

Inspection of Oakwood Primary Academy

Magnolia Drive, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN22 0SS

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff have high expectations. Pupils are kind, compassionate and considerate towards everyone. They are eager to play a part in making their friendly school a welcoming place. Pupils plant sunflowers in the playground and grow vegetables which they cook into tasty meals. One parent rightly described Oakwood Primary Academy as an 'amazing place where our children thrive and are extremely happy'.

Pupils learn to look after their health and well-being. They relish working with Kiara, the therapy dog, and visiting 'the hive' where they practise mindfulness and yoga. When needed, pupils use their 'time out pass' to have a moment of quiet reflection.

Playtimes are cheerful and sociable occasions. Pupils enjoy catching up with their friends in 'the den', 'the trim trail' and 'the quiet area'. Some pupils set up games and challenges for others to enjoy. Pupils feel safe and are safe. They trust staff will help them deal with any friendship problems quickly. Bullying is not tolerated at this school.

Pupils are proud of their roles as school ambassadors, monitors and members of the popular school council. They organise events and concerts to showcase their talents, including singing and playing a range of musical instruments.

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

Leaders' vision, 'aiming high with confidence, courage and perseverance', lies at the very heart of their aspiration for all staff and pupils. Together with their much-respected headteacher, the trust and members of the interim executive board have worked tirelessly to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive a good quality of education. Trustees and board members maintain rigorous oversight of leaders' actions. The school is now moving from strength to strength. Leaders are mindful of staff's well-being and work-life balance. All staff contribute positively to building an upbeat, proactive and cohesive team spirit.

Leaders have designed an innovative and well-structured curriculum. Within each subject, leaders have carefully organised the essential knowledge pupils, including those with SEND, need to learn and remember well. Leaders and staff are clear about what pupils must master step by step by the time they leave Year 6. Leaders have identified that in a very small number of subjects, pupils do not learn as well as they could. They have introduced revised curriculums in these subjects.

Staff training is effective. Leaders make sure that staff routinely identify pupils with SEND, and provide the resources and support they need. Teachers skilfully help pupils deepen their understanding of the concepts taught. They make sure that pupils make links to what they have learned previously. However, in early years, some staff do not check and help children develop their ideas and vocabulary. As a

result, children do not achieve as well as they could in all seven areas of learning. Leaders are addressing this.

Reading is a priority. Well-trained staff identify those pupils who need extra practice. Adults focus on reinforcing knowledge of sounds and reading fluency to help these pupils to catch up quickly. Pupils enjoy taking home their reading books, which have been precisely matched to the sounds that they know. Pupils talk excitedly about the books staff read and share with them. They read a diverse range of books and look forward to visiting the well-stocked school library.

Pupils enjoy learning, and classrooms are abuzz with lively discussions. In the early years, children settle into the provision quickly. They know the routines well and follow instructions with thought and care. Most pupils have high attendance. Leaders have procedures in place to monitor and improve rates of absence. However, some pupils do not attend as regularly as they should.

Leaders nurture and promote pupils' wider personal development. Pupils benefit from a wide range of well-considered opportunities available to them. They enjoy taking part in an interesting range of clubs, trips and visits. Pupils also work regularly with a range of professionals and experts to learn about the careers open to them. Pupils value diversity and celebrate difference. As one Year 6 pupil said: 'We treat everyone as an equal. It does not matter to us what religion, sexuality, race, hair colour or type of glasses they wear'. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of vigilance. Staff are well trained to spot the slightest signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil. Leaders work well with external agencies to make sure that these pupils and their families receive the support they need. Leaders complete required checks on all staff they employ.

Pupils learn how to keep safe, including when online and in their local community. They know what makes a healthy relationship, as well as the importance of looking after their mental health.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the early years provision, some staff's subject knowledge is not strong enough. This means staff do not always make sure that children embed important ideas and vocabulary. Leaders need to make sure that staff in early years are well trained.

- Leaders have identified that in a small number of foundation subjects, pupils do not learn as well as they could. Recently, they have introduced a revised curriculum for these subjects. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is fully embedded and effective.
- Despite leaders' actions to improve attendance, a small number of pupils do not attend regularly. This means that some pupils miss out on their learning. Leaders need to continue to work to reduce persistent absenteeism.

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

Unique reference number	138391
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10245395
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	322
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Antony Blaker QPM
Headteacher	Ryan Laker
Website	www.oakwoodprimaryacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	23 to 24 February 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Aurora Academies Trust.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met online with representatives of the interim executive board, including the chair of trustees and the chair of the interim executive board. She

also spoke with the interim chief executive officer of the Aurora Academies Trust and the trust's director of education and standards.

- The inspection team carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and art. To do this, they met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum design, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. Inspectors also sampled pupils' work from religious education, design technology and science.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors spoke with staff and pupils. An inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads to examine records and actions. This included sampling a range of safeguarding documentation. The team inspector reviewed checks on the safer recruitment of adults.
- Inspectors talked to pupils from different year groups about their learning and experiences at school.
- Inspectors took account of parents' responses to surveys, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' written comments. The views of staff, pupils and parents were also gathered onsite.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- The inspection team scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school. This included leaders' school improvement plan, the trusts' statement of action, leaders' self-evaluation, policies, curriculum documents and minutes of the interim executive board meetings.

Inspection team

Shazia Akram, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nina Marabese

His Majesty's Inspector

Stuart Edwards

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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