

Inspection of a good school: Oughton Primary and Nursery School

Mattocke Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 2NZ

Inspection dates:

2 and 3 March 2023

Outcome

Oughton Primary and Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Oughton are proud of their school. Many pupils have developed a strong sense of self-awareness. They show this in their positive behaviour. Pupils and adults build warm and respectful relationships. This means that pupils feel safe and well cared for.

Pupils respond to staff's high expectations for behaviour. They behave in a calm and orderly way around the school. Pupils understand and recognise their own and others' emotions. This helps them to show empathy to others. Pupils understand what bullying is. They say that it happens sometimes, but it is dealt with by staff quickly and well.

Pupils follow a broad curriculum that helps to develop their talents and interests. They take pride in their work and achieve well. Pupils appreciate the various trips and visitors to the school. These experiences help pupils connect their learning with the wider world. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Pupils learn that being kind and tolerant are important. This shows in the way pupils treat each other. Pupils value opportunities to take on extra responsibilities, such as being a school council member. They carry out their roles with commitment and enthusiasm.

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

Leaders provide a curriculum that builds pupils' knowledge from the early years to Year 6. Most subject leaders have carefully identified the subject knowledge and key vocabulary pupils need to learn. Teachers typically plan lessons that are purposeful and capture pupils' interests. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding. They use this information to make changes to lessons that help pupils remember and know more over time. In a few subjects, leaders have not identified the subject-specific knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to learn as precisely. This means that pupils' progress in these subjects

varies. This is because teachers are not always clear about what knowledge they need to teach. Pupils do not get the chance to learn it or practise using it.

Leaders have introduced a new programme for teaching phonics and reading. Children start learning phonics as soon as they start in Reception. All staff teach sounds accurately to the pupils. Teachers monitor pupils' progress carefully. Pupils get help through 'keep up' and 'catch up' sessions so they do not fall behind with reading. For many, this helps them to read accurately and fluently. However, the books that a few pupils read do not accurately match their reading ability. This means that these pupils struggle to read these books. This makes it harder for them to learn to read with fluency.

There is a strong focus on developing children's language in the early years. This helps children communicate confidently and make sense of the world around them. Children quickly learn to follow adults' expectations for good behaviour. They participate enthusiastically in well-planned learning activities and take pleasure in learning new things. Children gain a good understanding of number and mathematical ideas through teaching, stories and play. Children are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn in the classroom alongside their peers. They access the full curriculum. Staff make skilful adaptations to the curriculum, which helps all pupils to succeed. Some pupils have more one-to-one support and bespoke learning when needed. Pupils with SEND achieve well.

Leaders have put strong systems in place to promote good behaviour. Leaders and staff have created a positive and respectful environment for learning. Staff know and care about pupils. When pupils struggle to focus on their learning, they quickly get appropriate support from well-trained adults. This includes leaders providing external support for pupils. Pupils try hard in lessons. Their learning is rarely disrupted by the behaviour of others.

Leaders prioritise pupils' wider development. Pupils can explain techniques they use to improve their well-being and how they show care for others. They learn about different cultures and celebrate diversity. Different clubs and activities provide opportunities to build character and develop talents. Pupils are developing their interests and aspirations for their future careers.

Leaders and governors share the same values and vision. Governors support leaders and hold them to account. Staff have support, when needed, and leaders consider staff well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that all staff have relevant and up-to-date training. Leaders have established effective systems to keep pupils safe. Staff know the signs that they need to

be alert for and know how to report any concerns they may have. Leaders keep accurate and detailed records of concerns and actions taken to keep pupils safe.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online. Every class has a worry box so that pupils can express any concerns.

Governors make sure that the school carries out all the required checks to ensure adults are suitable to work in schools.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the important knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to learn are not precisely identified. Consequently, it is hard for teachers to know what they need to teach. They do not help pupils to learn as well as they should in these subjects by planning lessons that help pupils learn and practise using some important knowledge. Leaders need to ensure that, in all subjects, they identify the important knowledge and subject-specific vocabulary that pupils should learn so that teaching of the whole curriculum is highly effective.
- A few pupils who are not yet fluent in reading read books that do not match their reading ability. This means they are slower at developing reading fluency and struggle to read accurately. Leaders need to ensure that all pupils read books that are well matched to their phonics knowledge to enable all pupils to read accurately and develop fluency.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in 7 and 8 June 2017.

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	133323
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10255189
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Faye Nearney
Headteacher	Lisa Clayton
Website	www.oughton.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 and 8 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding leader. The inspector also spoke with a school improvement partner from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in three subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspector visited lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to children and viewed children's work.
- The inspector viewed a range of documents, including governor meeting minutes and safeguarding records.

- The inspector met with representatives of the local governing body.
- The inspector considered the 60 responses and 38 free-text responses made by parents to Ofsted's survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered 29 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and 51 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jessie Linsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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