

Oakwood Infant and Nursery School

Windsor Avenue, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO15 2AH

Inspection dates

16–17 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher is the catalyst for school improvement. She has galvanised staff and changed the culture of the school.
- School leaders, including governors, know the school's strengths and areas to improve.
- Governors are effective and efficient; they have a 'can-do' approach. With the headteacher, their primary aim is always to improve the quality of education provided for pupils.
- Pupils' outcomes are much improved since the previous inspection. Phonics and writing are much better. However, pupils have too few opportunities to practise and hone their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Extra help for disadvantaged pupils is carefully checked to ensure they do well.
- Staff believe pupils need to be happy to thrive and do well at school. Support for vulnerable pupils and their families enables them to make the most of school.
- The most able pupils, including those who are also disadvantaged, make better progress than when the school was previously inspected. However, some work set in a few classes is still not sufficiently challenging.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is managed effectively so these pupils flourish.
- Teaching is good overall. Lessons are interesting and engage pupils.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning play an important part in their good progress. They are proud of themselves and their school.
- Oakwood largely succeeds in the aspiration for pupils, 'We are all stars, watch us shine'.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils like the rewards for good conduct and hard work.
- Parents agree that their children feel safe and well cared for in school.
- Pupils' attendance continues to improve steadily. Most, but not all, parents respond positively to the school's expectations and see the benefit of regular schooling. However, girls' attendance remains low.
- Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Parents are positive about the school. Typical comments include, 'The head has improved the school, if she were a hotel she'd get five stars!' and, 'The whole feel of the school is lovely!'

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the learning for the most able pupils, including those who are also disadvantaged, is consistently challenging enough to enable them to reach their full potential.
- Ensure that teachers provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise and hone their writing and mathematical skills in relevant activities in other subjects.
- Seek ways to further improve pupils' attendance, particularly that of girls.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher's tenacious determination lies at the heart of the school's improvements. Aply supported by governors and staff, she has remorselessly driven the school forward. Since the previous inspection, checks on the quality of teaching are more robust, and teachers are held fully to account for the progress of their pupils.
- School leaders' and governors' high aspirations for the school and its pupils ensure no barrier is seen as insurmountable. In particular, they have changed the culture of the school. Staff and pupils say they are proud of the school and the 'can-do' attitude that prevails.
- School leaders' very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement ensures change is in the right areas.
- Despite recruitment difficulties, the headteacher strives for the highest-quality teaching only, and accepts no compromise. She has successfully built an effective team of senior and middle leaders, as committed as she is to achieving the best for their pupils. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- Subject leaders' understanding of their role is good. For example, English and mathematics leaders' highly effective monitoring ensures changes introduced are understood and followed by staff. Steps being taken to improve teaching and raise pupils' outcomes further are clear and accurate.
- Staff morale is good. Those responding to Ofsted's online survey agree they share a clear understanding of the goals the school is aiming to achieve. Those working in the school when it was last inspected overwhelmingly agree it has improved.
- Pupils say the curriculum is fun and interesting. All subjects are incorporated. However, opportunities for pupils to practise and hone writing and mathematics skills in other subjects are limited. Visits to places of interest and visitors to school bring learning to life. Pupils like the extra activities after school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are generous in all they do for those less fortunate than themselves, particularly children. They collect for the homeless and support the local food bank at harvest time. They recognise and celebrate our differences and similarities. Last Christmas, for example, they performed 'Silent Night' in Polish.
- Pupils' understanding of British values is good. Pupils know, for example, the importance of Remembrance Day and the significance of the poppy. Pupils respect other cultures and religions, and know it is 'fair' to treat everyone equally.
- Oakwood is an inclusive community. Every curriculum topic has a multicultural aspect. All pupils enjoy equal access to all aspects of school life. Barriers to learning are tackled. School letters are provided in 16 languages.
- Provision for the relatively small proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is much improved. The leaders' thorough knowledge and understanding ensures these pupils get the right support. Good training means teaching assistants guide pupils effectively. Parents' high involvement benefits pupils

because they see home and school working together in their children's best interests.

- Leaders carefully monitor the use of pupil premium funding and ensure it is used effectively. Extra help is deployed where it is most needed, for all eligible pupils, including those most able.
- Additional primary school sports funding is used very effectively. A staff survey highlighted areas in their knowledge and understanding requiring improvement, which have been addressed. Pupils now enjoy a wider range of activities, including basketball. Older pupils know that physical activity is part of a healthy lifestyle.
- Links with the junior school enable pupils to make a smooth transfer. For example, vulnerable pupils receive extra visits to help them feel at home in their new surroundings. Staff moderate work together to ensure they have a similar perception of pupils' abilities. Links with other local schools benefit the school too.
- Local authority support is good. It has played a significant part in the school's improvement. For example, Oakwood's staff benefit from links with those in similar roles at good schools because they can see effective techniques in action.
- Parents' positive view of the school is based on strong relationships with staff. Parents respond positively, even when the headteacher makes demands of them, such as to improve the attendance of their children. Parents appreciate the training courses for them. One parent stated, 'The courses have helped me help my children'. Nine in every 10 responding to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, would recommend the school to another parent. Parents spoken to feel the school is well led and managed, and that their concerns are listened to.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective.
- Governors' strong sense of purpose means they do not compromise or accept second best from themselves or staff. For example, they perceived staff absence to be high, and successfully tackled this problem head on. In this and other ways, they have worked closely with the headteacher to change the culture of the school.
- Governors' time is used efficiently. For example, each governor links to a subject and a class, and brings this more in-depth knowledge to collective decision-making.
- When vacancies occur, governors look closely at gaps in their skill set, and try to fill them. Currently, governors' wide range of skills, from finance to human resources, is deployed effectively.
- Governors challenge the school to prove that changes made work, and represent good value for money. In particular, governors check that additional funding, such as pupil premium, is used effectively.
- Governors use the school's information about pupils' progress effectively to gain a clear view about how well pupils learn. This information is compared with that from other sources, including their own monitoring, to check it matches and they challenge leaders if it does not.
- Governors rigorously oversee the performance of staff, including the headteacher, to check targets are met.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's culture promotes vigilance for the safeguarding of pupils. All staff are fully aware of their responsibilities, and what to look for in order to keep pupils safe.
- Staff and governors' regular training, including the 'Prevent' duty (to prevent radicalisation of young people), ensures awareness levels never drop. Staff's up-to-date knowledge enables them to detect potentially vulnerable pupils, so that action to intervene can be taken quickly.
- Staff say they are confident in raising any concerns they may have. The school's clear and thorough systems effectively record and note concerns and the actions taken.
- Parents understand the school's role in safeguarding pupils. The deputy designated leader works closely with vulnerable families to ensure pupils' safety and welfare is paramount.
- Documentation is thorough. Checks on the suitability of staff, governors, regular volunteers and contractors are robust.
- Relationships with outside agencies are very strong. School staff call on a range of expertise when seeking help to support pupils and vulnerable families.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the previous inspection. In particular, the teaching of phonics and writing are much improved, and assessment is used accurately to make sure activities are not too hard for pupils, particularly those who need to catch up.
- Lessons run smoothly because staff and pupils enjoy positive relationships. Pupils want to learn and to please staff. When pupils move between classes, for example for ability-grouped phonics sessions, they do so quickly and sensibly.
- Classroom displays promote pupils' learning well. Pupils regularly refer to prompts on display to support their learning. At the start and end of each writing unit, pupils' work is added to a display of each individual's writing. This illustrates the good progress they make and gives pupils a clear understanding of their progress.
- Teachers deploy the well-trained teaching assistants effectively. School leaders and governors have a clear focus on developing a very effective team of teaching assistants in their school. This, together with the strong commitment of the assistants themselves, makes a significant contribution to the improved teaching and learning.
- Staff develop pupils' self-assessment skills very well. Through open-ended questions, they encourage pupils to articulate the progress they have made. Pupils recognise their improvement and offer sensible thoughts on where they need to focus next.
- Staff promote pupils' speaking and listening skills well. In general activities, such as celebration assembly, pupils are encouraged to speak aloud. In specific speech and language activities, skilled teaching assistants enable particularly rapid progress.
- Reading is taught well. The teaching of phonics is much more effective than when the

school was last inspected. This is because teachers and teaching assistants now have the necessary knowledge and skills. Pupils spoken to by inspectors clearly enjoy reading for pleasure and understand it is an important skill to master.

- Writing skills are taught well, and pupils are given more opportunities to write longer pieces of work than when the school was previously inspected. However, teachers do not yet ensure pupils use these skills when writing in other subjects. So, while Year 2 pupils demonstrate in an English lesson, for example, an understanding of the characteristics of a chronological report, they do not transfer these skills to writing in history.
- Mathematics is taught well. Clear advice and guidance from the subject leader ensure teachers know how to deepen and extend pupils' understanding. An improved mathematics curriculum gives pupils good opportunities to reason and problem-solve. However, opportunities to hone these skills in other subjects are relatively few.
- Teachers cater for the most able pupils much better than when the school was previously inspected. Even so, some tasks continue to be too easy for pupils, or the instructions too difficult for them to read.
- Pupils' handwriting and presentation of their work are good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, largely brought about because of teachers' higher expectations, and pupils' greater pride in themselves and their work.
- Homework caters for pupils' differing abilities well. Those who struggle receive extra practise of work done in school. Those who succeed receive activities that challenge them to apply what they have learned in school. Whichever task pupils receive, their parents are given helpful advice to support their children.
- About nine in every 10 parents responding to Parent View agree their children are well taught at Oakwood Infant School.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The overwhelming majority of parents responding to Parent View agree their children are happy at school and well looked after.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning benefit their progress. Staff promote traits such as 'perseverance' and encourage pupils to try to figure out what to do if they are stuck. Pupils told an inspector that they like helping one another with their work.
- The most able pupils say that work is generally harder now than it used to be, but that some could be harder still, and they would like this.
- Pupils' preparation for their future life is good. For example, 'careers week' aims to raise their aspirations and give them an insight into a good variety of employment opportunities.
- Pupils willingly accept responsibility and opportunities to contribute. Some, for example, are 'ambassadors' who help others.

- Pupils' good understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet is the result of clear advice from visitors such as the police and regular reminders in lessons. In other areas, such as classroom and playground safety, pupils are aware of their own safety and that of others.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In particular, pupils' attendance overall has improved since the previous inspection.
- Four in five parents responding to Parent View agree that the school makes sure pupils behave well. Those spoken to feel that bullying is dealt with quickly and firmly. Parents like that they are informed and involved, whether their child is victim or offender.
- Pupils know the school rules and usually stick to them. They respond positively to praise and reward. Celebration assembly is a very special time when parents join the school to congratulate impeccable behaviour, extra effort or hard work.
- The vast majority of pupils work and play together harmoniously. They mix well at break and lunchtimes. They participate enthusiastically in the games that are organised for them at lunchtime.
- A few pupils struggle to manage their own behaviour. These pupils receive extra help and support, which is generally effective, so they quickly return to learning. When relevant, staff involve parents. Pupils benefit from seeing home and school working closely together, and hearing one consistent message.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They say bullying does happen, but that they have adults to turn to if they are worried, and they are confident something would be done. All parents responding to Parent View who expressed an opinion agree their children feel safe in school.
- Attendance is slightly below the average for primary schools. The school does much to encourage regular attendance. For example, a breakfast club operates each morning. Pupils enjoy healthy snacks, a good range of activities, and one another's company. Even so, the attendance of girls in particular is low.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection. In particular, standards in phonics and writing are better.
- The school's checks on progress, and the quality of work seen by inspectors in pupils' books, show that the vast majority of current pupils make good progress.
- Since the previous inspection, results of the Year 1 phonics screening have steadily improved. Staff are better trained and the school's approach better organised.
- Since the previous inspection, results in the Year 2 assessments have improved overall, too. By 2015, the proportion reaching the expected standard for their age was broadly average in reading and not far behind in writing and mathematics. The school's checks on progress and current pupils' work seen by inspectors suggest that the large majority of pupils are on track to achieve or exceed the expectation for their age in 2017 in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2016, results overall fell. This is because

inconsistencies in teaching meant some pupils made limited progress and their achievement was lower. As a result, although achievement in three of the four classes was slightly better than that of 2015, the overall results fell.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because the tasks they are given are at the right level to maximise their learning. This is an improvement since Ofsted's monitoring visit in December 2014.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. This is partly because these pupils, including those who are most able, have extra help tailored to their needs. Their progress is checked regularly and the extra help changed if it is not working. The results of disadvantaged pupils in the 2016 national tests were low. This group also made good progress, but it was from low starting points so they did not catch up fully.
- The most able pupils generally make good progress. Lessons cater for their needs better now than when the school was previously inspected. However, in some lessons they start with activities that are too simple, before moving onto work that gives them sufficient challenge to get their teeth into. As a result, time is not well used and these pupils do not meet their potential.
- The school is fully inclusive; the small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups do well academically and participate in all aspects of school life.
- Leaders and teachers recognised that boys did less well than girls, and that the difference was much larger than that typically found in schools nationally. Changes to the curriculum and how it is taught mean that boys currently in the school are generally making good progress.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years provision is good in both Nursery and Reception classes. In particular, children's tasks are pitched at the right level to maximise their learning, an improvement since Ofsted's monitoring visit in December 2014.
- Children make good progress throughout the setting. From starting points that are below those typical for three- and four-year-olds, an increasing proportion reach a good level of development by the end of Reception. Even so, the proportion remains below the national average. About half the children start at Oakwood in Nursery and the remainder at the start of Reception. The school's checks on progress show that the proportion of children who reach a good level of development by the end of Reception is higher for those who join in Nursery than those who join a year later.
- Children behave well and respond positively to staff's high expectations. They are polite and considerate, closely following the example staff provide.
- Children enjoy one another's company. They work and play together well. At snack time, children wait their turn and socialise together. Staff promote conversation, for example about healthy eating.
- Adults support learning well. They actively engage children through interesting activities and questioning that probes and extends their thinking. If children understand quickly, they seize the opportunity and reshape the task. For example, when it became clear children understood ordering of numbers to 10, the teacher

quickly extended the task to 20.

- Adults' clear and accurate understanding of children and their individual needs enables them to plan appropriate tasks.
- Children know themselves as learners. Each individual's work is displayed, including their next steps in learning. During the inspection, children pointed these out to an inspector. They clearly understood their progress, at a level appropriate to their age.
- Well-established routines are clear to children. Children, for their part, settle quickly. They want to please staff.
- Both inside and out, interesting activities motivate children to be curious and creative. There is a good balance between adult-led activities and those chosen by children.
- All children enjoy equal access to all aspects of school. Any barriers to learning are quickly spotted by staff, and effective extra help provided to remove them.
- The provision is well led and managed. Leaders effectively manage their separate areas and work closely together. Staff know the systems and procedures, including those for safeguarding children. Staff roles and responsibilities are equally clear; staff know what is expected of them, and what they can expect of others in the team.
- Parents say the arrangements for their children to start school are good and they settle quickly. The relationship with parents is positive. Parents feel staff listen to them and know their children well. Parents say they like to contribute to the online assessment system, and to see their child's progress in 'real' time.

School details

Unique reference number	114722
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10011814

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant and Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	404
Appropriate authority	The governing board
Co-Chair	Christine Chadbourne and Jenny Cooke
Headteacher	Kathy Maguire-Egan
Telephone number	01255 421168
Website	www.oakwoodinfantandnurseryschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@oakwood.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 July 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school operates a Nursery. Currently children attend for 15 hours per week.
- There are four classes in each of Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is well above average.
- The overall proportion of pupils who receive support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The school operates a breakfast club five days a week.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited all classrooms. Some visits were conducted jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors observed small groups of pupils being taught.
- Inspectors also looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They met with pupils to discuss their experiences at school.
- Pupils were observed taking part in other activities and as they moved around the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other leaders, teachers, other staff and governors. Inspectors also met with a representative of the local authority.
- The views of 22 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account. The inspectors also held informal discussions with parents. The inspectors considered the views of 12 members of staff who responded to their survey.
- School information was considered and documents were scrutinised. These included the school's development plan, recorded checks on the quality of teaching, curriculum plans, minutes of meetings of the governing body, and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance. Arrangements for and records of safeguarding procedures were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Robert Greatrex, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Patricia MacLachlan	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Leahy	Ofsted Inspector

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