

The Oaks Infant School

Address: Gore Court Road, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 1GL

Unique reference number (URN): 144870

Inspection report: 14 July 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 have high expectations for pupils' attendance and behaviour. Attendance is everyone's responsibility. Leaders are rigorous in their analysis of attendance information. They take swift action when they identify patterns in the attendance of groups and individuals. Leaders engage effectively with families regarding attendance. Where pupils need help to remove barriers to attendance, leaders provide timely and bespoke support. This includes making small adjustments to the start of the day to help prepare pupils for learning. As a result of leaders' actions, attendance is high. The attendance of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. There has been a rapid and notable reduction in the persistent absence of all pupils.

Leaders' high expectations for pupils' behaviour are shared by all staff. Routines are well known by pupils and enacted consistently by staff. Behaviour across the school is excellent. Lessons are calm and purposeful. Pupils are independent and show dedication to their learning. They are enthused by finding out new things and keen to share what they know and can do. Social times are well organised. Pupils participate energetically in the activities on offer. Pupils are kind and share the equipment well. Pupils have no worries about bullying. They know that staff will take swift action should they need to.

Early years

Strong standard ●

The provision in both Nursery and Reception gives children the best possible start to school. Leaders have created a calm and nurturing environment where children are excited to learn. The curriculum is ambitious and planned with precision. Children are immersed in language at every opportunity through stories, rhymes and songs. Staff use their detailed knowledge and expertise to deliver the curriculum effectively. They use high-quality interactions consistently well to extend children's vocabulary. Consequently, children talk about their learning enthusiastically and use challenging language with confidence.

Children begin to develop their understanding of letter sounds from Nursery. Phonics is taught in Reception with precision. Children make rapid progress through the chosen phonics scheme. There is a rigorous approach to teaching children how to hold a pencil correctly. Children benefit from frequent opportunities to practise writing letters and drawing. Most children are able to write a sentence by the end of Reception. Children also develop a secure understanding of mathematics. Staff provide additional support for children who need extra help. Children with complex needs are fully included and make rapid progress.

Leaders prioritise children's personal development and wellbeing. Children quickly develop positive hygiene habits. They share equipment kindly and tidy resources away independently. Leaders establish positive partnerships with parents. Well-considered transition arrangements help children to be confident and ready for Year 1.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

This is an inclusive and welcoming school. Leaders are highly ambitious for pupils who face additional barriers to their learning. They have developed effective systems to identify pupils' personal and academic barriers with precision. This includes disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and children known to social care. Staff are well trained to provide thoughtful and appropriate help for pupils in the classroom. Where needed, leaders work closely with external agencies, including the virtual school, to provide specialist support.

Pupils in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND have their needs met well by expert staff. Leaders monitor the impact of their interventions diligently. They review and adapt the provision to enable the most vulnerable to thrive. For example, they have created an 'enhanced transition environment' to support a small group of pupils who need more support to build confidence and independence in their learning. Pupils progress very well from their starting points.

Leaders use the pupil premium funding intelligently. This enables disadvantaged pupils to strengthen their reading and communication skills and to benefit from a range of experiences beyond the classroom. Alternative provision is carefully chosen and closely matched to pupils' needs.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders know the school extremely well. They are clear about its strengths and where further improvement is needed. Leaders are driven by a robust sense of moral purpose. They are united in their ambition to improve personal and academic outcomes for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For example, they identified a small group of pupils with complex needs who were not eligible for a place in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. They swiftly created an additional learning environment to support these pupils so they could access the full curriculum. Consequently, the attendance and behaviour of these pupils improved sharply, enabling pupils to thrive and benefit from all the school has to offer. Leaders have also taken effective action to strengthen the quality of the curriculum and teaching. This has led to rapid improvement in pupils' writing in English.

Those responsible for governance have a shared ambition of sustaining improvement. They diligently fulfil their statutory responsibilities. Governors and trustees use well-established systems to challenge leaders rigorously on the impact of their actions. Equally, they support leaders, and ensure that the wellbeing of leaders is prioritised.

The professional learning programme is evidence-informed and closely aligned to the school's improvement plan. Training for staff is supplemented by a wider programme of professional and career development offered by the trust. Staff value this opportunity to share their expertise across the school and more widely. Leaders work closely with staff to manage their workload and wellbeing effectively. Staff are proud to belong to The Oaks family. Parents greatly appreciate the support and care shown by the school.

Leaders provide a rich and inclusive personal development programme that is an entitlement for every pupil. The school's personal, social, health and economic education curriculum is planned in detail. Pupils develop the knowledge and skills they need for the future. Pupils learn about healthy relationships. They are taught how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. They know the importance of a balanced diet and eating different vegetables. Pupils confidently recall their learning about road and rail safety.

Pupils learn about democracy. They vote for their class mascots and understand that a majority should be respected. They know that following rules helps to keep everyone safe. Pupils can describe similarities and differences in the religions they have learned about. They have mature attitudes to equality and the need to treat everyone with respect. Pupils learn about the value of earning money through hard work by applying for and having their own 'job' in Year 2. By the time they leave the school, pupils develop into confident, resilient individuals who are well prepared for life beyond the school.

Pastoral support is carefully tailored to meet pupils' needs and reflects the inclusive nature of the school. Leaders and staff work closely with pupils and their families. They provide individual support from well-trained staff where needed. Should pupils share any concerns they may have in the 'worry box', staff address these quickly and sensitively. Transition arrangements at all stages help pupils and families move through these points with confidence. Staff in the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) establish imaginative ways to help pupils communicate their feelings.

Pupils take full advantage of the extensive enrichment opportunities available to them. Leaders have designed a set of experiences they want all pupils to have before they leave the school. All pupils learn a musical instrument, take a journey on a train and visit the beach. Leaders make careful adaptations for pupils with SEND so they can benefit from the breadth of experiences on offer.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils progress well through the curriculum across year groups and key stages. In the early years, children develop key skills in number, handwriting and phonics. This prepares them well for Year 1 and beyond. By the time pupils finish key stage 1, they develop secure knowledge across the core and foundation subjects. They can recall much of what they have learned with confidence. This is reflected in the quality of their written work in English. Here, pupils write with precision and accurately apply their knowledge of spelling, punctuation and grammar. This precision is not always reflected in the work pupils produce in the wider foundation subjects.

Outcomes in phonics at the end of Year 1 have been in line with or above national averages over time. By the time pupils finish Year 2, a significant majority pass the phonics screening

check. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well from their individual starting points. Pupils in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND make significant progress from often very low starting points.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The curriculum is broad, ambitious and well sequenced, from Nursery to the end of key stage 1. Leaders have carefully planned what pupils need to know and remember in readiness for their next stage in education. They understand how well the curriculum is taught across the school. Leaders ensure that teachers have the expertise they need to teach the curriculum effectively. The curriculum has identified the technical vocabulary leaders want pupils to learn. However, pupils do not always have regular opportunities to talk about their learning and to practise using this vocabulary.

Leaders are committed to developing pupils' strong foundations in reading, writing and mathematics from the early years. Phonics is taught consistently well from Reception. As pupils progress through the school, they are taught to read with increasing fluency and accuracy. Consequently, pupils enjoy reading for pleasure. Mathematics is taught through practical activities. Teachers provide daily opportunities for pupils to revisit what they have learned previously. This helps them to remember important concepts so they can build more detailed knowledge over time. Teachers adapt learning so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities can access the curriculum effectively.

Leaders have prioritised writing. Teachers model accurate letter formation, and consistently address errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar in English. Leaders are taking appropriate action to ensure that the teaching of writing in the foundation subjects is as effective as it is in the English curriculum.

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

Pupils are well supported in this warm, inclusive and ambitious school. The curriculum is exciting and engaging. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning. They want to be in school, and attend well. From the early years, children are immersed in language and vocabulary. Pupils achieve well. They build secure knowledge and skills of reading, writing and mathematics as they move through the school. Pupils benefit from highly effective support to help them overcome any barriers to learning they may have. By the time they leave the school, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils behave extremely well. They understand leaders' expectations for them to be 'ready, respectful, safe'. Pupils follow these rules confidently. They treat each other and staff with kindness. From the early years, children learn to be independent and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' focus and engagement in their learning continue right up until the end of Year 2. Classrooms are calm environments. During social times, pupils treat their peers, staff and the equipment with respect. Pupils are not worried about bullying. They report that incidents of unkindness are rare and are quickly dealt with by adults if they do occur. Consequently, pupils feel safe.

The personal development programme helps pupils to understand the world around them. They develop a secure understanding of equality and difference. This helps pupils to develop positive relationships and make sure everyone feels included. All pupils participate in the school's enrichment programme. They are encouraged to think about helping others by supporting the food bank and visiting a local care home. Pupils develop their talents and interests through an array of clubs, including arts and crafts, dance, choir, cooking, music and sports. Pupils value weekly assemblies, where they are celebrated for their achievements both in and outside of school.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that pupils consistently apply early writing skills across the broader curriculum with the same precision that is shown in their English work.
 - Leaders should ensure that teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to engage in meaningful discussion so they can practise using subject-specific vocabulary fluently.
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About this inspection

This school is part of the Our Community 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, David Whitehead, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Debbie Haigh.

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

This inspection took place on 14 and 15 July 2026.

Following our renewed inspection 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 school and trust leaders, staff, pupils and parents during the inspection. The lead inspector met with the governance professional and representatives from the board of trustees and local governing body.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This has 12 places for pupils with speech, language and communication needs. There are currently 8 pupils attending this provision.

The school uses one registered alternative provision.

Headteacher: Jenny Wynn

Lead inspector:

Stephen Cattell, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Kirstine Boon, Ofsted Inspector

Patrina Begley, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from [different sources](#). More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

 The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 14 July 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

312

Close to 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

270

Close to 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)

14.98%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.3%

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

3.53%

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

12.18%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Close to 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)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SLCN - Speech, language and Communication

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

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)	5.1%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.8%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.9%	5.9%	Close to average

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)	12.7%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	11.8%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	14.2%	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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