

Inspection of Oakfield Infant School - Part of Oakfield Schools Federation

Chowdene Bank, Low Fell, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE9 6JH

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 July 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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 at Oakfield embody the 'golden threads' of diversity, character and ambition. They speak clearly about what these words mean. Pupils are enthusiastic, inquisitive and articulate. They have positive attitudes towards their learning. Well-trained staff keep children safe. Pupils also know how to keep themselves safe. They readily point out the 'Oakfield safeguarding leads' and know what these staff do. Pupils have very positive relationships with adults. They greet staff with visible delight.

Pupils understand the high expectations that leaders have put in place. They achieve well as a result of striving to meet these high expectations. There is a calm and purposeful environment in school. Pupils cheerfully work together in collaboration. They help others wherever they can.

Pupils are proud of their school. They enjoy lessons and talk about what they have learned. They are very keen to share their knowledge with visitors. Pupils develop a keen sense of equality and fairness. They articulate this well. Parents are positive about the school. One parent summarised the views of others by saying, 'I feel confident my children are in a safe and secure environment that allows them the freedom to be themselves and grow, learning respect for others.'

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

From their first days in Reception, children enjoy a vibrant and well-resourced learning experience. Exciting activities fire children's imagination. There is a tangible love of books and writing. Children actively seek out chances to write. They use the familiar conventions of stories that they have heard adults modelling, in their independent writing. There is a clear focus on vocabulary and language. Children create treasure maps. They talk about volcanoes, tornadoes and how boats 'would sink if they hit an iceberg'. They use directional language accurately and use map keys to explain what they have drawn. They develop an effective base of phonics knowledge. This prepares them well for the next stage of their education.

The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in school is relatively small but is increasing. Pupils who are eligible for the government's additional pupil premium funding achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified. Skilled adults put provision in place to meet need. However, the targets for some pupils with SEND are not precise enough. In these cases, provision does not sufficiently address pupils' specific areas for development. As a result, some do not make the progress they are capable of.

Staff teach the school's phonics programme with consistency. They are well trained and have secure subject knowledge. There is a clear focus on pupils developing a secure base of phonics knowledge from Reception upwards. As a result, pupils develop into increasingly confident and fluent readers before they move to junior school. Pupils love reading. Their positive attitudes to reading are summed up by one pupil saying, 'I sometimes get lost in books.'

Across the wider curriculum, pupils enjoy a range of interesting and engaging lessons. In mathematics, for example, younger pupils have a secure understanding of number bonds. Others use known facts to add one-digit numbers to two-digit numbers accurately. They have a secure understanding of their prior learning. In geography, pupils talk with confidence about different continents. They compare physical and human features in Shanghai with those in London. Children in Reception talk about volcanoes on their treasure maps. They know that volcanoes 'erupt with lava' and are 'like mountains'. In religious education (RE), pupils compare birth rituals and ceremonies in different cultures. Other pupils identify synagogues in the local area as part of their Judaism unit of learning. However, some subject curriculums are relatively new and are not securely embedded at this point in time. Assessment in these subjects is not sufficiently precise to identify gaps in knowledge.

The school has high expectations for punctuality and attendance. There has been a demonstrable decrease in the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school. Attendance is high across the school.

There is a high-quality curriculum for pupils' wider development. This gives pupils an age-appropriate understanding of equality, tolerance and respect. It prepares pupils well for later life. Pupils articulate their learning with clarity. For example, pupils talk about the watershed for television programmes and what this is. They understand how to make healthy choices, including when making healthy wraps in design and technology lessons. They enjoy attending extra-curricular activities. Pupils on the school council talk about how they 'listen to what we need to do and make suggestions to make the school better'.

Leaders ensure that governors get detailed information about the school. This allows governors to offer supportive challenge to the school. Governors fulfil their roles with diligence. They have clear oversight of the school and its improvement journey. There is a clear focus on staff workload and well-being. Staff feel well supported in school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The support plan targets for some pupils with SEND are not precise enough. This means that teaching does not consistently address need and some pupils with SEND do not make the progress of which they are capable. The school should ensure that targets in support plans are more precise and specific.

- Some subject curriculums are quite new, and assessment processes are in the process of refinement. This means that assessment in some subjects does not identify gaps in pupils' learning precisely enough to inform future teaching. The school should continue to embed the curriculums and the assessment processes so that gaps in pupils' learning can be addressed with increasing precision.

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	108332
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10347227
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rachel Mason
Headteacher	Kate Chisholm (Executive headteacher)
Website	www.oakfieldschoolsfederation.org/
Dates of previous inspection	29 and 30 November 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of a federation with a junior school. The two schools share the same site.
- The executive headteacher and some other staff work across both schools in the federation.
- The school has a funding agreement in place with the Department for Education and is in the process of converting to academy status. The school will join Smart Multi-Academy Trust in autumn 2024.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

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.
- The inspectors met with the executive headteacher, other school leaders, representatives of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and representatives of the school improvement team at the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and RE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector listened to some pupils from Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and looked at samples of pupils' work in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record, met with those responsible for safeguarding, 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 staff and pupil online surveys and Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. An inspector met with some parents.

Inspection team

Richard Beadnall, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lynn George

Ofsted Inspector

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