

Inspection of a good school: Oaklands Infant School

Butler Road, Crowthorne, Berkshire RG45 6QZ

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 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?

Oaklands Infants is a happy and nurturing school where leaders are determined to establish 'deep roots for future growth'. Parents and carers are very positive about the school. Relationships are strong. One parent, typical of many, commented, 'The school always goes above and beyond for the pupils.'

Staff expect pupils to behave well, try their best and show excellent manners. Pupils respond well to these high expectations. Disruption to learning is very rare. Leaders help pupils understand the school's values and how to behave through using a range of characters. Pupils are respectful of others and like to challenge themselves.

During playtimes, pupils play well together and care for each other. 'Casey's Crew', an elected group of Year 2 pupils, look out for anyone who is upset or on their own. Pupils say that the staff and Casey's Crew quickly sort out any problems. They feel safe in school. Leaders have clear systems in place for dealing with the rare incidents of bullying.

Pupils experience a broad curriculum. However, leaders have not ensured that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. As a result, some pupils are not building their phonics knowledge well enough in order to read fluently.

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

Leaders foster a love of reading. Teachers bring books to life, and pupils enjoy listening to stories. Pupils benefit from reading and listening to a wide range of high-quality texts. This helps them to develop their vocabulary and deepen their understanding. The teaching of comprehension is a strength in the school. Pupils confidently give their opinions on what they have read and inferred.

However, leaders have been too slow to put in place a suitable phonics programme. Currently, there is a very mixed approach to the teaching of phonics and not all staff are trained well enough to deliver accurate phonics teaching. Consequently, some pupils, especially those who find reading the hardest, are not learning to read swiftly enough. Leaders have recognised this and have plans in place to improve the teaching of phonics. They are researching which phonics programme to adopt.

There are high expectations of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff quickly identify their needs and, on the whole, provide effective support. However, weaknesses in the school's phonics programme limit the progress of some of these pupils in reading.

The mathematics curriculum is well designed and well taught. Leaders have made sure that pupils' knowledge builds well over time, starting in early years. Teachers introduce new ideas clearly and correct any misconceptions immediately. Pupils remember what they learn. Many can instantly recall important facts. Leaders make sure that pupils have the chance to practise new methods to help them calculate fluently and accurately. During the inspection, Year 2 pupils proudly showed and explained their column subtraction work.

The early years curriculum provides children with a strong foundation that prepares them well for learning in Year 1. Across the school, leaders have implemented a broad and ambitious curriculum. In some subjects, such as art, leaders have identified clearly what they expect pupils to learn. This is helping pupils to build their knowledge well. For example, pupils talk knowledgeably about artists and colour palettes. However, in a few foundation subjects, such as history, leaders have not identified precisely enough what they want pupils to know and remember in each unit of learning. Consequently, teachers cannot build on or recap what pupils have previously learned to enable pupils to build their knowledge over time. Assessment processes are also less well developed in some foundation subjects.

Pupils benefit from a well-considered enrichment programme. This includes a range of trips, such as a recent Year 1 visit to a nature park where pupils learned about tree identification and plant growth. Leaders make sure that pupils learn about different cultures and religions. Leaders plan to reintroduce further visits with the easing of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

The trust provides valuable support and resources to leaders. The local governing body is newly formed and many governors are still establishing their roles. Governors do not yet have a strong understanding of the quality of education in the school and acknowledge the need to strengthen their support and challenge to leaders.

Staff feel proud to work at Oaklands and morale is high. They respect the headteacher greatly. Staff appreciate the support for planning their teaching.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained in safeguarding. They have a strong understanding of the risks that pupils may face, including any local risks. Safeguarding recruitment checks are thorough and documented well.

Staff are vigilant for any potential signs of harm and they communicate any concerns swiftly to leaders. Staff and leaders understand their pupils and families well and know where support is needed. Leaders have implemented clear procedures for reporting and referring on any concerns. Pupils know whom to speak to if they are worried about themselves or their friends.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not yet implemented a coherent and systematic approach to the teaching of phonics. Some staff have not received sufficient training to enable them to teach phonics effectively. As a result, some pupils, especially those who find reading the hardest, are not learning to read swiftly enough. Leaders need to implement their plans to introduce a systematic synthetic phonics programme. They need to ensure that staff are trained in the school's approach, so that phonics is taught consistently well by all staff.
- In some foundation subjects, leaders have not identified with precision the key knowledge they want pupils to know and remember. Assessment processes are not well developed in all subjects. As a result, teachers cannot build on or recap what pupils have previously learned to enable pupils to build their knowledge over time. Leaders should ensure that teachers know what pupils must learn and remember in all subjects and that they are checking that pupils are building their knowledge securely.
- Some governors are new and are still establishing their new roles. The governing body does not yet have a strong enough understanding of the quality of education in the school or provide enough support and challenge to leaders. Governors need to strengthen their understanding of their respective roles to enable them to fulfil their strategic responsibilities well and provide effective and appropriate support and challenge.

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 a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Oaklands Infant School, to be good in March 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

Unique reference number	145283
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	10226989
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	172
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Steve James
Headteacher	Hannah O'Neill
Website	www.oaklandsinfants.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Oaklands Infant School converted to become an academy school in January 2018. It is one of five schools in the Corvus Learning Trust. The trust delegates some responsibilities to the local governing body. This is set out in the trust's scheme of delegation.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2017.
- The chair of governors started in his role in September 2021.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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 senior leaders, staff and pupils.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their

learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work. The inspector heard some pupils read. She also spoke to leaders and considered the curriculum in some other subjects.

- The inspector met with trustees from the Corvus Learning Trust and members of the school's local governing body.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. They reviewed a wide range of documents and records, including the school's record of recruitment checks and records of concerns. The inspector also spoke to staff, governors and pupils about safeguarding.
- The inspector considered parents' responses to Ofsted Parent View and parents' free-text comments. She also took into account the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

Lea Hannam, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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