

Inspection of Oakwood Primary School

Cotswold Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL52 5HD

Inspection dates: 30 April and 1 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The executive headteacher and co-headteachers have raised expectations and ambition for every pupil, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Until recently, the school has not ensured that pupils achieve well. Pupils' outcomes in 2023 were significantly below national averages. New leaders have taken steps to bring about improvements to the school. These are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' education.

Positive relationships between staff and pupils are at the heart of Oakwood Primary School. This starts in the early years, where children benefit from strong attachments with the adults who help them. The school expects pupils to behave well. Most pupils live up to these expectations. Bullying, when it occurs, is dealt with swiftly and appropriately. Pupils take leadership roles in the school council and support one another through becoming 'anti-bullying' ambassadors.

Pupils appreciate the clubs on offer such as gymnastics, football and chess. Pupils' mental health is supported well through workshops and 'well-being Wednesday' activities. Trips and residential visits allow pupils to experience a range of activities that stretch their independence and resilience. Pupils are happy in school.

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

New leaders are determined to improve pupils' achievement. They have made positive changes to pupils' well-being and pastoral support. Nonetheless, the school knows there is more to do to ensure the quality of education is good.

Children in the early years benefit from a well-sequenced curriculum which builds progressively over time. Staff plan exciting and engaged activities for children, including those with SEND, to make considerable progress from very low starting points.

Pupils learn from a broad and balanced curriculum. Some subjects are further developed than others. For example, in mathematics, the school is clear about what pupils need to learn. Children in the early years quickly learn how to count in pairs, using counters to build their understanding of number. In Year 6, pupils recall learning about calculating fractions of amounts.

However, in other curriculum areas, the school has not identified the precise knowledge pupils need to know and remember. This makes it difficult for pupils to build their knowledge over time.

Communication and language are prioritised from the moment children start school. In Reception Year, children learn the sounds that letters make. Staff check that children have strategies to read unfamiliar words. Adults weave phonics into

classroom activities, modelling how to say the sounds accurately. This means children can practise using the sounds they know, helping them to become more confident readers. Most pupils have books that match the sounds they have learned. They practise reading in school and at home. This helps pupils get better at reading. Any pupils who may need extra support are given the help they need to keep up with the phonics programme.

The school successfully supports many pupils with SEND. The school has established a 'hub' to serve the needs of pupils with the most complex needs. The 'hub' is a place where pupils learn how to manage their emotions and regulate their behaviour. Most pupils with SEND have their needs met well. However, as with other groups of pupils, some do not achieve academic success.

The rate of pupils' attendance is low. Recently, the school has improved its systems for managing pupils' attendance. Although there are early signs of improvement, persistent absence remains high for some groups of pupils, such as those who are disadvantaged.

Pupils learn about healthy relationships and demonstrate a mature understanding of consent. Community links within the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum are strong. The school places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' knowledge of safety. For example, local police work with the school to promote the importance of staying safe online. Pupils appreciate the importance of being active citizens and making a positive difference to their local community, such as singing at the local residential home.

Governors care deeply about staff, pupils and their community. They understand and fulfil their statutory duties, including safeguarding pupils. Governors have appointed determined senior leaders. However, until very recently, they have not challenged the school about the quality of education and attendance with enough rigour and urgency.

Staff pull together and support each other well. They appreciate the consideration that is given to their well-being and workload. Staff are proud to work at the school. Most parents recommend the school. They appreciate the communication and support they receive from staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The precise knowledge pupils need to know and remember is not sufficiently identified and sequenced across all subjects. As a result, pupils, including those with SEND, find it hard to build their knowledge based on what they already

know. The school must ensure that the precise knowledge it wants pupils to learn is identified and sequenced across all subjects.

- The schools' work to reduce persistent absence has not been robust enough. Absence and persistent absence remain high. Pupils, therefore, do not benefit as well as they should from their education. The school must take decisive action to reduce absence and persistent absence as a matter of urgency.
- Governors do not have a sufficient understanding of the quality of education pupils receive. Over time, they have not challenged leaders sufficiently about curriculum development and attendance. Governors need to ensure they have better oversight of the school's effectiveness and use it to rigorously hold leaders to account.

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 special educational needs and/or disabilities (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	135857
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10334693
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	360
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Claire Price
Headteacher	Tony Larnar (executive headteacher) Rosie Hill (co-head of school) Emily Hayet-Patino (co-head of school)
Website	www.oakwood.gloucs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	18 and 19 December 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been several changes of staff since the previous inspection. The executive headteacher took up post in September 2023. The co-headteachers were made permanent in April 2024.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is well above the national average.
- The school is part of the Aspire Foundation, a registered charity founded to support children and families through a range of provision including children's centres, early year's settings and primary schools.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, members of staff, a representative from the local authority, and the chair and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography, religious education and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited samples of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments, and the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Gavin Summerfield, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Spencer Allen	Ofsted Inspector
Hilary Goddard	Ofsted Inspector

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