

Inspection of Oakmere Primary School

Chace Avenue, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 5NP

Inspection dates:	8 and 9 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of this welcoming school. Staff and pupils have developed positive relationships. They show respect for each other. Pupils learn about differences and describe each other as 'unique and special'.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Staff care deeply for pupils and manage their behaviour positively. Pupils know what is expected of them. They understand why behaving well is important for their learning. Pupils have strong learning behaviours. Those who find this more difficult are supported well by staff.

The school has developed an ambitious curriculum. It covers a broad range of subjects. Pupils enjoy lessons particularly when they can be creative. Teachers explicitly teach important vocabulary across all subjects. Pupils speak proudly about what they know. Most pupils achieve well.

Pupils enjoy the wider opportunities on offer. They develop their understanding of fundamental British values through assemblies and leadership roles such as peer mediators and school councillors. Pupils take the responsibility of these roles very seriously.

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

The school has made considerable improvements since the previous inspection. The curriculum in place now helps pupils from the Nursery Year to Year 6 to make progress. Leaders have developed a suitable curriculum. This is effective for most pupils. However, important learning is not always as clear as it should be in some parts of the early years curriculum. In these instances, some staff are not able to support children in building their learning as well as they could.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. The clear order of learning helps pupils to remember what has been taught. For example, older pupils confidently remember science learning from previous years. Teachers use assessment well. They identify misconceptions and provide pupils with clear guidance so they know how well they are doing.

The school quickly identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It ensures that these pupils receive highly effective support, which helps to build their independence. Pupils with SEND are included in all aspects of school life. They learn alongside their peers. Teachers are well trained to adapt their teaching appropriately. Pupils with SEND achieve well across the curriculum.

There is a well-established approach to teaching reading. Children in the early years make a strong start. Teachers help them to recall prior learning, learn new sounds and practise blending regularly. The school monitors pupils' progress in reading closely. Pupils read from books that match their phonics knowledge. If pupils fall behind their peers, they receive targeted support from well-trained staff. This includes a small number of pupils in key stage 2 with gaps in their reading knowledge. Older pupils are exposed to challenging

texts. Teachers help them to access these texts by explicitly teaching unfamiliar vocabulary before reading lessons. This helps pupils to be successful and to develop a love of reading.

In the last two years, there has been a small improvement in pupils' rates of attendance. The school monitors this closely and takes appropriate action when pupils' absence starts to increase. However, too many pupils still do not attend school regularly. This means they have gaps in their learning.

Routines are well established in early years. Children quickly learn what is expected. Staff and pupils appreciate the positive changes in behaviour that the school has brought about. Pupils are calm and well mannered. This means their learning is not disrupted. Pupils are taught about bullying and say that it is now rare. They have confidence in staff to deal with bullying effectively.

The school has improved the offer of clubs, trips and leadership posts available to pupils. Pupils connect trips, such as visits to museums, to their learning. Staff are proud to enhance the curriculum by arranging visits from local experts, for example by offering a rocket-making workshop in science. The school is proud of long-standing events such as the mini-marathon. It works in partnership with local schools to offer pupils a range of sporting opportunities. The school makes sure that it prioritises pupils who may not get the chance to take part in these activities, including pupils who are disadvantaged. A high number of disadvantaged pupils attend. These opportunities help pupils understand the importance of exercise to help them keep healthy.

Leaders and governors have a clear vision for the school. Governors have used expert support to help them to better understand their roles and responsibilities. Teachers are positive about the recent improvements to the curriculum. They say this helps them to be better teachers. Leaders consider staff workload and well-being, including teachers who are at the start of their career.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of areas of learning in the early years, the curriculum does not detail what children should know and remember in sufficient detail. This means staff in early years are not always clear about learning intentions and cannot help children as effectively as possible to secure key knowledge. The school should ensure that the early years curriculum provides the important knowledge and skills children need to know in readiness for their learning in key stage 1.
- Some pupils do not attend school regularly. This means they miss important learning,

which is difficult for them to catch up. The school should be more precise with its strategies to improve attendance so that pupils come to school regularly and in turn make better progress through the curriculum.

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	117371
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10345199
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	246
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Colin Daniel
Headteacher	Ayshen Wilson
Website	www.oakmere.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	18 and 19 October 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school is moving from two-form entry to one-form entry. This means there is currently a mixed Year 3 and Year 4 class and a mixed Year 5 and Year 6 class.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's educational provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have

taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The lead inspector spoke with a group of governors, including the chair of governors and the local authority school effectiveness adviser.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects, met with pupils 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 gathered the views of pupils by speaking to them during lessons, in groups and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of staff to gather their views of the school. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. An inspector also spoke to parents and carers at the school gate.

Inspection team

Emma Breckenridge, lead inspector Ofsted Inspector

Gina Bailey Ofsted Inspector

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