

Oakwood Primary School

Address: Sandpiper Road, Southampton, Hampshire, SO16 8FD

Unique reference number (URN): 116138

Inspection report: 28 April 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders make pupils' attendance and punctuality a high priority. This helps pupils to benefit from the education and experiences the school offers. Leaders work with families and wider agencies to identify and reduce barriers to attendance. As a result, most pupils attend school regularly, and leaders respond quickly when concerns about absence arise. Pupils enjoy school and the opportunities available to them, which supports regular attendance.

Pupils behave well around the school. They have highly positive attitudes to learning and are incredibly supportive of one another. This starts right from the early years. Children learn in a calm and purposeful environment where disruption to learning is rare. Routines are clear and understood by pupils and staff. Staff consistently model and promote the school's values. Pupils are respectful towards each other and adults. They cooperate well with each other to resolve conflicts. This is particularly evident during break and lunchtime when pupils play and interact with high levels of independence. Bullying and other forms of harassment are not tolerated. If they occur, they are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils enjoy coming to school and say 'everyone belongs here'.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders place inclusion at the centre of the school's work. Staff accurately identify pupils' needs and know how to best support them. Staff know pupils and their families well and provide pupils with effective, targeted support from the start. Leaders ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who have other barriers to learning are safe, well and ready to learn. They also ensure that pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide highly tailored support for disadvantaged pupils.

Staff receive training to reduce barriers to pupils' learning and wellbeing. This enables pupils to access the full curriculum as well as the school's wider enrichment offer. In classrooms, teachers adapt teaching to meet the increasingly diverse needs of pupils. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with education, health and care plans. Leaders implement a robust approach to accurately checking and monitoring pupils' attainment. Leaders ensure that pupils make progress through the curriculum from their varied starting points.

Leaders are proactive in their work with external professionals and parents and carers. Well-trained staff support pupils to talk about their feelings and help them to navigate any challenges they may face. Deliberate actions by leaders support pupils to develop independence, emotional security and readiness to learn.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils typically achieve well as they move through the school. They secure the knowledge they need in reading, writing and mathematics and build effectively on what they already know. Most pupils apply their learning confidently in different subjects and produce work that reflects their growing understanding. However, a small proportion of pupils make errors in their writing, particularly in relation to letter formation and handwriting. This affects the consistency and overall quality of their written work across the curriculum. Leaders have taken appropriate action to address this. The impact of this work is beginning to be seen in improvements in pupils' writing, particularly in the older year groups.

Starting in the early years, children learn phonics successfully and quickly gain the confidence to read simple words with increasing fluency. Pupils draw on this knowledge over time to become fluent and confident readers. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities typically progress well from their varied starting points.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have put in place a broad and well-ordered curriculum. They know where this is working well and where further refinements are needed. Staff model new concepts and learning clearly. They design tasks to build on pupils' prior learning. However, leaders are working to ensure that staff check pupils' understanding consistently well, so that gaps in knowledge are identified and addressed quickly.

Across the school, the development of pupils' basic skills in reading and mathematics is a priority. Staff choose texts carefully to support pupils' understanding. This helps pupils to build their vocabulary effectively. Typically, staff successfully make sure that pupils have the practice that they need to become confident with these skills. The teaching of writing is not as consistently effective as other areas of teaching. Staff do not routinely identify errors in letter formation quickly. As a result, some pupils are not as well prepared for their next steps in learning as they could be.

Overall, staff have a secure understanding of pupils' needs and barriers to learning. They adapt learning when this is needed and support pupils well. For example, staff design teaching around pupils' identified needs and targets. They provide sensitive support so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities access the curriculum confidently.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children get off to a positive start in the early years. They learn in a calm, well-organised and resourced environment where routines are clear and expectations are high. This helps children feel safe, confident and ready to learn. Children play and learn together happily. They respond well to adults and show growing independence.

The early years curriculum is appropriately ambitious and carefully planned. Teachers usually use their checks effectively to adapt activities so that children make progress. Staff

model language clearly and encourage children to use talk partners, building vocabulary and social skills. Adults support children during activities to help them develop their learning. The curriculum helps children to practise and apply what they have learned.

Early reading is a priority. Children learn phonics securely, and handwriting is developing through targeted support and finger-control activities. Teachers check how children are doing and make timely adjustments. Leaders monitor provision and work closely with parents and external agencies to meet individual needs. Children, including those who are disadvantaged or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, progress well from their starting points and typically leave Reception well prepared for Year 1.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders are dedicated and ambitious, with a clear focus on pupils' wellbeing and attendance. They demonstrate a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders prioritise key actions to strengthen areas for improvement, including writing. They use assessment information and other evidence to evaluate their work and target improvement strategies effectively.

Leaders make decisions that place pupils' best interests at the centre, particularly those who are disadvantaged, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who face barriers to learning or wellbeing. Leaders and staff know pupils and their families well and work closely with them to ensure that appropriate support is in place.

Leaders promote a culture of safeguarding and ensure that staff share a clear understanding of their responsibilities. They provide staff with professional development that is evidence informed, coherent and sustained. This supports teachers to develop their expertise and implement the curriculum effectively. Early career teachers benefit from guidance and mentoring and feel well supported. Leaders consider staff workload and wellbeing carefully when making decisions. Staff value the support they receive. They speak positively about leaders' commitment to professional development and wellbeing. This contributes to a positive working environment.

Those responsible for governance bring appropriate expertise and knowledge to their roles. Governors meet their statutory duties and manage resources effectively. They provide both support and challenge to leaders when holding them to account for the school's performance. Through this work, governors contribute to ensuring that strategic decisions benefit all pupils.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school's values of pride, excellence, empathy and teamwork are central to daily life. Pupils understand these values and show them in how they act. They understand fundamental British values and know how to stay safe online.

Pastoral care is well embedded across the school. Pupils learn how to support their mental health. They learn simple ways to manage their feelings, such as relaxation techniques and ways to cope when they feel worried or upset. Pupils learn how to be resilient and to have a positive outlook. When pupils need extra help, trained staff give focused support.

Assemblies, often linked to books read in class, help develop pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils are taught to speak up if something is not right. This allows them to grow in confidence and develop a strong sense of fairness. Pupils respect and value diversity in their school community. They show empathy and care for others and are proud of their school.

The personal, social and health education curriculum supports pupils' wider development. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, consent and different types of families. They learn how to stay safe and understand risks both online and offline. The relationships and sex education programme is appropriate and helps pupils get ready for the next stage of their education. By the end of Year 6, pupils feel ready for secondary school. They can talk about what they have learned, including puberty, managing stress and staying safe.

Leaders have designed an ambitious personal development programme that runs through the curriculum. Overall, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, take part in a wide range of enrichment activities in music, art and sport. Leaders understand what pupils need and plan support carefully. Because of this, pupils develop well socially, morally, spiritually and culturally.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils enjoy coming to this school. Each morning, staff welcome pupils in a kind and friendly way. Pupils are proud of their school and say it is a safe and happy place. Those of different ages play together at breaktimes and support one another well. They understand the importance of being responsible and setting a good example. Pupils know there are adults they can talk to if they are worried. Staff take concerns, including bullying, seriously and pupils say people treat each other with kindness and respect.

In classrooms, teachers create calm and positive learning environments where pupils enjoy learning. From Reception to Year 6, pupils understand the importance of working hard and doing their best. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from other vulnerable groups, make the progress they need to be ready for the next stage of their education.

Staff know pupils well and understand their needs. They take timely action to reduce barriers to learning and help pupils to overcome difficulties when these arise. Staff also help pupils to enjoy learning new things, which supports regular attendance and positive engagement in lessons.

Pupils grow in confidence and take on responsibilities through roles such as school captains, playtime friends and reading ambassadors. As a result, pupils become more confident and independent over time.

Parents and carers are positive about the school and feel confident that their children are happy, safe and doing well.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers and classroom staff identify and address pupils' misconceptions to help them achieve well across all areas of the curriculum.
 - Leaders should ensure that pupils who need to develop their foundational skills, including legible handwriting, are supported consistently and effectively to do so.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Rachel Gander.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, teachers, support staff, governors, a representative from the local authority, pupils, and parents and carers during the inspection.

The lead inspector also spoke with the chair of the foundation trust which the school is a part of.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses one registered alternative provision.

Headteacher: Mrs Maria Whitmarsh

Lead inspector:

Ulric Neblett-Leigh, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Jo Petch, His Majesty's Inspector

Rebecca Mayman, Ofsted Inspector

Nicola Pearce, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.



This data is from 28 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

414

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

420

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

27.05%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

3.14%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

8.70%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	55%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	48%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	55%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	63%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	74%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	68%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	73%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	81%	73%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	64%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	57%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	65%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	71%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	77%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	68%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	77%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	86%	73%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	42%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	33%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	39%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50%	44%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	67%	62%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	62%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	82%	60%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	51%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	43%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	50%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	57%	58%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	66%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	48%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	61%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	82%	59%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference

between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	42%	68%	-26 pp
2024/25 (final)	33%	69%	-36 pp
2023/24 (final)	39%	67%	-29 pp
2022/23 (final)	50%	66%	-16 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	67%	80%	-12 pp
2024/25 (final)	62%	81%	-19 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	80%	-30 pp
2022/23 (final)	82%	78%	4 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	51%	78%	-27 pp
2024/25 (final)	43%	78%	-35 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	78%	-28 pp
2022/23 (final)	57%	77%	-20 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	66%	80%	-14 pp
2024/25 (final)	48%	81%	-33 pp
2023/24 (final)	61%	79%	-18 pp
2022/23 (final)	82%	79%	3 pp

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	4.3%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.8%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	4.6%	5.9%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	8.9%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	9.9%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	13.2%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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