

Inspection of a good school: Orchard Lea Infant School

Kennedy Avenue, Fareham, Hampshire PO15 6BJ

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 January 2022

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 taught how to be 'ready, respectful and safe'. This ensures that they know how to be ready to learn, be respectful of others and understand how to keep themselves safe. Pupils know this is important so they can concentrate on learning and enjoy being with their friends. Relationships between pupils are positive. As one child commented, 'I have 30 friends in my class.'

Leaders have very recently introduced a behaviour system linked to planets. This is helping pupils to know how they are expected to behave. As a result, pupils usually conduct themselves well. They said that bullying occasionally happens, but they trust staff to sort out any problems.

Pupils enjoy the different opportunities available. They value their special 'reading buddies'. The cuddly animals have increased pupils' enthusiasm for reading at home. They relish attending different sports clubs and going on ferry and farm trips.

Staff are keen for pupils to enjoy learning. The executive headteacher is raising expectations of what pupils can achieve. Ambitions have not been high enough for weaker readers, and these pupils have not got off to a strong start. Expectations of what pupils will learn in different subjects have not been high enough.

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

Improvements have slowed over recent years due to the turbulence in leadership. The new executive headteacher is empowering leaders and supporting staff to make the right changes for pupils. This is helping teachers to focus on what is being taught and how well pupils are learning.

The teaching of early reading is inconsistent. Many pupils get off to a good start in learning to read. Leaders make sure that pupils read books which are well matched to the sounds they have learned. Staff read aloud high-quality texts to promote a love of reading. Starting from Reception, staff carefully develop children's vocabulary when discussing books. The weakest readers are not supported well enough, though. The least expert staff often work with these pupils, without firmly following the planned phonic programme. Struggling readers do get some extra support, but it is not enough to help them keep up.

The sequenced mathematics programme helps staff to structure what pupils learn and in what order. Teachers prioritise developing pupils' fluency with number, so that they can use this learning to solve age-appropriate problems. Staff work with small groups of pupils to help them build on what they have learned before. This approach works most successfully in Reception where there are high expectations of children working independently. Children worked with the teacher to use different resources to represent the number seven. Those working independently used resources to confidently practise their counting skills.

The executive headteacher has begun supporting staff to lead other subjects. Staff appreciate the time and support that they are given to develop their subjects. Learning is broadly sequenced from Reception onwards in subjects other than mathematics and English. Leaders have not, however, precisely identified the most important knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn and remember. As a result, teachers do not always build on or revisit what pupils have previously learned. This means that learning is sometimes less secure, so pupils struggle to remember and explain their learning.

The special educational needs coordinator identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. She makes effective use of external support to ensure that pupils get the specialist support they need. Staff adapt their teaching well in some subjects to support pupils with SEND by providing amended tasks or different resources.

In most classes, pupils concentrate well. On occasion, behaviour can disrupt learning, but staff quickly respond and help pupils to refocus. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, staff have spent extra time teaching the youngest children how to behave, play together and work independently. Consequently, children in Reception are keen to learn and get on well together.

Pupils benefit from different opportunities, and leaders are committed to further broadening this range. The members of the school council have recently met their local MP online, to develop their understanding of democracy. They plan to visit the Houses of Parliament by the end of the year. Since January 2022, Year 2 pupils have enjoyed learning the ukulele. Leaders plan to soon extend instrument playing to other year groups too. Leaders promote pupils' well-being through yoga sessions.

The members of the recently formed federated governing body understand their role, and have begun to review the improvements being made by asking challenging questions. They do not know enough about the curriculum to sufficiently hold leaders to account.

In discussion with the executive headteacher, the inspector agreed that the teaching of early reading, curriculum thinking in the foundation subjects and governors' challenge to leaders about the quality of education may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff know their pupils and families well. This helps them to notice when there are changes in family circumstances. They are also aware of local safeguarding issues which may affect pupils. Staff know what signs to be alert to, and how to report concerns. They are quick to share with safeguarding leads when a child may be at risk of harm.

Leaders and governors make sure that the required checks are made, so that suitable adults work with pupils.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, both inside and out of school. This includes when working online.

Minor weaknesses in safeguarding were identified during the inspection. Leaders acknowledged these and began to address the issues immediately. These weaknesses do not leave pupils at risk.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff do not ensure that struggling readers get off to a good start in learning to read. This means that some pupils do not have the time, support and practice to become fluent readers. Leaders should ensure that all staff are expertly trained, and that the most qualified staff give pupils the support they need to help them to catch up.
- Subject leaders' curriculum thinking is not specific enough. Consequently, pupils are not always building on their learning over time. Leaders should make sure that they precisely identify the key knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn, and that teachers check how well pupils, including those with SEND, retain them.
- Governors' oversight of the school's work is not strong enough. This means that they are not able to sufficiently challenge leaders. Governors should ensure that they improve their curriculum understanding so that they can assure themselves of the quality of pupils' learning.

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 October 2011.

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

Unique reference number	116224
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10200268
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Louisa Corta
Headteacher	Hilary Brewster
Website	www.orchardleainfants.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been acting headteachers in post since September 2018.
- The executive headteacher started in her role in September 2021. She also became executive headteacher of Orchard Lea Junior School at the same time.
- The head of school of the infant school started in her role in January 2022.
- The governing body federated with Orchard Lea Junior School in January 2021. In September 2021, several governors left and four new governors joined. In January 2022, the chair of governors started in her role.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, head of school and other school staff.

- She also met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body, and spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, she 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 looked at curriculum plans, and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector spoke with staff and pupils. She met with the designated safeguarding leads to review their knowledge, records and actions, and also reviewed information about the safer recruitment of staff.
- To review wider judgements, the inspector spoke to staff and groups of pupils, and observed behaviour in classrooms and at playtime.
- She spoke to pupils from different year groups, and considered responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- The views of staff, including responses to Ofsted's online staff survey, were considered.
- The responses to Ofsted Parent View, including written responses, were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Laurie Anderson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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