

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Oaklands School

Gresham Road, Hounslow TW3 4BX

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 May 2025

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Oaklands School is a happy place where pupils thrive. They arrive keen to start each day and are greeted by caring staff who know them well and keep them safe.

Pupils are enabled to have a voice through every activity they do at school. They are deliberately encouraged by staff to communicate their thoughts and opinions and to make choices. Staff ensure that they notice what works best for each pupil. They help them in very individualised ways. This means pupils develop and progress considerably during their time here. This is reflected across a range of areas, including pupils' communication skills, knowledge and well-being.

Pupils meet the high expectations staff have of their behaviour and achievement. They are calm in lessons, work hard to improve their understanding of the world and become more independent. This means pupils are well prepared for their next steps educationally and in life.

Pupils are supported to access the community and gain work experience through a well-structured programme of visits and workshops. This includes working in the school café, collecting recycling, and shopping for and preparing meals. Pupils and students visit galleries, museums and theatres and practise travelling on public transport.

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

The education provided at Oaklands School is excellent. Leaders have thought very carefully about what to teach pupils at each stage from their different starting points. The curriculum is designed to support pupils to discover what they most enjoy, how best to communicate their desires and to be as independent as possible. Pupils learn to interact

with the world around them through a range of subjects, such as art and design, music, sports and science. They also develop a knowledge and practical understanding of mathematics and language across these subjects, for example reading recipes and measuring out ingredients in cookery, and counting beats while drumming and singing songs in music.

Teachers and support staff are highly skilled at explaining new learning through a range of communication methods. They present subject matter clearly in ways pupils understand and find interesting. They use sensory experiences to help this, for example touching sand and shells and listening to the sound of seagulls to deepen understanding about the seaside. The school ensures the activities chosen enable pupils to repeat and apply their knowledge across different situations and subjects. This helps to make pupils' learning more memorable. Teachers check what has been understood, correct misconceptions and adjust their teaching to ensure that pupils learn what is intended.

Those pupils who can access literacy through the school's phonics programme are taught effectively by staff who are experienced and well trained. This means these pupils learn to read and write with increasing accuracy and fluency. Some pupils are taught to communicate and understand staff using gestures, pictures and technological devices, matched to their needs. Teachers work with speech and language therapists to further support pupils to make rapid gains in their communication skills. Techniques are incorporated through all learning so opportunities to secure pupil progress are maximised throughout the school day.

The school works closely with occupational and physical therapists and other health professionals to ensure pupils' varying needs are fully identified and met. This means pupils are supported effectively to work towards the outcomes identified in their education, health and care (EHC) plans. The school has worked hard to improve attendance. It carefully monitors absence rates to identify any issues quickly. It works with a range of professionals to support pupils and their families to overcome their barriers to attending school.

Pupils' broader development is a keen focus and is extensively woven through the curriculum. For example, pupils learn about different faiths in communication lessons, about money and shopping in mathematics and how to stay safe online in computing. They are given opportunities to be leaders through the school council and by supporting younger pupils. Children in early years are taught to identify and manage their emotions from the very start of their time at the school. Over time, pupils learn what helps them to calm down or focus and how to communicate this to staff.

Leaders' actions have maintained the school's extremely high standards through significant expansion to a new site, and in the number and age range of pupils who attend. The school is highly regarded for sharing its expertise with other settings. Parents and carers appreciate the commitment and nurture shown by staff. Staff are very positive about the way the school considers their workload and well-being. They feel well developed and happy and are rightly proud of the work they do at Oaklands School.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 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 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

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| Unique reference number | 102555 |
| Local authority | Hounslow |
| Inspection number | 10345818 |
| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Community special |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 267 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 47 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Melvyn Tatters |
| Headteacher | Mairead Standring |
| Website | www.oaklands.hounslow.sch.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 25 and 26 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the school has expanded the number of pupils on roll and has moved to working over two sites. Primary-aged pupils, including children in early years, are educated at a site on Woodlands Road, Isleworth TW7 6JZ. Secondary-aged pupils, and students in the sixth-form provision, are educated at a site at Gresham Road, Hounslow TW3 4BX.
- The headteacher took up their post in April 2024.
- The school caters for pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities, including severe learning difficulty, autism, and profound and multiple learning difficulty.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

- The school meets the requirements of the 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.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of the 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.
- Inspectors met with school leaders including the headteacher, heads of school and assistant headteachers. Inspectors also met with governors, including the chair of the governing body, and spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, met with pupils and looked at samples of their work. Inspectors also observed breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors considered documentation related to the curriculum and assessment, behaviour and attendance, and pupils' EHC plans.
- 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 views of pupils, parents and staff were considered through discussions as well as their responses to Ofsted's online surveys, including Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Una Buckley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jacque Fairhurst

Ofsted Inspector

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