

# MAY 2017 EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

ISI (Independent Schools Inspectorate)

**OAKLANDS SCHOOL, Loughton**

A member of The Oak-Tree Group of Schools





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## SCHOOL'S DETAILS

<b>School</b>	Oaklands School		
<b>DfE number</b>	881/6025		
<b>Address</b>	8 Albion Hill Loughton Essex IG10 4RA		
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8508 3517		
<b>Email address</b>	info@oaklandsschool.co.uk		
<b>Headmistress</b>	Mrs Sue Belej		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Mr Matthew Hagger		
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 11		
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	242		
	Boys	90	Girls 152
	EYFS	85	Key Stage 1 81
	Key Stage 2	76	
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4 to 5 May 2017		



# PREFACE

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Ofsted monitors the work of independent inspectorates on behalf of the DfE, including a sample of inspections, and you can find the latest report on the work of ISI on the Ofsted website.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any unmet standards identified at their previous inspection.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in- depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures. The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. This is an EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection, reporting on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

All inspections of independent schools in England are conducted according to the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work. The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.



## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils and the learning support area. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Dr Alison Primrose  
Ms Susan La Farge  
Ms Annie Lee  
Ms Lucy Sumner

Reporting inspector  
Team inspector (Head, ISA school)  
Team inspector (Former head, IAPS school)  
Team inspector (Former head of pre-prep, IAPS school)

# 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## About the school

**1.1** Oaklands School is an independent day school for pupils aged between 2 and 11 years. It is one of the Oak Tree Group; a group of four schools owned by the Hagger family who provide governance for the schools. The current Group Managing Principal is Mr Matthew Hagger, one of the proprietors. The school benefits from collaboration with the other schools in the group, including special events and inter-school competitions.

**1.2** Since the previous inspection, the senior leadership team has been re-structured and there have been a number of building developments including new classrooms, toilet facilities and office accommodation. Specialist rooms for information and communication technology (ICT) and for pupils with special educational needs/disabilities (SEND) have been relocated and refurbished.

**1.3** The school was founded in 1937 and moved to its present site in Albion Hill in September 1944. It was acquired by the Hagger family in 1982. The current headmistress has been in post since September 2016.

## What the school seeks to do

**1.4** The school aims to create a learning environment in which pupils achieve well both academically and in their broader personal development. It supports pupils as they develop a sense of responsibility and a clear understanding of right and wrong. Respect and tolerance are promoted within a friendly, community atmosphere. Through encouraging independence, providing opportunities to develop leadership skills and promoting collaboration, the school aims to prepare pupils well for their futures.

## About the pupils

**1.5** Pupils come from a range of professional and ethnic backgrounds, living within 10 miles of the school. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that pupils' ability is above average. The school has identified 14 pupils as having SEND, all of whom receive additional support. These special needs include communication and interaction difficulties, dyslexia and dyspraxia, ADHD and emotional difficulties, hearing impairment and epilepsy. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for 27 pupils, nearly all of whom have their needs supported by their classroom teachers. Pupils identified by the school as more able or having specific talents are challenged in the classroom. These pupils also participate in enrichment activities and have opportunities to enter local and national competitions.

**1.6** National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

School name	National Curriculum name
Lower kindergarten	Nursery 2½ to 3 years
Garden room	Nursery 3 to 4 years
Transition	Reception



# 2. KEY FINDINGS

- 2.1** The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- Pupils develop good levels of knowledge and understanding, encouraged and supported by their teachers.
  - Pupils' literacy and communication skills are strong; additional intervention and extension groups effectively meet the needs of different ability groups.
  - Pupils are attentive and diligent in class and display extremely positive attitudes to learning, promoted by a culture that celebrates effort and achievement.
  - Pupils' progress is limited at times as few opportunities are provided in whole-class lessons for questioning and independent thinking.
- 2.2** The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils are confident, articulate and self-aware; they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
  - Pupils' behaviour is exemplary; they have a strong moral code and understand the importance of rules in community life.
  - Pupils co-operate willingly, they respect others and fulfil positions of responsibility conscientiously.
  - Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others; they respond compassionately and are keen to help in practical ways.
  - Pupils' understanding of keeping healthy and safe is excellent, well supported by the personal, health and social education (PHSE) programme and effective cross-curricular planning.

## Recommendations

- 2.3** The school is advised to make the following improvements:
- Provide more opportunities in lessons that promote pupils' intellectual curiosity and independent learning.
  - Consider how to integrate focused times for quiet and reflection within the school day to further enhance pupils' strong spiritual development.



### 3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

**3.1** The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

**3.2** Pupils' knowledge and understanding are good. They develop a broad range of skills in many areas of learning as a result of both the balanced curriculum and the support and encouragement of their teachers. Their attainment in standardised English and mathematics assessments is above average when compared to national data. Pupils of all abilities make good progress. Those with SEND achieve well; they develop strategies to overcome individual challenges, and benefit from focused, individualised support. Pupils with EAL make rapid progress as a result of effective support in class. All of the pupils who responded to the pre- inspection questionnaire agreed that the school provides them with good opportunities to learn and make progress, a view endorsed by almost all of the parents.

**3.3** Pupils' communication skills are strong. They speak confidently and listen attentively. Reception class children were fully absorbed when listening to a story in assembly, and pupils in Year 1 demonstrated careful listening in a music activity where they had to respond to musical cues. Pupils make effective use of talking with a partner to support their learning, by recalling facts or sharing ideas with them. Pupils become increasingly confident speaking in French as a result of the safe and supportive environment created in the class. They listen carefully to the teacher and develop a good accent. Pupils value opportunities to speak to an audience whether in 'show and tell' sessions in class, addressing the whole school in assembly, or when participating in school drama productions. In writing, younger pupils have a well- developed vocabulary of which they incorporate, as was evident in their excellent descriptions about a haunted house. More able pupils described how they use alliteration in their poetry writing. Pupils develop a secure knowledge of English grammar, identifying parts of speech and using a wide range of conjunctions and adjectives. More able pupils in the upper juniors produce excellent pieces of extended writing, inspired through their participation in a focused extension group. Pupils with SEND or EAL achieve good levels in their creative writing which they are proud to share. Pupils benefit from access to ICT resources which they use to support their emerging writing skills. Pupils of all ages are keen readers. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and recognise words that rhyme. Their rapidly



developing fluency is strongly promoted by the language-rich environment surrounding them. Older pupils read well, benefitting from daily opportunities to do so. Pupils in Year 3 reported that they loved reading, listing a number of their favourite authors.

**3.4** Pupils have good levels of numeracy. They apply the basic operations with increasing confidence, from the halving of simple numbers in the EYFS through to solving word problems using division in Year 4. More able pupils understand the use of inverse operations to check their answers. Younger pupils develop their understanding of capacity through practical work and Year 5 pupils demonstrate a good understanding of metric measures, converting measurements into different units with ease. Pupils make good progress when teaching uses a range of resources to support learning, but make less progress where teaching pays insufficient attention to prior learning and when closed questioning limits the opportunities for pupils to develop mathematical reasoning skills. Pupils apply their mathematical knowledge effectively across the curriculum. They understand how to use spreadsheets to manage data and successfully record scientific experimental results in tables and graphs. In history, pupils applied their mathematical skills to calculate the size of an army when learning about Roman legions. More able mathematicians have the opportunity to develop higher- level mathematical reasoning skills through participation in a special 'Out of the box' club. This initiative along with other clubs addresses the recommendation of the previous inspection to extend provision for able, gifted and talented pupils, enabling them to achieve levels above those expected for their age.

**3.5** Pupils have good levels of scientific knowledge and understanding. They talk confidently about the characteristics of animals; children in the EYFS could explain the life cycle of a frog. Pupils observe carefully and then record their scientific observations with increasing accuracy. In school, their scientific enquiry skills are less well developed as they have few opportunities to pursue their own investigations. Older pupils regularly undertake independent science research tasks as homework, such as finding out about the life and work of famous scientists. They analyse and extract pertinent information from various sources and incorporate it successfully into their own presentations.

**3.6** Pupils are safe and competent users of ICT. They understand the use of different computer programmes, including basic coding and control. Pupils use ICT effectively as a tool to support their learning across the curriculum. The school's leadership and management strongly support the development of pupils' ICT skills and competencies through careful planning and effective deployment of resources. Governance ensures that pupils have access to good- quality equipment, operating safe and well-managed systems. The school has successfully addressed the recommendation of the previous inspection to further the development of ICT as a tool for teaching and learning in the classroom, for all subjects and age groups.

**3.7** Pupils' work displayed around the school celebrates their creativity and demonstrates their good skill levels in a range of media and techniques including paper weaving, portrait painting and roller printing. Pupils explained clearly how they learned pencil shading techniques. Younger pupils talked simply about the work of famous artists and could explain in detail the techniques they used when creating their own version of Monet's famous Water Lilies paintings. Pupils' good knowledge and understanding of the world around them is promoted through appropriate cross-curricular planning, with art work often connected to learning in history and geography; this is evident in the display of striking Egyptian-style paintings and the construction of colourful Guatemalan kites. Pupils attending the art club use photography successfully to

capture life around the school. In design technology, pupils develop good process skills. Their individualised Tudor house models were well-made, evidently the product of thorough planning, accurate measurement and careful construction.

**3.8** Pupils of all ages enjoy singing. Children in the EYFS sing enthusiastically together in their assembly and become increasingly more confident to sustain a melody. In the choir, pupils enjoy learning new songs which they soon have the confidence to sing as a round. Pupils' musical knowledge and skills are extended beyond the classroom through participation in the school orchestra, choirs and various concerts through the year, where their musical achievements are celebrated. The pupils develop good levels of physical fitness, developing a wide range of sporting skills. Younger pupils throw a ball with increasing accuracy. Older pupils benefit from team coaching and enjoy a variety of team sports. Pupils become confident swimmers and more able pupils develop good sport-specific skills through participation in clubs, promoted and supported by the school.

**3.9** Pupils' attitudes to learning are extremely positive. They settle quickly to the tasks set and tackle them with interest, keen to learn and motivated to succeed. Pupils work well together and collaborate effectively when provided opportunities to do so. The youngest children in the EYFS demonstrate sustained engagement in activities that interest them and that they have chosen themselves. Children co-operate well together across the EYFS, such as when discussing outcomes for their role play activities or when responding to construction challenges. Older pupils learn how to organise group work effectively; when working on a group poster, Year 3 pupils ensured that everyone had something to do so that nobody was left out. Older pupils appreciate the help and guidance that they receive from their teachers, but are sometimes over-reliant on that support in class. Pupils highly value the recognition and rewards that they receive from their teachers, which motivate and encourage them.

**3.10** Pupils identify a range of different sources to support their learning. They refer readily to classroom dictionaries when faced with new vocabulary. Pupils develop good study skills. Children in the EYFS begin to make simple hypotheses as they engage in practical construction activities. Older pupils review their own writing critically and analyse text carefully, distinguishing between fact and opinion. Pupils carry out research assignments at home, summarising information competently which they present in a variety of formats.

**3.11** Pupils with individual talents or abilities participate in local and national competitions where they achieve considerable success. Their participation is actively promoted by the leadership and management of the school, who support their participation and celebrate their achievements. Year 6 pupils have won awards in a national inter-schools essay competition, and pupils in Years 3 and 4 have had their poetry published following another competition. Pupils attending drama club achieve significant success in speech and drama examinations, with the majority of participants gaining the top grades. The school choirs and orchestra have participated in local concerts, and Year 2 pupils have won the Infant choir trophy at a regional music festival for the past three years. Pupils enjoy representing the school in inter-school sporting fixtures. The school's cross-country running team has been successful in local competitions and pupils in the school's karate club make strong progress year on year, gaining successive coloured belt awards. Its swimming team is strong and has been successful in local swimming galas. Individual members of the team have been selected to represent the region in a national inter-schools swimming championship.



## 4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

**4.1** The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

**4.2** By the time pupils leave the school, they are quietly confident and self-assured. Their positive self-confidence and self-assurance are the outcome of the warm, caring relationships that they have with their teachers at every stage. In the EYFS, children persevere with tricky challenges and they display resilience when things do not go according to plan. The nurturing environment supports them highly effectively, enabling them to overcome disappointment and frustration. Older children value talking with their teachers if they have concerns, and their individual efforts and achievements are valued. The consistently high-quality pastoral support provided is a key factor underpinning this development of resilience and self-assurance. Pupils' confidence grows through participation in a range of different activities including school drama, team sports and residential trips. They are self-aware and have an accurate understanding of their own strengths and areas for development. Pupils can articulate clearly what they need to do to progress further in their learning, informed by the effective target setting used through the school. All of the pupils who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they are well supported by their teachers. Pupils of all ages contribute actively to the school community and have age-appropriate opportunities to make choices and decisions. They understand how the decisions they make can impact on future opportunities. Members of the school council noted how their confidence has grown as a result of council activities, such as meeting with the headmistress to discuss ideas and reporting back to the whole school on decisions made. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and excited about the new opportunities that lay ahead.

**4.3** Pupils' social development is excellent. Their behaviour around the school is exemplary. Pupils move sensibly around the school site and look after each other, for example by holding doors and saying thank you. They learn how to manage their own behaviour effectively as a



result of the positive approach to behaviour management established by the leadership team and implemented consistently across the school. Good behaviour is recognised and commended. Pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour and realise the importance of making good choices. All of the pupils who responded to the questionnaire considered that they are treated fairly, and almost all of the parents agreed that the school actively promotes good behaviour. Pupils were able to explain that they all wanted to do the right thing in order for the school to be a happy and safe place. The relationships observed between pupils of all ages were extremely positive. Playground equipment is shared equitably and older pupils are always ready to help younger pupils. Pupils know that bullying is unacceptable and all are confident that any unpleasant or unkind behaviour would be dealt with effectively should it occur. These important messages are re-enforced through special focus assemblies with visiting speakers and regularly discussed within the PHSE curriculum.

**4.4** The pupils display respect for others, both within the community and beyond. They value the varied contributions that people make, learning about the people who help us and about different faiths in their religious education (RE) lessons. Pupils understand that while people may look different, they are all the same on the inside. They refer sensitively to people who may have different needs or disabilities. Pupils of all ages enjoy learning about the customs of different traditions which are celebrated by the whole community. They understand that practices unfamiliar and strange to them may be important to others, and so talk about them respectfully. Older pupils appreciate hearing from a range of different speakers who come to their assemblies. The pupils' respectful attitudes are promoted by the inclusive ethos which permeates the school.

**4.5** Pupils have an excellent understanding about the values that underpin life in Britain today. They understand the freedoms that democracy brings and are extremely articulate about the values they consider important. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of our system of government, and most older pupils could identify key parties in national elections. They



participate in the democratic process through the school council, with class elections held each year to select school council representatives. Pupils are clear that each person has individual rights and they can articulate many of these, with some classes making regular reference to them or having a focus on different rights each day. Pupils explain that they have a values prayer which they often say together in assembly, and some younger pupils reflect on their own values and behaviour which they log in a journal. The clear focus on values throughout the school makes a strong contribution to the pupils' spiritual development, encouraging them to think about the non-material aspects of life. Some pupils identify assemblies as a time for 'thinking about things' but most pupils refer to what they learn in assemblies. The younger children occasionally stop and just listen when outside, but older pupils were unable to identify moments of quiet or occasions which had elicited a response of awe and wonder within them. Pupils enjoy assemblies and this is evident in the confident way they sing and pray together, an experience which enriches their community life.

**4.6** Pupils of all ages are sensitive to the needs of others. They respond compassionately on hearing about those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils are motivated to help when they learn about people in places in the developing world with no access to clean water or little medical support. They are keen to offer support and enthusiastically plan fundraising events. Pupils enjoy participating in different activities such as bake sales, sponsored walks and a 'bad hair' day to raise money for these charities. They are aware of the needs of those in the local community, donating harvest gifts to a local mission and supporting a children's hospital. Pupils' care for others is evident in the way they carry out their responsibilities in school. Younger pupils enjoy acting as monitors, looking after the books or tidying equipment in the classroom. Year 6 pupils visit pupils in the younger classes at the beginning of each day, helping them to settle to their morning tasks. School prefects support the younger ones during indoor break times, encouraging them to play appropriate games in the classroom. Pupils take responsibility for putting away the playground equipment at the end of break. This sense of responsibility and awareness of others is evident from an early age. Pupils, including some of the younger ones, speak sensitively to children in the EYFS, for example explaining kindly why they cannot play football together.

**4.7** Pupils are extremely confident and knowledgeable about how to keep safe and healthy. This was confirmed in the questionnaire, where all of the pupils who responded agreed that they know how to keep safe online. Children in the EYFS understand why it is important to wash their hands, and can explain why it is safer to walk around the school rather than run. Pupils understand the importance of eating a balanced diet and know that drinking plenty of water is good for them. These healthy habits are promoted by the school providing fruit for morning snack and with teachers reminding pupils to drink plenty of water. Pupils can explain how exercise is an essential part of keeping healthy, and they enjoy participating in the wide range of physical activities provided for them in both the physical education curriculum and in extra-curricular clubs. Older pupils understand the importance of maintaining a healthy mind as well as a healthy body, learning strategies to promote positive mental health in their PHSE

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