

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: The Oaks Primary School

Aster Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP2 0NR

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 October 2024

Outcome

The Oaks Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Philip Palmer. This school is part of ASSET Education trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Clare Flintoff, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Simon Evans-Evans.

What is it like to attend this school?

All pupils receive the support they need to 'strive for excellence'. Pupils develop excellent communication skills, respectful relationships and positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils' conduct around the school is purposeful. They focus and concentrate on learning. As a result, pupils achieve well in national tests. These qualities prepare them well for the future.

Pupils develop teamwork skills and a sense of fair sportsmanship. They enjoy practising their football skills at breaktime. Older pupils responsibly take on leadership roles, such as corridor monitor and librarian. This fosters a sense of belonging. Younger pupils aspire to take on these responsibilities. This is because older pupils are excellent role models. Bullying is rare. If it occurs, the school deals with it effectively.

The school's 'complete human strategy' promotes pupils' physical and mental well-being. High-quality pastoral support helps pupils understand and express their emotions. Pupils find the 'worry box' helpful in alerting teachers to their need for support. Some pupils enjoy extra reading sessions with Dougal the therapy dog. This helps them read with confidence and assists their emotional well-being. Well-planned trips beyond the local area broaden pupils' horizons. They delight in going on the London Underground.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has more pupils with speech, language and communication needs. The school also has an increase in pupils who speak English as an additional language. There is an above-average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. To help pupils do as well as possible, the school prioritises pupils becoming confident and articulate. The curriculum is enriched with trips and visits to inspire pupils and broaden their interests and talents. This also brings learning to life. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language achieve exceptionally well from their starting points.

Sustaining the school's ambitious vision is due to well-planned professional development. This continues to advance staff's expertise and improve teaching. Trust leaders are well informed, so decisions are made in the best interests of pupils. This leads to praise from staff and parents about the school's inclusivity and commitment to well-being.

Children get off to a fantastic start in the early years. From Nursery, the school focuses on developing children's communication, language and early mathematical skills. Children learn rhymes and how to focus their attention. Familiar routines help children become independent, for example knowing to put on an apron before exploring containers in the water tray. High-quality interactions are well-tuned to the needs of individual children. All this prepares children extremely well for their next stage in education.

The school's curriculum is well considered and ambitious. It sets out key knowledge pupils will learn, along with the most important vocabulary. Well-structured lessons ensure pupils always recap on what they have learned before. Pupils like the chants that help things 'stick in their mind' and remember more. Pupils learn to build on others' ideas. They engage in purposeful conversations and present their own ideas with clarity. Teachers check pupils' learning frequently to correct any misunderstandings. Pupils with SEND succeed alongside their peers. This is because adaptations to learning meet their needs.

The school persists in helping all pupils learn to read well from Reception. Well-trained staff teach phonics with precision. The school is quick to identify pupils who are not keeping up with the phonics programme. Extra help results in these pupils gaining confidence and fluency in their reading. Pupils love to borrow books from the expansive school library. They develop an interest in a wide range of reading materials, from poems to non-fiction.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They understand the rules and learn from their mistakes. Pupils take pride in striving for excellence rewards. Pupil attendance rates are high because there is a clear expectation that 'every day counts'. Staff go the extra mile to support families to improve their child's attendance.

The way the school promotes pupils' character and personal development is exemplary. Pupils become confident, independent thinkers. They foster mutual respect in 'circle

group' discussions. Pupils articulate differing viewpoints politely, such as debating ways to provide sustainable food sources for school lunches. They learn to understand democracy by voting on class matters, such as selecting their class novel. Experiences such as 'The Oaks has talent' and residential trips broaden pupils' interests. Sporting events extend the talents of pupils with differing abilities. 'Jobs day' and 'careers month' develop pupils' aspirations about their future.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 outstanding for overall effectiveness in September 2018.

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	141842
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10323752
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	451
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Simon Evans-Evans
CEO of the trust	Clare Flintoff
Headteacher	Philip Palmer
Website	http://www.theoaksprimary.co.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	19 and 20 September 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of ASSET Education trust, which has a further 13 schools.
- There have been some changes to leadership since the previous inspection.
- The school does not currently use any registered or unregistered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke to the headteacher, the co-heads of school, teachers, pupils, subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.

- The inspector also met with members of the governing board, including the chair, and a representative from the trust board.
- The inspector spoke with the chief executive officer from the trust.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, she spoke to pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. She also took into consideration the online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Mireille MacRaid, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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