

Inspection of Oakway Academy

Off Oakway, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN8 4SD

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 January 2023

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 enjoy their time at this school. One pupil said: 'This school is great because the teachers are kind and we learn interesting things.' The staff care deeply about all of its pupils. The welfare team provide the necessary support for pupils to overcome difficulties. Expectations are high for all pupils to achieve well, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and the most disadvantaged.

There are clear and well-established routines which enable pupils to settle well into the school. All staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils appreciate the guidance the school rules provide. For instance, the use of the acronym 'STAR', which means 'sit up straight, track the speaker, ask and answer questions, respect everyone' is consistently applied, and pupils say it keeps them on track. As a consequence, pupils behave well. They get on well together. Bullying is not tolerated. Well-trained pupil anti-bullying ambassadors support other pupils at playtimes. They pass information to adults quickly, so they can deal with poor behaviour and address bullying immediately should it happen.

Pupils are highly respectful of one another and of difference. Pupils learn to debate tricky issues in a mature manner. One pupil stated: 'Our school is very welcoming, and our differences are what make our school unique.' This is evident throughout the school.

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

Teaching pupils to read well is a priority. Leaders have clear expectations about what they want pupils to achieve. Staff are knowledgeable and identify when pupils are falling behind in reading. They provide well planned and bespoke support where necessary. Extensive resources support pupils. Pupils learn to be resilient and show a determination to learn to read.

Beyond learning to read, books play a prominent part in the school. Access to a wide genre and range of authors, both new and traditional, ensures that pupils develop a love of reading. The books expose pupils to issues such as diversity and inclusion. A well-resourced library takes pride of place in the centre of the school. Pupils are keen to spend time there and immerse themselves in books. 'Reading champions' take rucksacks full of books out onto the playground. They proudly state the importance of their role. One pupil said: 'We take books throughout the school and persuade others to read them. They are really great books, so we promote them.'

Leaders have made sound and well-informed decisions about how to improve all elements of the curriculum. However, in some elements of the curriculum, leaders have not checked precisely enough to establish the impact of these changes. All subjects are well planned and sequenced. As a consequence, pupils make strong links between different concepts, such as how volcanoes link to tectonic plates. Teachers draw upon their strong subject knowledge to design and deliver lessons that are exciting for pupils. This engages learners and enables them to work

independently and collaboratively. Pupils focus on their learning, want to work hard and are determined to do well.

Children make a strong start in the early years foundation stage (EYFS). Learning activities are carefully considered and skilfully constructed. Adults are knowledgeable and support children effectively to challenge their thinking. Leaders have given careful consideration to how learning in key stages 1 and 2 builds from what children have been taught in EYFS. As a consequence, children are well prepared for their next phase of learning. There is a strong resolve to ensure children communicate well and learn a rich vocabulary. The early years is a nurturing environment where children quickly learn respect and tolerance.

Leaders are particularly ambitious for pupils with SEND. Clearly identified needs are well communicated to staff. Appropriate adaptations to teaching ensure these pupils succeed. Adults use additional resources effectively to support pupils. This ensures they access the same learning as everyone else. Leaders regularly check on the progress of pupils with SEND, which helps them to achieve well.

The school has high expectations for behaviour. Recent changes to the behaviour policy have raised expectations higher. Pupils are clear about the rules and understand their importance. Those who struggle sometimes quickly get the support they need. Behaviour is good in lessons and on the playground. Pupils are courteous and respectful to each other. Pupils recognise the importance of coming to school. Leaders support pupils who struggle to attend regularly. Nevertheless, too many pupils are persistently absent from school.

There are many opportunities for pupils to develop beyond accessing the academic curriculum. Pupils relish the chance to take on a wide range of additional responsibilities, including being school councillors or eco-warriors. The curriculum provides a range of appropriate enrichment activities. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, both when learning online and when in the community, and also to be healthy. Excellent pastoral support ensures pupils overcome barriers to learning or development should they arise.

Leaders have been resolute in improving the school. They have made sound and well-informed decisions about what to improve and when. Leaders are considerate of staff's workload and care for their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding within this school. Checks on staff ensure only appropriate adults work in the school. Staff are vigilant to risks of harm and abuse. Systems for reporting, recording and monitoring concerns are robust. These are regularly reviewed. External support is sought where necessary. Appropriate challenge ensures this support has a positive impact. The school responds well to any local safeguarding issues. It provides additional training and support where necessary.

Pupils feel safe. Bullying rarely happens, but pupils know it will be dealt with. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Too many pupils are persistently absent from school. This means that they are missing out on their education. Leaders must ensure the recently introduced strategies to improve attendance are having the desired impact to reduce absence rates.
- Leaders have made sound and well-informed decisions about how to improve all elements of the curriculum. However, in some elements of the curriculum, leaders have not checked precisely enough to establish the impact of these changes. As a consequence, some elements of the curriculum are not as established as they could be. Leaders should ensure they check that the improvements made are having the required impact and make changes where necessary.

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](#)' 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	140853
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10254855
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	585
Appropriate authority	Board of directors
Chair of trust	William Thallon
Principal	Claire Byron
Website	www.oakwayacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 and 3 April 2019 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Hatton Academies Trust.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the senior leaders, including the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, curriculum leaders and the EYFS leader.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in five subjects: reading, mathematics, science, geography and music. To do this, they met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and met with teachers and

pupils. They also looked at plans for the religious education curriculum and looked at pupils' work.

- The lead inspector met with the chair of the board of directors and three other members of the board of directors.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, pupil survey and staff survey, along with written comments from parents. Inspectors spoke informally to parents outside the school.
- Attendance, behaviour logs and safeguarding records were scrutinised. This included the school's single central record. Inspectors also conducted meetings with leaders to discuss the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors considered pupils' behaviour at various times of day, including in lessons, around the school site and at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Mark Anderson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Liz Moore	Ofsted Inspector
Gayle Bacon	Ofsted Inspector

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