

Inspection of Oakwood Primary Academy

Pendeen Crescent, Southway, Plymouth, Devon PL6 6QS

Inspection dates:	15 and 16 October 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Good

The senior head of this school is Paul Arnold. This school is part of Discovery Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Alison Nettleship, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Neil Maslen.

What is it like to attend this school?

There has been much change in the school since the last inspection. The new leadership team is ambitious and determined for all pupils at Oakwood to learn well. Pupils are starting to benefit from these improvements. This view is echoed by many parents and carers. Nevertheless, the school is realistic that there is still work to do to restore the school's standing in the community.

Pupils are polite to each other most of the time. In some lessons, pupils' behaviours are not effective for learning. When this happens, pupils' learning is disrupted. Furthermore, some pupils hold an unwavering view that there are pockets of bullying in the school. They say that when staff are made aware of these incidents, they are dealt with well. Despite these weaknesses, pupils are safe and most enjoy school.

Pupils appreciate the many opportunities that they have beyond the academic. They recall memorable experiences of camps and trips with enthusiasm. Pupils have access to a wide range of extra-curricular clubs. They appreciate the opportunities that they have to contribute to school life, such as being a 'happy mind leader' or a 'well-being champion'. However, not all pupils have a strong enough understanding of British society.

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

In 2023 and 2024, outcomes were much lower than the national average in several areas. After a period of instability and decline in standards, the trust took decisive action. Trust leaders overhauled the curriculum and staffing structure. The new leadership team has galvanised staff. Its members have created an ambitious vision for the school. Morale is high. This was not always the case. A typical staff comment, which summed up the views of many, was: 'I now feel that we are going in the right direction.' This view was echoed by several parents. The school is now stable and there is a palpable determination on the part of all staff to bring about further improvements.

The new curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. The curriculum content is coherent and builds pupils' knowledge from the early years to Year 6. The school has ensured that the curriculum better meets the needs of pupils. However, it is too early to see any discernible impact. Furthermore, assessment is not as precise as it needs to be. Checks on what pupils know and remember, before moving on, are not well thought out. Consequently, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. In addition, teachers do not always use what they know about pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well enough. Adaptations of the curriculum for these pupils are not always effective. This leads to activities being either too challenging or too easy. Consequently, some pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they should.

The early reading curriculum lacks rigour. It is not implemented consistently well. Pupils learn to read as soon as they begin school. However, some children in the early years have not secured the appropriate learning behaviours to be ready to read. This leads to children not fully engaging in their phonics learning. Some pupils who are catching up do not have books that match their ability. This hampers their potential to be able to read

confidently and fluently. Older pupils enjoy reading. They talk passionately about the books they read. Leaders have made recent changes to the library to make it more accessible. Pupils appreciate these changes and the wide range of books on offer.

Pupils typically behave well in lessons. However, some staff have low expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, low-level disruption occurs. This disrupts learning and slows pupils' progress. Pupils feel that behaviour at social times is particularly challenging. They say that older pupils often use disrespectful language and fall out with each other. However, when pupils struggle to regulate their behaviour, staff support them effectively.

Pupils' attendance is a concern. Too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough. The school has recently introduced systems to improve pupils' attendance. The school works closely with families to help get their children to school every day and on time. However, a large number of disadvantaged pupils still miss too much time in school.

Pupils have limited opportunities to be an active presence in their wider community. The school recognises this and has plans in place to strengthen pupils' possibilities. Although pupils have some understanding of fundamental British values, they are not secure in understanding diversity in society.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The trust has made recent changes to most of the curriculum. It is not clear how these changes are strengthening pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, assessment is not fully developed in some subjects. Systems for checking what pupils know and remember are not precise enough. This leads to some pupils having gaps in their knowledge. The trust must ensure that the changes to the curriculum are having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.
- The phonics programme is not implemented effectively. This means that too many pupils are not learning phonics well. Books are not consistently well matched to pupils' phonics knowledge. The trust must strengthen the precision and consistency of the implementation of the phonics programme, so that all pupils can read fluently and with confidence.
- Some pupils with SEND do not learn the curriculum as well as they could. This is because curriculum activities are not adapted well enough to meet their needs. The trust must ensure that staff use what they know about pupils with SEND so that these pupils can access the curriculum fully and achieve well.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons, including in the early years and at social times, is not always positive. Low-level disruption is tolerated in some classes. This hinders pupils'

learning. The trust needs to ensure that all staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct so that all pupils can learn well without interruptions and enjoy their social times.

- Pupils' attendance remains stubbornly low, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, these pupils miss out on important learning. This is leading to gaps in pupils' knowledge of the curriculum. The school should continue to work closely with families and external agencies to ensure that pupils' attendance improves and persistent absence reduces rapidly.

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	143305
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10344763
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	274
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Neil Maslen
CEO of the trust	Alison Nettleship
Senior head of school	Paul Arnold
Website	www.oakwood-primary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Discovery Multi Academy Trust.
- The senior head of school took up post in September 2024.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- There is a breakfast club operated by the school.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with trust executive leaders, senior leaders, curriculum leaders, teaching and support staff. The lead inspector met with representatives from the local advisory board and the chair of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, English, modern languages, physical education and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The lead inspector examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' reviews and improvement planning.
- 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.
- An inspector spoke to parents at the start of the school day. They also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, and to staff surveys.

Inspection team

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Bray	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Barton	Ofsted Inspector

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