

# Inspection of a good school: Oakmoor School

Budds Lane, Bordon, Hampshire GU35 0JB

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Inspection dates:

19 and 20 October 2021

## **Outcome**

Oakmoor School continues to be a good school.

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

Pupils say that they really mean it when they describe the school as being 'like a family'. They feel well supported and cared for by all staff. Pupils are particularly appreciative of the 'amazing' pastoral staff. They are very confident that pastoral staff will listen to them, take any concerns they have seriously and 'sort out' problems. Pupils appreciate the tutoring system, which places pupils of different ages into the same tutor group. They like the opportunity provided to get to know other pupils from different year groups, and they say that they 'look out for each other'.

Pupils conduct themselves very well and live up to adults' high expectations of behaviour. They show respect and courtesy to their peers and the staff who work with them. Pupils appreciate being able to focus on their work in lessons without disruption. Around the school, the atmosphere is relaxed and friendly.

Pupils feel safe at school. Parents praise the support the school provides, including during the recent pandemic. One parent's comment, which reflected the comments of many, was, 'The teachers have been amazing through the COVID lockdowns. My daughter has been supported throughout.'

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

Leaders have made sure that the curriculum is carefully planned and well sequenced. They have worked with colleagues in the Trust to ensure that the curriculum builds on what pupils learn at primary school. In most subjects, leaders have considered exactly what pupils should learn and the order in which things are taught. In English, for example, leaders have identified important themes such as identity, conflict and civil rights. These themes are revisited regularly so that pupils gain deeper understanding of them. In some subjects, for example art, topics link to what pupils are learning about in other subjects. The curriculum in mathematics is particularly well planned. However, a few subjects, such as history and design technology, are at an earlier stage of curriculum development in key stage 3.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They work together to plan activities that build on what pupils have learned before. The meanings of new and important words in subjects are taught and revisited so that pupils remember them. Teachers' questioning checks that pupils know and remember what they have been taught. In history, for example, pupils were confident explaining the meaning of concepts such as empire and conquest.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support. Staff know and identify the needs of these pupils well. They are determined to help them keep up with other pupils in their learning. The reading skills of many pupils are low when they join the school. Staff focus on adapting lessons for weak readers. However, pupils do not always read widely about their subjects or for pleasure.

The curriculum is now more ambitious than it was before. More pupils are ready for their next steps and have a broad range of skills. Pupils achieve very well in mathematics. English is improving well. More pupils than before now study the English Baccalaureate subjects in key stage 4. Additionally, very high numbers of pupils continue to study arts and technology subjects.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They establish clear routines and boundaries. Pupils behave very well in class and are enthusiastic about their lessons. Well-planned 'experience days' make a strong contribution to pupils' broader development. Pupils appreciate and value these sessions. They cover relevant topics for their age group. Pupils say that staff take the days seriously and teach them in an interesting way. For instance, a recent lesson on consent had really made pupils think about acceptable behaviour in relationships.

The school has continued to improve since the last inspection. Increasing numbers of parents now see Oakmoor as their school of choice. The support from the trust is strengthening leadership and the quality of education. Staff value the support they receive and leaders' concern for their workload and well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is a strength of the school. All staff share in the responsibility for ensuring that pupils are kept safe. The members of the large safeguarding team are well known and work well with teachers and pastoral staff to support pupils at risk.

Leaders regularly update staff knowledge on safeguarding issues. Staff at all levels know what to do if they have concerns about pupils. Staff are particularly vigilant of the danger of online bullying and are very clear about what to do when it occurs.

Parents say that their children feel safe at school. Pupils know who to go to if they need help and feel confident that their concerns will be dealt with.

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

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

- Many pupils join the school with low standards in reading. Pupils do not read widely enough around their academic subjects or for pleasure, which can limit the depth and complexity of their writing. Leaders should ensure that staff encourage pupils to read more widely in their subjects and for pleasure.
- Some subjects are at an earlier stage in curriculum development, particularly in key stage 3. This is largely due to less experienced leadership and delays in implementing new curriculum plans because of interruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In a few subjects, there is a lack of clarity about what precisely pupils are expected to know and be able to do at different stages of the pupils' journey through the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that curriculum plans in all subjects identify clearly and precisely what pupils need to know and be able to do in order to access the next steps in their learning. This will help pupils do as well as they should.

## 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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Mill Chase School, to be good in October 2016.

## 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>	140182
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200228
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	756
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	Nil
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Jane Longmore
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Hemmings
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.oakmoor.hants.sch.uk">www.oakmoor.hants.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	12 and 13 October 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the University of Chichester Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school has a resource base for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. There are currently nine pupils being supported by the provision.  
A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision, either at the Hampshire County Council-run Rowhill Centre or Place to Learn.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and senior leaders. Inspectors also met with a range of teaching and support staff.

- Inspectors evaluated the quality of education by looking in detail at the teaching of English, mathematics, history and design technology. Inspectors discussed curriculum design with leaders, carried out lesson visits, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers from the lessons visited about the curriculum. In addition, the lead inspector met with leaders of art, modern foreign languages and religious education to review curriculum planning and examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator and visited the school's specialist resource provision and inclusion centre.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding. The school's single central record was reviewed. Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and discussed some case studies of safeguarding referrals.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the Chichester Multi-Academy Trust and the chair of governors.
- Inspectors considered the views of members of staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey for staff, responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and free-text responses. Inspectors met with groups of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally about the school. Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online pupils' survey.

### **Inspection team**

Mark Bagust, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Charles Joseph

Ofsted Inspector

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