Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Oak Cottage Primary School

Greswolde Road, Solihull, West Midlands B91 1DY

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 January 2025

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to Oak Cottage Primary School. There are strong relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils are very well cared for. The school's 'Values Tree' underpins everything that happens at Oak Cottage. All pupils know the importance of respect, honesty, kindness, teamwork and friendship. There is a real sense of community and purpose at the school.

Pupils are motivated to live up to the high expectations the school has for them. Pupils have a real enthusiasm for learning. They work hard and are proud of what they and others achieve.

Pupils' conduct is exemplary. The atmosphere in school is calm and pupils are focused. Pupils treat each other with kindness and consideration. They look after each other and many remark that they see the school as 'one big family'.

Pupils know how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy, as well as how to stay safe online and in the wider community. They are keen to take on leadership responsibilities. These include being on the student council or the eco-committee, or becoming a librarian, a 'peer listener' or a 'buddy' to the younger children. Pupils also appreciate the many clubs they can attend, such as martial arts, choir, coding and 'Rock Band'.

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

The school has provided an ambitious curriculum that meets pupils' needs. The curriculum is carefully sequenced and allows pupils to build on their knowledge over time. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well. The school has a thorough approach to checking pupils' understanding. Misconceptions or gaps in pupils' knowledge are addressed at every stage of their learning.

Outcomes in mathematics are particularly strong. Once essential mathematical skills and knowledge have been mastered, all pupils have opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills. For example, in the younger years, pupils learn essential multiplying and dividing skills. As they move through school, they develop an understanding of what makes a right or wrong answer.

From the moment they start school, children begin to learn to read. Delivery of the phonics programme is highly effective. The school quickly identifies pupils who may be falling behind in their reading. Extra reading support and one-to-one intervention is provided so that these pupils can catch up. All pupils make progress in their reading by developing fluency and confidence.

The writing curriculum is designed to allow younger pupils to develop and practise their technical skills so they become competent writers. All pupils, as they move through the school, are able to write extensively, confidently and for an appropriate audience.

The curriculum in some subjects still needs further development. Pupils learn important knowledge, however, they do not connect new learning to those topics studied previously. This is particularly the case in key stage 1, where some tasks that pupils experience do not always build on their prior knowledge.

Pupils with SEND access the full curriculum alongside their peers. The school quickly identifies the needs of pupils and puts carefully designed programmes of support in place. Staff adapt learning well so that pupils with SEND are able to make progress across all subjects.

All pupils know that they have a voice and, at this school, this is heard. Pupils make suggestions to the school council and other committees which make a difference. For example, pupils have nominated the charities the school supports and help to organise fundraising activities.

Pupils understand the importance of fundamental British values, such as democracy, respect and tolerance. They have learned about equality and discrimination. Pupils have an understanding of what healthy relationships are and know what it means to be a good friend.

The excellent work that the school has developed in personal, social, health and economic education has been recognised and shared with other schools. Pupils value opportunities to be active citizens. The eco-committee has been instrumental in litter picking in the local

community. Pupils have written to local Members of Parliament with their concerns about the use of single-use plastics.

The curriculum benefits from the input of many visiting speakers and workshops. Pupils appreciate educational visits, which enhance their learning in the classroom. These include trips to theatres, museums and art galleries, as well as visits to religious events.

Parents and carers value the school and praise the staff and school leaders. Staff acknowledge that leaders are supportive of their workload and well-being. Governors know the school, its staff, pupils and the community well. They have considerable knowledge and expertise, which allows them to fulfil their roles effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, the curriculum design does not ensure that pupils make links between their prior knowledge and their current learning. Tasks pupils are provided with do not build on their knowledge or take their learning forwards. Some pupils have gaps in what they know or remember, which means their learning is not secure. The school should further develop the curriculum in these subjects, so that pupils are able to make effective connections in their learning and deepen the knowledge they acquire.

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 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 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 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	104056
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	10343784
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Paul Goddard
Headteacher	Richard Marshall
Website	www.oak-cottage.solihull.sch.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	18 and 19 September 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- There is a daily breakfast club managed by the school.
- The school has a nursery provision for three-year-old children.

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 his evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. He also met with members of the governing body, including the chair.
- The inspector focused inspection activity on the following groups of subjects: early English and mathematics, physical education, geography and history. For each group of

subjects, the inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke with 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' interest first.
- Throughout the inspection, the lead inspector met with groups of staff. He also considered the opinions expressed through the staff survey.
- The inspector met some parents at the start of the second day and had regard to the views expressed through Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

David Buckle, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector

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