

Inspection of a good school: Oakfield Primary School

Scott Drive, Wickford, Essex SS12 9PW

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 April 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this happy and friendly school. They like being with each other and value the firm friendships they build with other pupils. Pupils are kind to each other and welcoming to visitors. They understand and follow the straightforward school rule of 'Treat others how you want to be treated'.

Leaders and teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well in the classroom and the playground. They walk around the school calmly and hold doors open for each other and for adults. This shows their good manners and courteous attitudes. Pupils understand what bullying is. They feel that it rarely happens. Pupils are very clear that all adults help them to resolve any problems. This means that they feel safe. Pupils want to work hard and enjoy learning. However, their needs are not met as effectively as they should be in some subjects.

Older pupils are very proud of the jobs they can take part in, including school councillors and sports champions. These roles help pupils to develop their leadership skills and become positive role models for younger pupils. This helps them to be ready for the next stage of their education.

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

The school has a new senior leadership team. The team has checked the effectiveness of the current subject plans and identified some areas for development, but the required changes are still being established. Consequently, some plans are not as well developed as they need to be. Leaders have created an action plan with clear and measurable targets. In a few subjects, leaders' plans are more embedded, staff show good subject knowledge and pupils achieve well. In the early years, children's strong language

development links well to the subjects they learn. Staff develop children's knowledge, communication and social skills. This means that children can complete tasks independently, and they get on well with each other. In some subjects in key stage 1 and 2, the development of subject-specific language is inconsistent. In lessons, some pupils cannot use age-appropriate language to explain their current and past learning. For instance, in science, some pupils do not use scientific language to explain the processes involved when carrying out investigations.

Leaders have prioritised reading. Children begin to learn to read using phonics as soon as they start in Reception. Pupils achieve well in reading. They also show confidence and phonics accuracy when transferring their knowledge into their writing. Pupils in key stage 1 read books that closely match the sounds they know. This means that they can practise reading with fluency. Teachers in the early years and key stage 1 check pupils' knowledge regularly, and pupils who need it have catch-up sessions. However, older pupils who are not yet fluent readers do not have catch-up sessions that enable them to practise, learn and apply their phonics knowledge consistently.

Leaders have procedures in place to make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified at the earliest possible stage. Some pupils with SEND have learning targets. These set out what they need to learn. However, pupils' progress towards these targets is not checked well enough. This means that staff do not know whether these make a positive difference to pupils' learning. A few pupils with SEND have more individualised timetables. This helps pupils with SEND to follow the same curriculum as their peers, with a strong focus on removing any barriers to learning.

Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning and show respect for their teachers and peers. They are proud of their school and understand the clear sanctions and rewards. All staff treat pupils fairly and do not allow low-level disruption in lessons.

Pupils learn about diversity and a wide range of religious festivals and celebrations. They understand and celebrate the fact that they are all unique and different. Pupils appreciate the clubs and trips they can attend, which helps them to develop their interests and talents.

The new leadership team has a clear vision for the school's development. Leaders are strongly committed to improving outcomes for all pupils. They are clear that this needs to involve all stakeholders. Leaders have included and listened to the views of staff, parents and pupils. They have also sought advice from the local authority.

Governors understand and carry out their statutory duties. They are working alongside school leaders to make sure that staff well-being and workload are considered. Staff feel that their well-being has a high priority.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

As soon as they started at the school, leaders reviewed all safeguarding systems to ensure robust systems were in place to keep children safe. They have retrained staff to ensure that safeguarding remains a high priority.

Staff are clear on the school-wide safeguarding procedures. They record all concerns immediately and make further checks as necessary.

Pupils understand the very real risks that the online world can have for them. They know to speak to adults immediately if someone they do not know asks them for personal information.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils have not developed their understanding of subject-specific vocabulary and content consistently and over time. This means that when pupils are carrying out activities, they have gaps in their knowledge, and it is harder for them to link past learning and build new learning. Leaders need to ensure there are clear, understood and known 'key terms' that all pupils need to learn over time and in every subject.
- Pupils who are not yet fluent readers in key stage 2 do not continue to learn using a systematic phonics programme. This means that when they read unfamiliar words, they do not have the skills they need to decode and blend the words independently. Leaders need to ensure that pupils in key stage 2 who need a catch-up programme learn using a sequential phonics programme.
- Some pupils with SEND have individual targets and attend some intervention groups. However, pupils' progress and knowledge development are not monitored closely enough. This means that pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders need to ensure that staff have the training needed to create targets that help pupils learn the small steps of knowledge they need and check that targets and interventions make a difference to improving the social, emotional and educational development of pupils with SEND over time.

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 September 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	131806
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10255245
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	412
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Deri Hollywell
Headteacher	Lynn Cooney
Website	www.oakfield.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher started at the school in January 2023. The deputy headteacher has been at the school since the beginning of the summer term 2023.
- The school does not make use of 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 leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried deep dives in these subjects: early reading, science and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the arrangements that are in place to safeguard pupils, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader, considered school records and spoke with staff and pupils. The inspector scrutinised the single central record of pre-employment checks.

- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at playtime. They spoke with pupils to seek their views.
- The inspector met two members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspector also held a meeting with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector considered the 52 responses and 37 free-text responses made by parents to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered the 31 responses to Ofsted's online survey for school staff and 88 responses to the Ofsted survey for pupils.
- The inspector viewed a range of documents, including governor meeting minutes and information on the school website.

Inspection team

Jessie Linsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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