

Inspection of Oakfield House School

Station Road, Salwick, Preston, Lancashire PR4 0YH

Inspection dates: 15 to 17 March 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff describe the school as being like a family. Pupils are warmly welcomed by staff as they arrive each morning. This helps pupils to feel safe and happy in school. Pupils know that teachers will listen to any concerns that they have. They are confident that staff would be quick to address any incidents of bullying.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to thrive. They have planned a broad and engaging curriculum that helps pupils to achieve well.

Pupils value the exciting and challenging lessons that they have in the school's lovely outdoor areas. Engaging activities, such as building fires and gardening, help pupils to develop confidence and resilience.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of leadership opportunities. For example, pupils planned a garden party for residents of a local care home. They enjoy taking care of the school's dogs, Coco and Dave. Such opportunities help pupils to become thoughtful, active citizens, well prepared for their next steps.

Pupils' behaviour in class and around school improves significantly within a short time of joining the school. They benefit from the skilful support that leaders provide. This helps pupils to manage their own behaviour successfully.

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

Pupils join Oakfield House, often following long periods of absence from their previous schools. Staff ensure that new arrivals settle quickly. Caring and friendly relationships with staff help pupils to develop their confidence quickly. Most pupils attend school very regularly.

Leaders encourage pupils to aim high. They ensure that the school's curriculum fully supports pupils' aspirations. Staff are meticulous in planning a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn about, and work towards, different career choices.

In most subjects, including mathematics, English and science, leaders have set out the most important learning that they intend pupils to learn. For example, in mathematics, pupils learn important life skills such as using money and telling the time. The curriculums in these subjects ensure that pupils secure their knowledge in logical steps.

In a small number of subjects, leaders' thinking about the curriculum is not as precise. They have not identified the most important knowledge that pupils need to secure to prepare them well for future learning. Pupils' learning does not build in a carefully sequenced way. This means that pupils do not remember some aspects of the curriculum as well as they should.

Leaders have placed reading firmly at the heart of the school's curriculum. All pupils benefit from reading with adults every day in school. Reading books are carefully matched to pupils' reading ability. In phonics lessons, teachers give pupils plenty of practice to learn and revisit sounds. Teachers share a wide range of interesting books and stories with pupils. This helps most pupils to develop as fluent and confident readers.

In mathematics and English, leaders undertake detailed checks of pupils' knowledge when they join the school. Teachers use this information to ensure that teaching activities are well matched to what pupils already know. The checks that leaders make on pupils' learning are less precise in some other subjects. In these subjects, teachers sometimes plan activities that do not build on pupils' existing learning.

Leaders ensure that staff understand exactly how to support pupils to manage their own behaviour. This skilful support helps pupils to transform their attitudes to learning. They concentrate and persevere in their work. They develop their social skills, make firm friendships and enjoy spending time with their classmates and teachers.

Pupils have a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. A skilled team of therapists provides a wide range of carefully planned support for pupils. The therapists work closely with school staff to develop an individual teaching plan for each pupil. The close partnership between staff, therapists and parents and carers ensures that all have a detailed understanding of how best to support pupils.

Leaders plan a wide range of carefully planned experiences to support pupils personally. Through frequent trips and visits, pupils learn about the wider world. The school's eco council is very active in helping pupils to protect the environment. Such opportunities enable pupils to flourish.

The relationships and sex education policy meets statutory guidance. Leaders have consulted with parents on the contents of this policy. The policy includes plans for parents to withdraw their child from sex education lessons if they wish to. Pupils learn about different topics in a sensitive and age-appropriate way. This learning helps pupils to prepare for their next steps.

The school building is kept in good order by leaders. Through a range of checks, the proprietor body ensures that the school is safe for pupils, staff and visitors. For example, it ensures that fire safety regulations and risk assessments are up to date and compliant. The school grounds provide spacious and attractive places for pupils to exercise, learn and relax.

The proprietor body has a detailed understanding of the independent school standards (the standards). It ensures that leaders are held to account and that the statutory obligations are met. For example, it ensures that the school's accessibility plan complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Staff and parents have a very positive view of the school. Staff appreciate the efforts that leaders make to help them maintain an appropriate balance between work and home. Parents are full of praise for the difference the school has made to their children's lives, both academically and emotionally.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained in safeguarding and are knowledgeable about the signs of abuse. Leaders have put in place effective systems for reporting and recording safeguarding concerns. They have ensured that the safeguarding policy reflects the latest government requirements and that the policy is published on the school's website. Leaders refer to the appropriate services outside school if pupils need extra help.

Adults provide pupils with useful information about how to keep themselves safe from harm. For example, pupils learn about the risks involved in using the internet. Pupils are confident to report any worries that they may have to members of staff.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- In a minority of subjects, the content and sequence of learning have not been clearly identified by leaders. This means that pupils sometimes do not build their knowledge on what they already know. Leaders should ensure that all subjects have clearly identified and sequenced content to enable pupils to develop their knowledge well across the whole curriculum.
- In some subjects, systems to check how well pupils are learning are not fully developed. This means that leaders do not have precise knowledge of how well pupils know and remember some elements of the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that the strategies to check pupils' learning are strengthened in these subjects.

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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	131666
DfE registration number	888/6037
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10210336
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	27
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education Ltd
Chair	James Joyce
Headteacher	Angela Clark
Annual fees (day pupils)	£39,420 to £73,120
Telephone number	01772 672630
Website	www.oakfieldhouseschool.co.uk
Email address	office@oakfieldhouseschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 February to 1 March 2018

Information about this school

- A new leadership team has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. They have a wide range of learning, social, emotional and mental health needs.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school had 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss curriculums, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also visited some lessons.
- Inspectors also spoke with leaders about curriculums and looked at samples of pupils' work in some other subjects.
- During the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils about school life. They spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, members of staff and a member of the proprietor body.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.
- During the inspection, inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding and information relating to the independent school standards. They looked at records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Stevens, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Julie Bather

Ofsted Inspector

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