

# Inspection of a good school: Oakfield Junior School

Chowdene Bank, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE9 6JH

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Inspection dates:

21 and 22 September 2021

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are incredibly proud of their school. They talk excitedly about the high-quality displays in corridors. Displays cover a range of issues from speaking Chinese to origami dogs, from energy and electrical safety to Black Lives Matter. They are especially proud of the school grounds and the equipment they have outside.

Pupils have strong social skills and are like a happy family. They are delightfully friendly, keen to engage in conversation and approachable. Holding doors open, saying 'thank you' and 'you're welcome' come naturally. Pupils play cooperatively and with fun. When one boy took a tumble there was a long line of pupils checking on his well-being and offering help. Teachers have high expectations of every child. Pupils appreciate this and respond positively. Pupils say that they feel safe. They know where they should and should not play outside.

Currently, too many younger pupils do not read with fluency and confidence. Leaders are working hard to ensure every subject is well planned to build learning progressively. This is not the case at the moment.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders know that some subjects in the curriculum are not yet carefully planned and sequenced. Pupils cannot easily remember learning in the long term. Many find it difficult to connect new learning to what they already know. Pupils do make good progress in mathematics. This is because the curriculum is well planned and sequenced. Learning is broken down into smaller steps that build pupils' understanding. Teachers are clear about what pupils must know at the end of a unit of work. Assessment is used well to plan next steps. New learning builds on what pupils already know from previous year groups. This is also the emerging picture in geography.

Pupils say they love to read. Yet a majority of pupils are starting the school with reading skills that are below those appropriate for their age. They lack the phonic knowledge to decode words they do not know or can read by sight. There is no systematic teaching of phonics in place. Teachers are not trained to teach phonics. A minority of pupils have a reading book that they cannot read fluently or with confidence. They do not have the reading skills to allow them to understand their book. Pupils are not given books they can read fluently. This means they struggle to build their self-belief that they are indeed a good reader.

The school promotes pupils' all-round development extremely well. The planned curriculum expands pupils' understanding of different faiths and beliefs. There are many opportunities for pupils to gain a greater understanding of people from other cultures. Pupils speak openly about respect and tolerance of everyone different to themselves. They are aware of the importance of their own and others' mental health and well-being. They carefully explained how to interpret any 'yucky' feelings in the pit of their stomach. Pupils are confident to approach a trusted adult to share anything that gives them this uncomfortable feeling. The culture in the school is one of openness.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They behave very well in lessons. They apply themselves diligently in order to succeed. Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying at all in school. They have confidence in adults to be fair and sort out problems.

The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is good. Small adaptations to the curriculum make sure that no one misses out. Specific and targeted support for those with pronounced needs is strong. Leaders' ambition is that everyone should keep up with learning rather than having to catch up. Teaching assistants are skilled in providing support in lessons or working with pupils who need to catch up, to give them the chance to do so.

The very recent appointment of the executive headteacher has clearly engendered a strong sense of optimism and teamwork among staff. She has pinpointed areas of weakness and knows how to tackle them. She displays a strong determination to ensure rapid improvement. Staff know that although this may entail extra work, they are eager to get going. They say leaders talk often about a work-home balance, and trust leaders implicitly.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that the curriculum and reading may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

A new online system links concerns or incidents together. Record-keeping is meticulous. Staff access training in all safeguarding matters. They have a clear understanding of risks in the local area. Pupils know how to stay safe on the roads, riding their bikes and when near railways or water. All staff know that any worry reported by a pupil is never too small to ignore. Weekly 'care meetings' ensure leaders know of all safeguarding concerns or

issues. Clear communication aims to eliminate the chance of any concerns slipping through the net.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Some subjects in the curriculum are not well planned and sequenced. This prevents pupils building on what they have learned or remembering in the long term what they have been taught. Further work must be completed to ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is of an equally high standard as seen in mathematics and is beginning to be seen in geography.
- A sizeable number of pupils do not read with fluency and comprehension. This makes it more difficult for them to access the wider curriculum. Leaders must make sure that the new approach to teaching phonics helps pupils catch up quickly. This includes training staff to improve their expertise in teaching phonics and early reading.
- Some pupils do not have reading books that they can read fluently. This saps their confidence and restricts their understanding of what they are reading. Pupils must be given books that match their reading ability and build their self-confidence as readers.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2012.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	108329
<b>Local authority</b>	Gateshead
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200477
<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	238
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Les Milne
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Kate Chisholm
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.oakfieldschoolsfederation.org">www.oakfieldschoolsfederation.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is federated with Oakfield Infant School and shares the same site.
- The executive headteacher took up her post in September 2021.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders from the school, two members of the local governing body and the school's development partner.
- Deep dives were carried out in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also listened to some pupils read.

- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits and at breaktime. He spoke to pupils about their views on behaviour and a group of pupils gave him a guided tour of the school.
- Safeguarding records, including the single central record, were reviewed. The inspector talked to pupils and staff about their views of safeguarding.
- The views of 59 parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, were considered.
- The inspector met with staff to discuss their well-being and workload. He considered the 11 responses from Ofsted's staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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