaders are not ensuring that the quality of teaching is improving quickly enough so that it is consistently effective.
- The headteacher has been successful in establishing and sustaining a positive climate for learning and good relationships with the school's local community. Pupils, staff and parents are proud of their school. This was confirmed by the staff who responded to Ofsted's staff questionnaire, and, equally, by staff spoken to during the inspection. One member of staff, representing the views of others, said, 'All staff are proud of their role and of working at Oakwood to do their best for our children.'
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders strive to provide pupils with high-quality personal experiences which will give them the skills required for their future. Pupils enjoy participating in the many varied opportunities being provided. For example, they spoke with enthusiasm about the science activities they were participating in for the school's 'science week' and their excitement about their up and coming residential trip. Furthermore, the leaders' chosen curriculum is enriched by the inclusion of Islamic studies

and Arabic lessons, which provide pupils with skills they apply efficiently in their day-to-day school life.

- Leaders' work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school and sits at the very heart of the school's ethos. Leaders and teachers strongly promote fundamental British values. Pupils learn about democracy and British institutions, for example the work of the Houses of Parliament, and they also learn about a range of faiths. Pupils develop a positive spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding that prepares them well for life in modern British society.
- Leaders promote equality well, including the respect and understanding of all protected characteristics, such as those relating to disability, race, faith and gender identity. For example, during a whole-school assembly, pupils were encouraged to 'smile, keep a good heart and care for all people – Black, White, Christian and all other religions and faiths'.
- The local authority provides effective guidance and support, particularly in relation to safeguarding and early years. Leaders, especially within early years, listen carefully and actively seek to follow advice given, and they regularly review their actions to make sure that they are making a difference.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. They say that their children are happy at school and are extremely well looked after. Parents comment on the community atmosphere that permeates the school and the way in which each child is valued as a unique individual. Typical comments made by parents summarising the views of all include: 'Oakwood is an excellent school with a warm and welcoming atmosphere. [There is a] great sense of community and togetherness. The teachers are very dedicated and caring,' and 'The school does an excellent job at providing a safe, healthy, exciting and stimulating environment for all children to thrive and grow as confident members of a diverse community.'

## **Governance**

- Since the previous inspection, trustees and governors have gone through a period of change and inconsistency in their work. Recruitment of governors has been, and still is, a challenge. This has contributed towards reducing governors' leadership capacity to supporting the school to sustain and further improve it.
- Although trustees and governors are keen to make sure they fulfil their roles effectively, they are too reliant on the headteacher's expertise because they do not have a secure enough knowledge and understanding of the independent school standards. Consequently, this is weakening the rigour and accuracy in checking processes, for example with aspects of health and safety, to ensure that they are compliant with legal requirements.
- There is a lack of clarity in trustees and governors' strategic roles and accountability, and in who holds whom to account for the school's performance. For example, the headteacher is also a trustee and so, in effect, checks his own work. This results in reducing the rigour with which trustees hold senior leaders to account.
- Governors provide effective support and challenge to the safeguarding team to ensure that pupils are well cared for. Although governors carry out appropriate checks so that they know staff are safeguarding pupils, their checks on health and safety, more recently, have not been as thorough. This has resulted in some standards not being met.

- Trustees and governors visit the school regularly and are resolute in their ambition to secure improvements. They are determined to develop their own knowledge and understanding of monitoring and evaluation processes within the school. Both the group of trustees and governors demonstrate the capacity to improve.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The 'safeguarding team', comprising of the designated safeguarding lead and a deputy, has developed a strong safeguarding ethos based on secure systems and processes that are known and understood by all staff and communicated to all visitors, volunteers and members of the community.
- Staff receive regular and effective safeguarding training to ensure that they are kept up to date with the latest advice and guidance. The school's safeguarding team ensures that all staff know how to effectively complete records of concern. Where, if any, there is a doubt about staff understanding, it is swiftly managed and further training is provided to secure and make certain that safeguarding practice is effective.
- Leaders are keen to keep checks on the school's procedures. They recently commissioned the local authority to provide an independent audit of the effectiveness of safeguarding to make sure that it is of a consistently high standard.
- Appropriate checks are made to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. Recruitment processes and the school's checks on all adults before starting their employment meet legal requirements.
- Pupils are happy at the school and say that they feel extremely safe. Additionally, pupils report that they all look after each other and that older pupils look out for younger children to make sure they feel safe.
- Parents say their children are safe at Oakwood because all adults 'look out for the children' and they feel that 'safety, care and welfare are teachers' main priority'.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment across the school are inconsistent in quality. There is some high-quality teaching, learning and assessment in the school. However, not all adults have the same high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Some teachers do not use assessment effectively to plan carefully in order to ensure that activities are well suited to what pupils need to learn to make the progress of which they are capable.
- The school's assessment system is not being used consistently by adults to identify carefully what pupils know, can do, and understand across a range of subjects. Some teachers do not use this information to accurately plan pupils' next steps in learning. Consequently, pupils do not make consistently good progress from their various starting points.
- The weaknesses in assessment and planning are most evident in the outcomes for the most able pupils. Pupils told inspectors that work set in some subjects can be too easy. Pupils shared informative examples where they have repeated work using skills that they had already mastered, for example multiplying three-digit numbers by two digits. As pupils said, 'We have shown teachers we know how to do it.'

- The teaching of writing is improving. There are more opportunities for pupils to write for sustained periods of time and this is helping them to develop their skills. As a result, pupils are starting to use their grammar, punctuation and spelling with increasing accuracy. However, this is not consistent across all classes.
- Additional teaching of English and mathematics in small, before-school, 'morning activity' groups is provided for pupils who want to participate. While this is to help some pupils 'catch up', pupils also join these activities because they want to. This is having a positive impact on enhancing pupils' skills and also demonstrates pupils' eagerness and thirst for learning.
- There have been significant improvements in the teaching of phonics since the previous inspection. Teachers have developed strong subject knowledge and this is ensuring that pupils grasp the basic sounds that letters represent. From a young age, pupils are moved on quickly to learn more complex letter combinations so that they can accurately read and spell a wide range of common and unfamiliar words. Reading lessons in key stage 1 and key stage 2 are beginning to effectively develop and build on pupils' early reading skills.
- Where pupils make the most progress, teachers use subject knowledge and high-quality questioning to probe and challenge pupils in their thinking. This is most evident in mathematics. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were able to mentally calculate decimal calculations and were challenged by the teacher to explain their thought processes. This was further developed by the teacher skilfully asking for other ways the calculation could be done, which encouraged pupils to think about a different way.
- Teachers provide engaging and interesting activities within the wider curriculum subjects. For example, during the inspection, Year 5 pupils clearly enjoyed their engaging Arabic lesson whereby they confidently conversed in Arabic. Year 6 pupils were animated in science when they were making contraptions to support an egg in flight and Year 2 pupils responded positively in geography to making fruit kebabs, discussing the countries the various fruits came from. Pupils' enjoyment of their learning in a range of subjects contributes to their aspiration to achieve well across all subject areas.
- Additional adults in key stage 1 classes support pupils effectively. They work closely with younger lower-attaining pupils, giving them confidence to access the work. As a result of this individual support, this group of pupils are making stronger progress from their lower starting points.
- Very positive relationships exist between all pupils and staff. This is a crucial contributory factor in preventing lessons from being interrupted, and, subsequently, helps prevent distractions to learning.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong, and are built on trust and mutual respect. This respect is extended to all visitors and is a permeating feature of the school's culture.
- All staff play their part effectively in helping pupils to understand how they can keep

themselves safe. The school's curriculum, in addition to well-considered assemblies, effectively informs and supports pupils about how to stay safe both during and after school.

- Pupils are keen to help others at school and at home. They talk eagerly about their work helping other pupils, for example reading to younger children and thinking about people in their community. They also talk enthusiastically about writing Braille to support blind people.
- Pupils are made aware of a range of risks and show a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet, meeting people they do not know and when they feel worried. Pupils also show that they have a mature understanding of the risks of extremism and radicalisation. Pupils resoundingly report that adults at Oakwood care about them and are always approachable if there are any concerns.
- As confirmed in the Ofsted surveys, both parents and staff are highly confident that children are safe and well looked after in school.
- While, more recently, leaders have not consistently carried out rigorous checks on health and safety, and this has led to unmet standards in this aspect, they continue to ensure that pupils' safeguarding and well-being are priorities.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- This is because all adults role model high expectations of behaviour. Consequently, pupils of all ages show that they have a good understanding of what acceptable behaviour is. This is fundamentally underpinned by pupils' good understanding of moral standards and high expectations of their own behaviour.
- In lessons, pupils are extremely respectful, courteous and polite. They demonstrate high levels of appreciation of adults' work to help them, and they mirror this in their attitudes towards each other. This behaviour is equally reflected at playtimes and lunchtimes, when pupils play happily together and enjoy spending time with their friends.
- Pupils attend school regularly. Attendance is consistently strong and is above the national average. This confirms and reflects pupils' enjoyment of school.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their learning. They are eager to learn and enthusiastically share their learning with one another and visitors. Pupils make the most of every opportunity to learn. They are self-motivated to aspire to achieve their best.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics, which ensures that pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their education. However, pupils' books and other inspection evidence shows that while there is some good progress, this is inconsistent across year groups and subjects.
- Currently, leaders do not have a precise enough overview and knowledge of pupils'



progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because leaders' checking of the accuracy of teachers' progress assessment information is not regular or rigorous enough. Furthermore, teachers do not use the school's assessment systems well enough to identify what pupils can do and so their progress varies in reading, writing and mathematics.

- The most able pupils across the school are not achieving as well as they should be. This is because teachers do not consistently plan activities that take account of the assessment information so they can successfully challenge pupils from their various starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Work in pupils' books demonstrates that they learn about subjects such as art, geography, history and science. However, while curriculum plans are in place and pupils are enthusiastic about all subject areas, the assessment system is not being used consistently well for leaders to know how well pupils are achieving in all these subjects.
- Lower attaining pupils are well supported by additional adults. Observations and these pupils' work show that where these pupils are supported, they gain confidence and the quality of work they produce evidences good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

### **Early years provision**

### **Requires improvement**

- The early years provision requires improvement because teaching is not yet consistently good and there are inconsistencies in the quality of provision.
- Leaders report that children enter early years with skills lower than is typical for children of the same age. However, leaders identify in their school development plan that there is further work to be done to check the accuracy and quality of assessment starting points. In 2018, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was below the national average, whereas in 2017 it was above. This represents a mixed picture of attainment and, therefore, children are not consistently well prepared for Year 1.
- Inspection evidence shows that while there are children who are lower attaining, a larger proportion of children are capable and show fluency and effective communication skills when working as a whole class and in groups.
- The early years manager has taken on board and followed advice from the local authority. This has helped the early years manager to identify the strengths and weaknesses in both the Nursery and Reception classes and, consequently, accurately evaluate the quality of the teaching, learning and the curriculum in the early years.
- Adults use assessment information to a varyingly effective degree to prepare and plan an appropriate range of activities to support and challenge children to take their next steps in learning. The inconsistency of adults' work leads to some children not being challenged as well as others to achieve their best.
- Assessment information recorded is not routinely checked by leaders. This results in a lack of precise and rigorous information about how well children are progressing from their starting points.
- Children are not given enough opportunities through the activities planned to explore freely and apply their skills to a wide enough range of contexts. For example, children's



regular chances to make marks and read and write are limited, particularly in Reception.

- The school's designated Nursery and Reception outdoor spaces are not well developed. Teachers do not plan activities in these areas to meet children's needs well enough as part of their daily learning across the curriculum. Neither area is conducive for children to make their own decisions about how they learn outside and to use their learned skills effectively.
- Children are engaged with and curious about their work. They are able to express themselves and make valuable contributions to their learning in a variety of ways. For example, during the inspection they inquisitively watched a hatching chick's heart beat and showed concern when an already hatched chick started to peck the egg shell. One child exclaimed, 'That chick will stop the other chick coming out and it might not come out safely.' The children then went on to consider how they could help the unhatched chick.
- Training for early years staff is more frequent and well planned than it is elsewhere in the school. This is supporting the newer members of the early years team effectively. It is helping to improve the quality of their phonics teaching and the quality of teaching small groups.
- Partnerships with parents are effective. Adults share information about how well children are doing and parents feel confident that their children are happy and want to attend school. Transition arrangements between Nursery and Reception, and from Reception to Year 1, are well thought through. This helps to ensure that children settle quickly into the routines of the school day and develop good habits of regularly attending school.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective, including appropriate current training for paediatric first aid and staff supervision. Adults are suitably trained and qualified to work in the early years.

## School details

Unique reference number	135539
DfE registration number	821/6011
Inspection number	10056567

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	150
Proprietor	Oakwood Education Trust
Chair	Faisal Khan
Headteacher	Arshad Gul Shafi
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,695
Telephone number	01582 518 800
Website	<a href="http://www.oakwoodprimary.co.uk">www.oakwoodprimary.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@oakwoodprimary.co.uk">admin@oakwoodprimary.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	26 to 28 April 2016

## Information about this school

- Oakwood Primary School is an independent Muslim primary day school that opened in 2008. The school is situated in a quiet residential part of central Luton. The school is registered to admit up to 150 boys and girls aged from three to 11 years of any religious background.
- There are currently no disadvantaged pupils attending the school and no pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- The school does not make use of any alternative off-site provision.
- The school is managed by a board of trustees that includes the headteacher, who is one of the founders of the school. The school seeks to help its pupils achieve an

understanding of their own faith, and the role of Islam in their lives.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspectors observed current learning across all year groups, looked at pupils' books and spoke to pupils to find out how well they are learning in reading, writing, mathematics and other curriculum subjects. All the lead inspector's observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, both the designated safeguarding lead and the deputy designated safeguarding lead, who is also the early years manager, both assessment leaders, subject leaders and trustees and governors, including the chair of the trustees.
- The lead inspector held a telephone call with the local authority representative to discuss the support given to the school.
- An inspector met with two groups of pupils, one group being the school council, to discuss aspects of safety, behaviour and to find out about their school experiences.
- Inspectors checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards. Part of this work included carrying out a tour of the premises and scrutinising a wide range of documents. These included the required policies, records of the checks made on staff, curriculum planning, and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance. Both inspectors looked at pupils' workbooks with senior leaders.
- The school's assessment information of pupils' attainment and progress was evaluated. Several documents were considered, including a report to governors which reviewed the school's current performance and improvement plans. Inspectors also considered information about behaviour, attendance and safety.
- Inspectors took account of 39 responses on the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View and also the comments made from parents in 39 free-text responses. There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupils' questionnaire. Inspectors also reviewed the five responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and spoke to staff during the inspection.

## Inspection team

Tracy Fielding, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Adrian Lyons

Her Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

**The school does not meet the following independent school standards.**

### **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
  - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work–
  - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
  - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
  - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
  - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons.

### **Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 12 the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

### **Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools**

- 24(1) the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including–
  - 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility.
- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.

### **Part 6. Provision of information**

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 32(1)(b) the information specified in sub-paragraph (3) is made available to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector,

the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate.

- 32(3) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is–
  - 32(3)(e) particulars of the school’s academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations;
  - 32(3)(f) details of the complaints procedure referred to in paragraph 33, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

## **Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
  - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
  - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and,
  - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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