

# Inspection of Oakfield Infant School

Chowdene Bank, Low Fell, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE9 6JH

---

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 November 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then 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.

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

There has been turbulence in leadership in the school over recent years. The new leadership team is now bringing some stability. Leaders have high expectations for the pupils in this school. However, these expectations have not been realised at this point. Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are taking the right steps to bring about improvement in the school.

Leaders' actions are already having some positive impact on pupils. Pupils demonstrate a strong understanding of diversity. They meet visitors from a wide range of faiths, cultures and backgrounds during the school's diversity week. This helps them to understand about different groups in modern Britain. From as early as Reception, children are encouraged to think about what they might like to be when they are older. They learn about different careers through visitors to school, such as a local doctor and the police.

Pupils in the school feel happy, safe and confident. Most behave well. They know how to be a good friend. They say that bullying does sometimes happen, but when it does adults sort it out quickly. Pupils know they can use the 'worry corner' or talk to a trusted adult if they are worried about something.

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

Over time, leaders have not been sufficiently proactive in ensuring that pupils receive a consistently high standard of education. As a result, the school's effectiveness has declined since its last inspection. The new leadership team members know that there is work to do to ensure that all pupils achieve their full potential. They have identified 'golden threads', such as ambition, character and diversity, that will underpin their curriculum developments.

Leaders are acting to improve the curriculum. In mathematics, for example, a coherently planned curriculum that runs from Reception to Year 2 has been put in place. This sets out the knowledge that pupils should learn and ensures that pupils' understanding builds over time. Leaders are currently working with staff to help them teach the curriculum well. However, some adults do not check carefully enough to make sure that pupils remember the content that they are taught in mathematics. This hinders some pupils' achievement. In the early years, adults balance taught mathematics sessions with well-considered activities.

New leaders have rightly prioritised the teaching of phonics and reading. All staff are trained in how to teach phonics effectively. Phonics teaching starts almost as soon as children begin Reception. It is delivered daily across the school. There are additional intervention sessions for those pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Pupils' reading books match the sounds that they know. Leaders have thought carefully about the books that pupils read to ensure that they are exposed to a wide range of high-quality texts. Pupils speak positively about reading.

The curriculum in several subjects, such as science and history, is still in development. Some new subject leaders are in post. They have not identified the key knowledge that pupils should learn. With the support of senior leaders, they are taking the right initial action to tackle weaknesses in their subject. Teachers present subject matter clearly and make use of generally well-chosen resources to support teaching. However, in the wider curriculum subjects, there is not an effective system in place to check what pupils know and can remember. Teachers do not check to see if pupils have gaps in their knowledge in these subjects.

Typically, pupils behave well in lessons. There are occasional instances of off-task behaviour. Although staff usually deal with this, some teachers have higher expectations for pupils' behaviour than others.

The curriculum in early years is coherently planned and sequenced. Leaders have thought carefully about what children need to know to ensure that they are ready for Year 1. The early years leader is working with staff to ensure that the curriculum in key stage 1 builds on children's learning in Reception. Strong transition arrangements are in place with the nurseries that children attend prior to starting school. This means that adults understand what children know and can do. Adults start to build on this as soon as children begin Reception. Activities are carefully planned. However, at times, adults do not give children sufficient support to access some of these activities successfully.

The newly appointed special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has a clear vision for the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Some pupils with SEND are already benefiting from changes made to individual support plans to ensure that provision is closely matched to pupils' needs. However, this is not the case for all pupils with SEND. The SENCo is working with staff to improve their knowledge and understanding of how to cater for the needs of the pupils with SEND in their class.

New leaders have introduced opportunities for pupils to develop their wider talents and interests. Pupils can participate in after-school sport and music clubs. They have opportunities to perform for an audience, for example at Sage Gateshead. There are a range of trips designed to broaden pupils' experiences, such as to Beamish Museum and a local farm. Leaders are working to ensure that these visits align closely with the curriculum. Pupils speak proudly about contributing to their local community through, for example, donating food to the local food bank.

Several governors have recently been appointed to the governing body. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are supportive of the new leadership team and are keen to see the school improve.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff and governors are appropriately trained in how to report and record concerns about both pupils and staff. They are alert to signs that may indicate that a pupil is vulnerable or at risk from harm. Safeguarding records are accurately maintained.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they can talk about road safety, firework safety and stranger danger. Leaders are aware of contextual risks such as county lines. They have undertaken training in relation to this. Several leaders and governors are trained in safer recruitment practices. Leaders draw upon external agencies where appropriate to ensure that safeguarding arrangements in the school are effective.

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

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

- In some subjects in the wider curriculum, such as history and geography, leaders have not identified the key knowledge that pupils should learn. This means that teachers are not clear about the subject matter to deliver in some lessons. Leaders should ensure that curriculum plans set out the precise knowledge that pupils need to learn so that teachers can plan sharply focused lessons that enable pupils to build their knowledge over time.
- In some subjects, teachers do not check to make sure that pupils have remembered what they have been taught. This means that teachers do not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and therefore do not adapt teaching to match pupils' stage of learning. Leaders should ensure that systems are in place to check what pupils know so that teaching can be adapted appropriately. This will enable pupils to know more and remember more.

## **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>	108332
<b>Local authority</b>	Gateshead
<b>Inspection number</b>	10229041
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	166
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Local authority
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Rachel Mason
<b>Executive headteacher</b>	Kate Chisholm
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.oakfieldschoolsfederation.org/">www.oakfieldschoolsfederation.org/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18 September 2008

## Information about this school

- A new leadership structure was established last academic year. The current executive headteacher started in post in September 2021.
- Several governors are new to the governing body.
- The school is part of a federation with a junior school. The two schools share the same site. Several staff work across both schools, including the executive headteacher.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- Before- and after-school childcare provision is available. However, this is not led and managed by the school.

## 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 met with the executive headteacher and the leadership team. They also met with subject leaders, the SENCo, members of the governing body and the school improvement partner from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and science. 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 pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their learning in geography, art and religious education and looked at samples of work from these subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils reading to familiar adults.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils in lessons and during breaktimes.
- Inspectors examined the single central record and looked at how safeguarding incidents are reported. Inspectors spoke to leaders, teachers, support staff, governors and pupils about the culture of safeguarding in the school.
- The inspectors considered the responses made by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Philippa Kermotschuk, lead inspector      His Majesty's Inspector

Tim Scargill-Knight      His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2022