

School inspection report

5–7 December 2023

Oak Tree Primary School

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Mitcham Court

Cricket Green

Mitcham

Surrey

CR4 4LB

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as ‘the Standards’.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. The proprietor, who is also the head teacher, and other leaders have brought about significant changes since they have taken up their roles in May 2023. They are supported by an external advisor and senior leaders from other affiliated schools, who provide effective guidance and challenge to the leadership team.
2. The leadership team have undertaken a comprehensive and accurate self-evaluation. It identifies key areas of change, such as increasing the level of support and oversight of teachers, and the need to focus on developing pupils' core numeracy and literacy skills. This has led to the creation of a detailed school improvement plan, which is currently being implemented.
3. Through the introduction of the '5D' approach, the curriculum combines secular content with the school's religious ethos. Aspects of the curriculum had been revised to facilitate a recovery programme for literacy and numeracy skills. All pupils in the school have English as an additional language (EAL) and leaders have implemented effective strategies to develop their English language skills.
4. Teaching is generally planned effectively, and pupils make good progress overall. Many lessons are engaging, and pupils enjoy their learning. However, a few lessons are less effective because the activities are not fully matched to the needs and interests of pupils. Leaders recognise this and have recently introduced targeted support for teachers to ensure pupils progress is consistently good.
5. Leaders have introduced systems to assess and track pupils' progress in English and mathematics. This data is used to support teaching. However, these systems are not fully utilised to provide an oversight of learning trends and patterns.
6. Leaders and teachers in the early years have a clear understanding of pupils' underlying ability and aptitudes. They ensure children make good progress in all areas of their development in a nurturing environment.
7. Leaders adopt an effective approach to risk management and an appropriate policy is in place. Activities both on and off the site are risk assessed with care, and measures are taken to mitigate potential hazards.
8. Educational visits enrich and support pupils' learning. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to develop a range of other skills through extra-curricular activities but recognise a need to broaden their scope.
9. Leaders and teachers create an environment which promotes pupils' self-confidence, self-esteem and self-knowledge. Pupils generally behave well, although leaders have limited oversight to monitor any trends and respond to them.
10. Leaders have put strategies in place to develop pupils' physical and mental health. A strong emphasis on pupils' wellbeing is enhanced by pupils' reflections on their emotions and understanding their learning in the context of their faith.

11. Premises and accommodation are maintained to a suitable standard. Leaders ensure effective systems for health and safety, the prevention of fire and first aid and medical care are in place. Staff effectively supervise pupils across the site.
12. Leaders enable pupils to develop a high level of respect for cultural diversity and tolerance of people's differences. Pupils understand the importance of making a positive contribution to society.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance, are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that all teaching is well planned to meet the needs and interests of pupils so that they make consistent progress
- ensure that assessment data is consistently used to support leaders' oversight of pupils' progress
- develop the range of extra-curricular opportunities to enable pupils to develop a wider range of skills and interests
- monitor patterns of behaviour more consistently in order to develop appropriate strategies to address any issues.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

13. The proprietor, who is also the headteacher, took over the school in May 2023. An external advisor and senior leaders from other schools in the same proprietorial group provide effective support and challenge to the leadership team. They ensure that leaders take actions to address issues identified in the school improvement plan.
14. This plan was created as a result of an extensive and informed evaluation of the school by the proprietor. The plan lays out clear steps to address the issues identified. Leaders have introduced a number of major initiatives to enhance and expand the curriculum since the school opened, such as an increased focus on numeracy and literacy. These are recognised and appreciated by parents.
15. Leaders oversee teaching through regular lesson observations and drop-in visits. They aim to ensure teachers maintain high standards of behaviour and that pupils make good progress. As a result of this monitoring, leaders have identified a need to provide targeted support for some teachers to ensure a consistent quality of teaching in all lessons. Leaders then provide targeted professional development to enable staff to develop their teaching skills.
16. Leaders have also introduced a new system of assessment which supports teachers and informs their lesson planning. Leaders have identified a need to make more use of this data to monitor the progress of cohorts of pupils over time.
17. Leaders in the early years curriculum plan effectively and children make good progress from their starting points as a result of the effective assessment of their interests and needs. They create a supportive environment, which meets the wellbeing needs of the children in the setting.
18. Leaders identify and mitigate risk across a broad range of areas. In addition to appropriate risk assessments for buildings, trips and events, leaders make effective use of risk assessments for individual pupils with specific concerns including physical and wellbeing issues.
19. The accessibility plan provides for current and future planning to ensure pupils do not suffer discrimination, for example, by providing information to pupils in a format which meets their needs.
20. Leaders monitor policies with care in the light of changing guidance and liaise with external safeguarding agencies when required.
21. The school provides parents with a comprehensive handbook which signposts policies and other school information. They access this information electronically or in hard copy available in the school office.
22. Senior leaders deal quickly and effectively with parents' concerns. No formal complaints have been made in the period since the school opened in May 2023.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

23. Leaders have created a well-planned curriculum which marries secular content with the school's religious ethos. Through the integration of '5D' lessons, which link each subject with the relevant tenets of Islam, pupils benefit from a broad and enriching learning experience.
24. As a result of the self-evaluation undertaken following the recent change of ownership, leaders have adapted the curriculum to strengthen pupils' core literacy and numeracy skills to underpin their learning across the breadth of the curriculum.
25. Every pupil in the school has a home background where English is an additional language (EAL). Whilst pupils are fluent in English, the school has identified relative weaknesses. Leaders have introduced strategies to develop speaking and listening skills and to widen vocabulary. This focus has been successful and pupils make good progress, showing improved numeracy and literacy skills. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 demonstrate a mature use of vocabulary and articulate communication throughout their studies. Pupils are successful in gaining places in local schools, some with selective entry requirements.
26. This necessary focus on the recovery of basic skills has temporarily narrowed the breadth of the curriculum. Due to the success of the recovery programme, leaders plan to reintroduce these aspects of the curriculum during the academic year.
27. In the early years, leaders prioritise the acquisition of speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, children make good progress from entry, and most are on track to meet the early learning goals by the end of Reception.
28. No pupil has a formal diagnosis of special educational needs/disabilities (SEND). However, leaders have identified pupils whose current progress is a cause for concern and provide effective support, enabling them to make good progress.
29. Lessons are typically well planned. Pupils are highly engaged, enjoy their learning and make good progress. In a few lessons, activities are not fully matched to the interests and abilities of pupils, and pupils lose focus which sometimes impacts their progress. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their feedback and to revisit work so that they can act upon the guidance given. This leads to improved learning outcomes.
30. Leaders have developed new processes for assessing and tracking pupils' progress in English and mathematics. Staff use the data to identify gaps in learning. The assessment data informs planning and interventions as part of the whole school recovery programme. However, the use of this tracking system to provide leaders with an oversight of the progress of cohorts and individual pupils is not fully developed.
31. Opportunities for learning continue beyond the classroom. Educational visits enrich and support pupils' learning, such as to the Science Museum and Cambridge University. Pupils in Year 6 are preparing for a forthcoming camping trip to build their teamwork and leaderships skills. Clubs available include board games, fitness and sport, but leaders recognise a need to offer a wider range of options.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

32. Leaders and teachers create a welcoming and nurturing environment. Positive relationships between pupils and staff are developed from the early years and built upon throughout the school. This environment develops pupils' self-confidence and self-knowledge. Pupils are caring towards each other. Mental health pupil ambassadors support their peers as part of open access to the 'calm room'. This initiative is highly effective in supporting pupils' wellbeing. Pupils enjoy coming to school and talk openly with adults about their wellbeing. Pupils' self-esteem is high.
33. Pupils, from early years on, understand the importance of healthy eating and can apply what they have learned in lessons to their own eating at school and at home. The curriculum includes physical education, and the extra-curricular provision also offers some physical activities. Leaders have identified a need to offer a broader range of options to encourage pupils to be active and support their physical development.
34. Leaders promote the development of pupils' spiritual awareness through opportunities to reflect their daily worship. The interwoven nature of the '5D' approach to curriculum planning encourages pupils to reflect on their learning in the context of their faith.
35. Senior pupils provide younger pupils with clear and consistent behaviour modelling. Older pupils are consistently well mannered and polite. They have a clear understanding of the consequences of breaking rules, and they feel that teachers apply sanctions and rewards fairly. They appreciate opportunities to learn from mistakes and to make amends when required. The religious ethos of the school contributes to a clear emphasis on forgiveness and restoration of relationships. Younger pupils are generally well behaved. There are a few low-level behaviour issues which arise when teaching activities do not engage pupils' attention fully. Systems are in place to record and monitor behaviour, but they do not always provide leaders with clear oversight to enable them to address any emerging issues.
36. Leaders have developed an effective anti-bullying strategy, and pupils are clear about the difference between bullying and unkindness. Pupils are confident that they can turn to staff and that their concerns will be dealt with effectively. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) curriculum, which includes suitable relationships education, has an emphasis on showing respect for all, and helps pupils to develop strategies to regulate their emotions and behaviour. From the early years, leaders encourage pupils to identify and manage their own feelings, through daily emotion registrations. They are aware of the impact of their own emotions on friendships.
37. The premises and accommodation are maintained to a suitable standard. Leaders have developed appropriate systems for health and safety and the prevention of fire. Suitable arrangements are in place for first aid and medical care. Pupils are effectively supervised by staff across the site and clear protocols, which maintain their safety, are well-established and understood by all. Admission and attendance registers are appropriately maintained. Pastoral leaders monitor attendance and act upon concerns effectively so that levels of attendance are high.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

38. Leaders enable pupils to develop a high level of respect for cultural diversity and people's differences, including through religious education teaching. Older pupils' understanding of the part these teachings play in shaping them as positive members of society is well developed. Leaders' careful and sensitive provision of assemblies and morning worship enables pupils to further develop their understanding of faith within life in modern day Britain.
39. Leaders ensure that pupils develop a strong sense of right and wrong, guided by religious teaching moral principles. Teachers weave PSHE themes throughout the curriculum to make links with topics such as mutual respect, differences and relationships so that pupils develop a firm understanding of these values within the context of their broader learning. Pupils understand the importance of laws in society, and the role of public institutions.
40. Children in the early years understand the importance of following rules, and the roles played in society by the emergency services. Staff teach them to treat others with respect and to help and support those around them.
41. Leaders prepare pupils effectively for the next stages of their education. Senior pupils learn how life will be different when they join their senior schools. Pupils have opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for aspects of daily school life. As a result, pupils develop their social skills in a range of formal roles, such as eco-ambassadors, school council representatives and mental health ambassadors, and pupils devise rotas for smaller responsibilities such as clearing up after lunch. Leaders enable pupils to lead assemblies, which they do with confidence. Pupils' understanding and appreciation of democratic processes is well developed, and pupils are proud when they are elected to the school council.
42. Leaders develop strong economic awareness through opportunities for pupils to plan and deliver entrepreneurial projects. For example, Maths Week enabled pupils to raise money for the victims of war through making, marketing and selling cakes. They calculate how much money they have raised. Leaders enable pupils to develop an understanding of their place within the local community through visits to care homes, litter and leaf picking and planned visits to local places of worship.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

43. Leaders ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard pupils. The proprietor maintains an informed overview, supported by the advisory body, including a regular review of the safeguarding arrangements.
44. Safeguarding induction and training for staff, including that for the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and other members of the safeguarding team, are thorough, regular and in line with local requirements. Staff demonstrate a secure and confident understanding of the safeguarding policy and speak knowledgeably about how they ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils. Staff understand their responsibilities through the inclusion of safeguarding scenarios in staff meetings. Staff are confident that they would follow the protocols if they have safeguarding concerns about pupils or adults. Safeguarding leaders maintain appropriate records of concerns which arise.
45. The school listens to the views of individual pupils. The education welfare officer oversees all aspects of pupils' wellbeing, ensures issues are brought to the attention of the DSL where appropriate and refers to external agencies if required. As a result, pupils feel safe in their school. When required, effective communication is established with parents.
46. Leaders ensure that appropriate safer recruitment checks are carried out on adults who work with pupils. These are accurately recorded in a single central record of appointments. An external advisor with responsibility in this area has appropriate skills, experience and training, and regularly reviews the effectiveness of recruitment checks and reports to the proprietor.
47. Leaders ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online. For example, pupils appreciate the benefits of themed safety weeks. Suitable internet filtering and monitoring systems are in place to protect pupils from inappropriate content.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Oak Tree Primary School
Department for Education number	315/6588
Address	Oak Tree Primary School Mitcham Court Cricket Green Mitcham Surrey CR4 4LB
Phone number	020 8648 4647
Email address	admin@oaktreeprimarysch.co.uk
Website	www.gardensofjannahtrust.co.uk
Proprietor	Mrs Rena Begum
Headteacher	Mrs Rena Begum
Age range	3–11
Number of pupils	70
Date of previous inspection	5–7 March 2019 (Ofsted)

Information about the school

48. Oak Tree Primary School is an independent co-educational day school in Mitcham, Surrey. It opened in May 2023. The school was formally known as Date Valley School under a previous proprietor. The school is governed by its proprietor who is supported by a Board of Advisors. The proprietor is also the Headteacher.
49. There are 16 children in the early years part of the school which comprises a mixed class of 12 Nursery children and four Reception children.
50. The school has identified four pupils as requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
51. English is an additional language for all 70 pupils.
52. The school states its aims are to nurture and instil Islam in their pupils in the most natural way possible. A unique curriculum works through an integrated approach to deliver a wholesome education for all pupils. It seeks to empower children to discover themselves, achieve wholeness, spirituality and develop social consciousness.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

5–7 December 2023

53. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days. The onsite inspection was accompanied by a shadow team inspector.

54. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work with pupils and staff
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

55. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

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