

# Inspection of Oakmere Primary School

Chace Avenue, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 5NP

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Inspection dates: 18 and 19 October 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Good

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

Oakmere Primary School is welcoming and inclusive. Pupils are happy and confident and have coped well with the many changes in staffing and leadership at the school.

Pupils get along well, showing respect to each other and the adults who work with them. Most try hard to meet the school's three key behaviour expectations: be kind with our words and actions; do our best; act safely. They say behaviour has improved, but some pupils still make poor behaviour choices. In the classroom, this slows down the learning. Outside, it makes some pupils feel worried.

Most pupils say they feel safe at school. They know what bullying is and say it does not happen often. They trust the adults to sort it out if it does.

Pupils enjoy events that develop their knowledge and skills beyond the classroom, such as an inter-school netball tournament. Leaders have plans to extend the range of extra-curricular activities the school offers.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are mostly positive. In some subjects they learn well. In others, they cannot recall what they have learned. Leaders are working hard to improve the curriculum so that pupils achieve consistently well in all subjects.

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

There have been a lot of changes at the school since the previous inspection. The new headteacher has a clear and ambitious vision, and the leadership team is working hard to drive improvement in many areas.

Reading is a priority and staff have been trained to use the new phonics scheme. Teachers know which sounds to teach and when to teach them. They use assessment effectively in lessons to identify pupils who are falling behind. Interventions are in place to help those pupils who have fallen behind. However, some pupils have not yet learned the knowledge and skills they need to become fluent readers.

The school's intended curriculum is clearly set out. Many subject leaders are new and do not yet know the curriculum well. They do not routinely check how well teachers are delivering it. As a result, pupils are not achieving as well as they could in all subjects. Assessment is not yet consistent across all subjects. This means teaching is not always matched to pupils' needs.

Children in early years settle quickly, thanks to established routines and nurturing staff. Parents are involved in their children's learning. For example, at a coffee morning they saw phonics in action. A programme of improvements to the early years environment has started. The curriculum is delivered separately from the rest

of the school. This means links between what pupils learn in early years and what they will learn later on are not clear.

Adults have high expectations of pupils. Leaders have introduced a school-wide approach to managing behaviour. This includes incentives such as role model honours, which pupils appreciate. Training is planned so that all staff apply the behaviour management policy consistently. Most pupils behave well, but some low-level disruption in lessons hinders progress.

In lessons that are well planned and well taught, pupils' attitudes are positive. In some lessons, teachers do not follow the intended curriculum or do not know it well. This leads some pupils to lose their focus.

Pupils understand the importance of keeping themselves healthy and having healthy relationships. They are accepting of difference. Visitors to the school, such as firefighters and the police, enrich pupils' learning experiences. However, the range of opportunities for pupils' personal development is limited. Leaders plan to introduce a school council and a wider range of clubs, but these are not yet in place.

Leaders are aware of how important it is to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly. They liaise with external professionals when they need to. They set up interventions to support these pupils. However, leaders do not yet have systems in place to check the effectiveness of provision for pupils with SEND. Training for the staff who work with these pupils has been planned for this school year.

Staff are caring and committed to pupils' development. Most feel supported by leaders and understand the need for changes. Many staff are new and need further training to deliver a high-quality education to pupils.

The governing body shares the headteacher's ambition and vision. Governors know the school's strengths and where improvements are needed. They are not afraid to challenge leaders. Leaders' plans are ambitious and realistic, but they have not yet had enough time to show their impact.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Governors and leaders oversee safety checks on new staff. Staff are fully trained and understand their duty in relation to keeping pupils safe. There is a robust system in place for reporting and recording concerns. Leaders are quick to follow up when a concern is logged and act in the best interests of pupils. They liaise effectively with external agencies to ensure pupils get the help they need.

Pupils are well versed in online safety. They understand risk and know how to keep themselves safe. They know they should speak to adults if someone's behaviour makes them feel unsafe.

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

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

- Many staff are new to the school. They do not yet know how to implement leaders' curriculum plans well. Leaders do not routinely check the delivery of the intended plans. As a result, pupils do not learn as much as they ought to across the curriculum. Leaders should ensure all staff understand and teach the curriculum well. They should check the quality of provision in each subject so that pupils progress and achieve well.
- Pupils' behaviour is not yet good enough. This means lessons are sometimes disrupted and pupils sometimes feel uncomfortable out of lessons. Leaders need to ensure there are high expectations for behaviour inside and outside the classroom. They should continue to provide high-quality training and support for staff so that behaviour management systems are consistently applied.
- The programme of opportunities and activities for personal development is still in the planning stage at present. Leaders need to ensure that their plans for this area are fully implemented in a timely way. This will give all pupils access to a range of experiences to build their character and prepare them for the wider world.

## **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>	117371
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241859
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	276
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Colin Daniels
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ayshen Wilson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.oakmere.herts.sch.uk">http://www.oakmere.herts.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23 May 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher, inclusion coordinator, key stage 2 leader and several governors have been in post for less than a term.
- The school has before- and after-school childcare run by school staff and managed by school leaders.
- At the time of the inspection, school leaders were not making use of 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.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the inclusion coordinator, four governors and a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, art, history and physical education. For each deep dive, 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 their work. The lead inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and two deputy designated safeguarding leads to review records. A team inspector scrutinised the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. Inspectors also spoke to governors, staff and pupils to evaluate safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of other school documents and policies, including the school development plan and minutes of governor meetings.
- To gather pupils' views, inspectors spent time observing and speaking to pupils. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- To gather parents' views, the lead inspector reviewed the 33 responses and 22 free-text responses submitted to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the start and end of the school day.
- Inspectors gathered staff members' views by speaking to several of them and reviewing the 21 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

## **Inspection team**

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Fiona Webb

Ofsted Inspector

Richard Fordham

Ofsted Inspector

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