

# Inspection of The Oaktree School

Gorsewood Road, St John's, Woking, Surrey GU21 8WT

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Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Early years provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under  
Section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected The Oaktree School as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

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

This is a happy school. Relationships are warm and everyone gets along well. Social times are relaxed and well organised. Even the very youngest children in Nursery enjoy eating together at lunchtimes. They learn to carry their trays and are encouraged to say please and thank you. Help is always on hand if needed, for example when practising using cutlery.

Pupils mostly behave well in classes and they work hard. Pupils are generally keen to do well and try their best. However, sometimes pupils' attention wanders. This happens when learning is not well matched to pupils' needs and teachers do not expect enough of them. Leaders know this and are taking the right actions to address this.

Pupils feel safe in school. They understand the difference between incidents of poor behaviour and bullying. Bullying is rare and quickly dealt with.

Curriculum enrichment, through, for example, the forest school, is made available to everyone. Pupils enjoy learning about themselves and the natural world. Leaders provide waterproof clothing for pupils so that they can benefit from this provision all year round.

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

Since arriving at the school just over a year ago, the executive headteacher has identified that what pupils were learning was not ambitious enough. Leaders wasted no time in putting in place a comprehensive new curriculum. Leaders have provided support for staff to help them implement this and match learning carefully to the needs of the pupils. Learning for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is regularly reviewed alongside the curriculum improvements. There are signs that this is beginning to have an impact. This can be seen in early years. However, there is more to be done before leaders' ambitions for the curriculum are fully realised across the whole school.

Leaders have rightly prioritised reading. The impact of this is clear to see. As soon as children start in Reception, they have daily phonics lessons in small groups. They read books that are well matched to their phonics knowledge. Leaders have ensured that staff have been trained in how to teach phonics effectively. Pupils who find reading more difficult receive regular, effective support to help them keep up.

The early years curriculum is well designed to meet the needs of children. This includes building early writing skills. Staff provide opportunities for children to develop their hand coordination and muscle strength, in preparation for learning to write. For example, groups of children use tweezers and mark make with a range of implements. Despite this good start, too many pupils further up the school do not acquire the knowledge and skills they need to be successful writers. Not enough

attention is given to ensuring that pupils' spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting are well developed. Work in books is often poorly presented.

Some teachers present new information clearly and check exactly what pupils know, especially in early years and for pupils with SEND. However, this is not happening consistently across key stage 1. Some teachers are not identifying gaps in pupils' knowledge quickly enough. In addition, some teachers do not have the knowledge they need to effectively teach the school's curriculum. Leaders are already taking action to address this.

Pupils' personal development is well catered for. Pupils respect each other's differences. They are kind, caring and inclusive. A strong emphasis on community involvement means that pupils take part in local activities such as orienteering.

The new behaviour policy means expectations are now clearer and more consistent throughout the school. Pupils are more motivated to behave well. They enthusiastically explain how the 'change your mind cloud' encourages them to reflect and make improved choices.

Staff are supportive of the leadership team. They have confidence in the changes that have been made. They value the ongoing training and support they are receiving to bring these changes about. Staff are positive about the opportunities they are given to develop their careers by, for example, becoming subject leaders.

The trust and governing committee know the school well. They understand the school's strengths and know which developments are needed to refine the curriculum further. Representatives from the trust work closely and productively with school leaders to help support ongoing school improvement.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff have regular training and updates so that they know how to identify safeguarding concerns and what action to take. Leaders carefully record and review information about safeguarding concerns. They liaise well with other agencies to support pupils where necessary and help keep them safe.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Leaders ensure that using computers safely is taught at the beginning of each year. Parents are also provided with information and updates to help them support their children in staying safe online.

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

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

- The school's curriculum is still in the process of being implemented. As a result, pupils are not yet building their learning securely over time. Leaders should continue to refine, strengthen and implement a well-sequenced, coherent curriculum that enables pupils to develop their knowledge and skills well.
- Not all teachers have strong enough subject knowledge in key stage 1. As a result, pupils are not achieving well enough. Leaders need to ensure that staff have the subject knowledge they need to implement the curriculum and check pupils' understanding consistently well.
- Writing is not taught well enough in key stage 1. This limits the quality of pupils' writing. Leaders need to ensure that teachers give sufficient focus to developing pupils' handwriting, spelling and punctuation.

## 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.

## 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>	140090
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10228875
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	256
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Ian Girder
<b>Headteacher</b>	Clare Spires
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.theoaktreeschool.co.uk">www.theoaktreeschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23 September 2008

## Information about this school

- The school became an academy school in 2013. In 2019, it joined The Swan Trust and became part of a multi-academy trust.
- The executive headteacher joined the school in September 2021. She is also the executive headteacher of the junior school which shares the same site. The two schools share a governing committee.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, the lead inspector met regularly with school leaders. The lead inspector met with representatives from the governing committee and the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, music, physical education and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to some pupils read.
- Records associated with safeguarding were reviewed, including the single central record and appointment procedures. Inspectors spoke to staff about safeguarding and spoke to pupils about the support they have in understanding how to keep safe.
- The inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff surveys.
- The inspectors met with groups of staff to discuss their views about the school, including workload and well-being. The inspectors met with several groups of pupils, as well as spoke to pupils during lessons, at playtime and around the school.

### **Inspection team**

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lynn Martin	Ofsted Inspector
Ginny Rhodes	Ofsted Inspector

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