

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Oakgrove School

Venturer Gate, Middleton, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK10 9JQ

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 November 2024

Outcome

Oakgrove School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The executive headteacher of this school is Ian Tett. The school is part of the Kingsbridge Educational Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Peter Barnes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Megan Crawford.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be members of this school. They are motivated by the school's high expectations, which support them to achieve well. Pupils learn the importance of the school's values of 'excellence, innovation and respect'. They demonstrate these through considerate conduct towards others and their positive attitudes to learning. Across lessons, the calm and focused atmosphere supports high-quality learning.

The school's ethos of being a 'big school with a big heart' benefits pupils. Across the school, pupils are well-known by staff. They appreciate the warm and respectful relationships with staff across the school. Importantly, pupils are well known by staff. In the early years, staff enthusiastically develop children's self-confidence and familiarity with important routines. This lays the foundations for the positive behaviour pupils demonstrate across the school.

Pupils attend well and enjoy learning. They are enthused by the range of wider opportunities provided by the school. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to try out and learn new skills through clubs such as 'Bee Club'. There is high participation in these. Pupils are well prepared for life in the wider world. They reflect on how trips, including residential and visiting speakers, broaden their horizons.

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

The school's curriculum is broad and ambitious. It starts strongly in the early years, when small steps support children in learning important knowledge and skills. The school has prioritised the development of subject curriculums which build and deepen knowledge from Nursery through to Year 13. In most subjects, learning is seamless as pupils progress through the school. This supports pupils to achieve highly. In a minority of subjects, the order of knowledge and approaches to teaching continue to be developed. Consequently, in these subjects, pupils do not build a secure understanding over time. While published entries for the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) are low, the school is taking effective action to grow this by increasing the number of pupils taking a language qualification.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They draw on this to present new learning clearly. Pupils apply new learning to carefully developed learning activities. In the early years, well-considered activities help children to do this through play. Most teachers check pupils' understanding well. However, some teaching does not identify whether pupils have gaps in their knowledge. As a result, pupils sometimes struggle with new learning because they lack understanding of some essential knowledge.

Reading is a strength of the school. In the early years, highly skilled staff teach children phonics from the start. Throughout the school, pupils who are in the early stages of reading receive prompt and high-quality support. This helps them catch up quickly. Across the school, the enjoyment of reading is promoted effectively through a wide range of diverse texts.

Across the school, the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are clearly identified. Staff draw on individual plans to make appropriate adaptations to learning activities. These approaches help pupils with SEND to progress well through the planned curriculum.

Pupils' behaviour is calm and respectful. This starts in the early years, where children learn routines and language to help them manage their behaviour. In the early years, children learn routines and develop language which help them in learning well. Across the school, pupils arrive on time for lessons and settle quickly to focus on learning. Typically, they learn with purpose. In a few cases where pupils lose engagement, teachers quickly re-focus them on learning. Around the school, pupils act responsibly. The conduct of sixth-form students is exemplary. They act as role models for younger pupils.

There is rich work to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. They learn about the value of diversity and cultural differences. This helps them to develop an understanding of the importance of fairness and respect. In the sixth form, students benefit from the 'excellence programme'. Through this, they gain experience volunteering, working with, or running activities for, younger children. The school excels in preparing pupils for their next steps. This is demonstrated by the confidence pupils in Years 6, 11 and 13 have about moving on to their next stages of education. The high-quality careers curriculum supports

them in making informed choices either post-16 or when they complete their sixth-form studies.

The school continuously reviews the impact of changes on pupils' achievement. Where improvements are identified, the school makes sure these are sustained and embedded. Governors and the trust provide strong challenge and support to this process. Staff enjoy working in the school. They value efforts to manage their workload, which supports them to focus on teaching well.

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 minority of subjects, changes to the curriculum are not yet fully embedded. As a result, in these subjects, pupils do not develop a secure understanding of important knowledge over time. The school needs to ensure that across all subjects, the curriculum supports all pupils to build secure understanding of important knowledge.
- The methods used in some teaching to check pupils' understanding do not identify whether they understand important knowledge well. As a result, some pupils can struggle to apply new learning because they lack understanding of some essential knowledge. The school needs to ensure that approaches to checking pupils' learning support teachers to address and fill knowledge gaps across all subjects.

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 good 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 good for overall effectiveness in June 2019.

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 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	136454
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10341673
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2,498
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	390
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Megan Crawford
CEO of the trust	Peter Barnes
Headteacher	Ian Tett (executive headteacher)
Website	www.oakgrove.school
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Kingsbridge Educational Trust.
- The school uses two registered alternative provisions.
- The local governing board oversees 'The Oaks' breakfast and after-school club.
- The school meets the requirements of provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school is based on two sites, with an on-site nursery.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the senior leaders, including the executive headteacher, special educational needs coordinators, subject leaders and teachers. The lead inspector met with representatives of the trust including the chair of trustees, the local governing body, and chief executive officer. He also spoke to the school improvement adviser.
- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of their work.
- The inspectors observed breaktime and lunchtime activities.
- 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.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school. They considered the school's development plan.
- The inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including the additional free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke with some parents at the school gate.

Inspection team

Phillip Blagg, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jane Cartwright

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Ofsted Inspector

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