

Inspection of a good school: Oak Lodge School

Roman Road, Dibden Purlieu, Southampton, Hampshire SO45 4RQ

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 March 2023

Outcome

Oak Lodge School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this school. Staff are very caring and supportive. Parents and carers appreciate the help that staff give to them and their children. Staff understand and support pupils' individual needs well. Pupils are safe and happy. One parent summed up the views of many when stating, 'My child has thrived since coming to this school. He is learning important life skills and enjoys coming to school every day'.

Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Pupils know staff will look after them and help them to learn. Leaders have high expectations for pupils to achieve well and be prepared for adult life.

Pupils behave well. They are respectful of each other's needs and engage well with learning. They have very positive attitudes to education. Staff support pupils in managing their emotions so that they learn over time how to become more independent. Bullying is rare. If there is any bullying, it is dealt with quickly and effectively by staff.

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

Leaders have designed a well-structured curriculum. They have identified the important knowledge that pupils need by the time they leave school. Leaders are keen to ensure that pupils know and remember more over time. In most subjects, teachers organise learning into small steps to match the needs of pupils. In subjects where this is the case, pupils achieve well. However, in some subjects, for example in science and art, knowledge is not always broken down into logical steps as effectively. In these subjects, pupils do not always achieve as well as they could.

Leaders prioritise reading. There are opportunities for pupils to practise reading in almost all lessons. Each day, the whole school community stops what they are doing for 20 minutes, to read together. This results in pupils who are confident to tackle increasingly challenging books and are often happy to read out loud. Age-appropriate material is used

in all lessons. Those pupils who need support to improve their reading receive regular help. Staff deliver the reading programme consistently well.

Leaders think carefully about the curriculum and assessment, particularly for reading. They make sure that teachers' assessments help pupils concentrate on important learning. This prepares pupils for the next steps in their education well.

The school's personal development programme is comprehensive. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. They enjoy the wide range of enrichment opportunities that the school offers. These include important pupil leadership roles and experiencing a variety of trips and visits. Many pupils are involved in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Others enjoy taking part in community projects and other outdoor activities. Leaders are ambitious for pupils. For example, leaders have planned an open ocean sailing experience for pupils in the near future.

Leaders and staff are committed to helping pupils manage their own behaviour. Staff understand that negative behaviour can be a form of communication. Because of this, they understand what is wrong and use carefully planned responses to help. Because of this, learning is not disrupted. Positive behaviour is recognised by all staff. The whole school community enjoys celebrating in everyone's achievements.

Adults provide effective support for pupils to prepare them for adulthood and the world of work. This develops as pupils move through the school. Pupils receive appropriate careers education, information, advice and guidance. The school measures itself against the Gatsby benchmarks to ensure pupils receive high-quality careers advice. All pupils move on to positive destinations when they leave the school.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They value the support that leaders give them and feel listened to. Staff appreciate the changes that leaders have made and feel that communication is clear. Leaders help staff with their workload. Governors challenge leaders to improve the quality of education for all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have developed a strong safeguarding culture. They prioritise safeguarding training for staff. Staff at all levels are quick to act to keep pupils safe. They know their pupils exceptionally well, meaning that they are particularly alert to the additional risks their pupils might face. Staff are clear about the processes they should follow if they have concerns. Governors take their safeguarding roles seriously.

Through the carefully planned curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. All pupils are taught how to communicate their opinions and learn to recognise when they need to seek help.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the knowledge that pupils need to learn is not identified precisely enough. This limits some pupils' understanding of important concepts. Leaders should ensure that they identify what pupils need to learn in all subjects.

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 December 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	116637
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10256545
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	156
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mike Robinson
Headteacher	Kieron Hudson
Website	www.oaklodge.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Oak Lodge School is a special school.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school makes provision for pupils with severe learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorder and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school currently uses one unregistered alternative provider, 'Achieve Your Potential'.

Information about this inspection

- 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 headteacher, deputy headteacher, and other members of the extended leadership team. Inspectors also met with two governors, including the chair of the governing body.

- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals to the local authority. They checked the school's record of recruitment checks and spoke with staff about how they keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors considered parents' responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' free-text responses.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, communicated with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Gary Tostevin, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Christine Bulmer

Ofsted Inspector

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