

Inspection of Oaks Primary Academy

Oak Tree Avenue, Maidstone, Kent ME15 9AX

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Oaks Primary Academy is a welcoming and caring school. Pupils feel happy and safe here. They say that bullying very rarely happens and if it does, it is sorted out quickly. One pupil who had attended a different school before this one commented: 'This school is much more caring.'

Pupils have an infectious appetite for learning and relish every opportunity to become more knowledgeable. This is because learning is placed firmly at the heart of the school. Expectations of pupils are high. Time is spent ensuring that pupils learn to take responsibility for their learning. This means that they are fully invested in all parts of school life. For example, many pupils attend extra-curricular clubs such as languages, sports, computer coding, singing and dancing.

Pupils' positive behaviour in classrooms and around the school creates a highly engaging learning environment. Underpinning everything staff and pupils do are the school's values: we care, we have boundless ambition, we work together and we keep getting better. One pupil who spoke with inspectors summed up how he feels about learning by saying: 'I want to learn for longer to get smarter every day and get a job.'

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

Every bit of the day is a chance for pupils to learn. This is achieved through a highly ambitious and well-thought-out curriculum. Leaders strive for pupils to become internationally minded. This means that they are committed to developing pupils who help to make the world a better, more peaceful place. Staff do this by encouraging pupils to take ownership of their learning, be open-minded and work with others towards a shared purpose.

Leaders have identified the knowledge they want pupils to learn across a wide range of subjects. This knowledge is organised into 'central ideas', for example how people can engage with the arts. As a result, learning is carefully planned and sequenced from Nursery to Year 6. Firm foundations are laid in the early years so that pupils are ready for what will come in key stage 1 and beyond. Consequently, what pupils learn becomes more complex as they move through the school.

Teachers keep a close check on what pupils have learned, which helps them to provide timely support to those who fall behind. Pupils receive feedback about learning through pupil-teacher discussions known as 'conferencing'. Pupils who spoke with inspectors during the inspection said it is a helpful way to improve their work. This leads to pupils having an impressive knowledge and deep understanding of many important themes and issues.

Leaders know that reading is the key to unlocking pupils' full potential. Therefore, leaders prioritise reading. Staff receive high-quality training in phonics. The teaching of phonics begins in Nursery and continues into Reception and key stage 1. This

means that by the end of Year 2 pupils read confidently and fluently. Those who need extra help are supported well to catch up. Careful consideration is given to the books pupils read. This helps to ensure that what pupils read reflects the world we live in.

A sense of togetherness and belonging permeates the school. Staff get to know and understand the needs of every child. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils are identified quickly and are given the support they need to excel. This means that their learning is of the highest quality and they thrive in this inclusive environment.

The personal development of children is exceptional. Staff prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education as well as preparing them to take their place in the world. For example, pupils learn about how to lead a healthy lifestyle, world problems, tolerance, democracy and how to manage money. In Nursery and Reception, pupils learn about the world around them. For example, they learn about what makes families different. Learning to debate and disagree politely with other people's perspectives are also important in the school.

Leaders and governors are deeply committed to providing a high-quality education for pupils. Staff's professional development and workload are a priority. Staff who responded to our confidential staff survey said that leaders care about their development and consider their workload carefully. The principal and her determined leadership team are challenged and supported by a skilled group of governors. Together with the effective support provided by Leigh Academies Trust, this has led to rapid improvements in recent years.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Appropriate checks are carried out on all staff working at the school. Staff receive regular training about how to keep children safe. This means that they understand the risks children face. Staff know pupils and their families well and this helps them to spot things that could be a concern. Procedures are in place so that staff can report concerns. Leaders work well with other agencies and professionals to safeguard children.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They are confident in reporting concerns and have trusted adults they can talk to.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	137881
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10200892
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	194
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Frank Green
Principal	Jane Tipple
Website	http://www.oaksprimaryacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The academy is part of Leigh Academies Trust.
- The academy is authorised as an International Baccalaureate World School teaching the Primary Years Programme.
- The school runs its own early-morning breakfast club for pupils.
- There is a Nursery at the school, which has children from age three to four.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors did deep dives in reading, mathematics, modern foreign languages and personal, social, health and economic education. They discussed the

curriculum with leaders, staff and pupils, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and listened to pupils read.

- Inspectors visited the early years provision, including the Nursery.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, the chief executive and other representatives of Leigh Academies Trust, staff, pupils and those with responsibility for governance, including the chair of the trust.
- Inspectors considered the 119 responses to the pupil survey and the 21 responses to the confidential staff survey. They talked to parents before the school day and took account of the 34 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors viewed the school's website and policies, met with the designated safeguarding lead and spoke with pupils and staff. They checked school records of safeguarding checks carried out on adults working at the school and spoke with those responsible for governance.

Inspection team

Shaun Jarvis, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Clive Close

Her Majesty's Inspector

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