

Inspection of The Oaks Primary School

Sharples Hall Drive, Bolton, Lancashire BL1 7HS

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 December 2023

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	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 13 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 graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. 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 graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, along with the rest of the school community, described The Oaks as a place that 'feels like a family'. This sentiment shows how well cared for pupils are. It also reflects how well pupils get along with each other. Pupils are happy, safe and content.

The school is very ambitious for what pupils should learn. Pupils achieve extremely well in reading, writing and mathematics. Despite not reaching these same lofty standards in a minority of curriculum areas, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), still achieve well in most other subjects.

Pupils enjoy their lessons. They participate enthusiastically in their learning. Pupils behave well in their classes and around the school. They are highly motivated by the various rewards and certificates that they can achieve.

Pupils relish the many opportunities to take on responsibilities around the school. Various pupil ambassadors, monitors and elected school councillors wear their responsibility badges with pride. Pupils have a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities on offer. These range from choir, chess and art clubs to various sports clubs. Pupils appreciate these and make good use of them.

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

The school has designed a broad and balanced curriculum. Across the vast majority of this curriculum, the school has precisely identified the small steps of knowledge that pupils will learn. In most cases, the school has provided clear guidance to staff as to how and when subject content should be taught. This helps staff to deliver such content effectively. In turn, pupils build their knowledge securely over time. They achieve well across much of the curriculum.

In a small minority of subjects, the school has not been as clear about its expectations for how subject content should be delivered. In these few subjects, pupils are not taught some of the crucial content that is outlined in the school's curriculum design. As a result, pupils' knowledge in these few subjects is not as strong as it is in other subjects.

The school has a range of established systems for monitoring and evaluating the delivery of the curriculum. However, in a small number of subjects, the school does not use these systems as effectively as it could. Consequently, the school sometimes does not identify, or address, the most important issues with how certain subject content is delivered. This prevents pupils from learning all that they could in some subjects.

The school has strong assessment strategies in place to check how pupils are doing in their learning. Staff provide effective support to pupils to help them correct their errors or misconceptions.

The school has secure systems in place to identify pupils who may have SEND early. Staff are well trained to identify signs that may suggest a pupil has additional needs. The school works well with other agencies to secure timely support for these pupils where required.

The school encourages a love of books. Pupils enjoy reading and they read widely and often. For example, some pupils spoke enthusiastically about their past learning of a Shakespeare play as well as the weekly poems that they listen to in class.

Learning to read has a high priority in this school. Children begin to learn phonics as soon as they start in the early years. Staff are well trained to deliver the phonics curriculum effectively. Most pupils are given books that match well to the sounds that they need to learn. The school provides additional support for those who need extra help with reading. Almost all pupils meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. The school's actions with reading ensure that most pupils quickly develop into confident and fluent readers.

In the majority of lessons, pupils are calm and attentive. There is minimal disruption to their learning. Pupils value their education and rarely miss any days at school. As a result, pupils' attendance at school is very high.

The school provides for pupils' personal development well. It has recently adopted a new personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum this year. This PSHE curriculum is helping pupils to develop their understanding of fundamental British values. The school arranges several awareness weeks, such as a multi-faith week and a neurodiversity week, which help pupils to value peoples' differences. Pupils have a secure knowledge of how to look after their physical health. They also know how to stay safe online. They learn how to maintain healthy relationships with others. Older pupils told inspectors about the school's coaching initiative that encourages pupils to take ownership of their learning at home. Pupils feel that this is helping them to prepare for the demands of secondary school.

Staff appreciate the practical steps that leaders and governors have taken to help them manage their workload. Some examples include the additional time that they are given to carry out their subject leadership duties. Governors understand their role and fulfil their statutory duties.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not set out its expectations for how a small number of subjects should be delivered. This means that pupils are not taught some of the knowledge that the school intends for them to be taught. The school should provide clear guidance on how the content in these subjects should be taught so that pupils can achieve well in these subjects.
- In a minority of subjects, the school is not effective at evaluating the delivery and impact of the curriculum. This means that some improvement needs are not identified and acted on in a timely manner. In turn, pupils do not achieve as well as they could in these subjects. The school should ensure that staff are well-equipped to gather and evaluate monitoring information effectively so that they can quickly address any shortcomings in their areas of responsibility.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	105176
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10289883
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Judith Bromley
Headteacher	Fallon Trainor
Website	www.theoaksbolton.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 October 2010, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed earlier this year.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- There is a before- and after-school club at the school, which the governing body oversees.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history and mathematics. They met with subject leaders and teachers. They visited lessons,

looked at examples of pupils' work and talked with groups of pupils about their learning. The lead inspector observed pupils read to a familiar adult.

- Inspectors also considered the curriculum, spoke with pupils about their learning and evaluated their work in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector spoke with a group of governors. Inspectors also talked to staff about their workload and well-being.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with the leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development. Inspectors also met with leaders responsible for SEND.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their wider experience of school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documents related to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day and took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

David Spruce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sharon Cowey

Ofsted 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 looked after children, 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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: 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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024