



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

OAKWOOD SCHOOL

NOVEMBER 2016



SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Oakwood School			
DfE number	306/6088			
Registered charity number	1053810			
Address	Oakwood School 59 Godstone Road Purley Surrey CR8 2AN			
Telephone number	020 8668 8080			
Email address	enquiries@oakwoodschool.org.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Ciro Candia			
Chair of governors	Mrs Eleanor Leonard			
Age range	3 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	152			
	Boys	72	Girls	80
	Day pupils	152	EYFS	34
	Years 1 - 2	42	Years 3 - 6	76
Inspection dates	23 to 24 Nov 2016			

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.

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 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 un-met 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 grade descriptors 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 in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they 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 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 several governors. Inspectors observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. 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

Mrs Joy Richardson	Reporting inspector
Mr Jonathan Brough	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Miss Angela Rawlinson	Team inspector (Former head, IAPS school)

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Oakwood School opened in 1996 as the first of four schools founded by the Parents, Children and Teachers in Partnership (PACT) educational trust. It is a Catholic school that welcomes pupils of other faiths and cultural traditions. The PACT educational trust acts as the governing body and oversees the management of the school, while the school's day-to-day running is the responsibility of the headmaster and senior management team.
- 1.2 The school is housed in a large Victorian building in an acre of grounds, on the edge of Purley. Pupils are taught by class teachers and by specialist teachers, and pupils from Year 3 also have a personal tutor.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide a personalised and rigorous education that teaches values within a Catholic ethos of love, trust and respect. It seeks to educate the whole person; intellect, body and spirit. Character education underpins the academic programme. The PACT educational trust recognises parents as the primary educators of their children. The school's mission is to support parents in raising their children to lead good lives by growing in virtue.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Most pupils come from families living within a few miles of the school. Around three quarters are from Catholic families, and the school has a wide diversity of ethnic heritage within its population. The school has identified four pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, mainly dyslexia, and they receive additional support. No pupil in the school has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for fourteen pupils. Specialist support is provided for two, who are at an early stage in learning English. The school has identified thirty-two pupils with academic and non-academic gifts and talents, and provides enrichment activities tailored to their needs.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

Recommendations from previous inspection

- 1.6 The previous full inspection of the school by ISI was an interim inspection in November 2010. The recommendations from that inspection were:
 - Build on existing good practice to ensure that in addition to praise, marking consistently includes advice for improvement.
 - Develop the facilities for information and communications technology (ICT) throughout the EYFS to enhance learning and to add variety to teaching strategies.
- 1.7 The school has successfully met both the recommendations of the previous inspection.

2. KEY FINDINGS

2.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- Pupils progress well and reach high standards by the time they leave.
- Pupils read with understanding, write interestingly and accurately, and confidently manipulate numbers.
- Pupils achieve highly across a wide range of activities, in and out of the classroom.
- Skills in computing are underdeveloped, and limited resources constrain pupils' reading experience.
- Attitudes to learning are extremely positive and this underlies pupils' high achievement.

2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils espouse and apply the 'virtues' that are explored within the character development programme.
- They have a strong sense of responsibility towards others and the community.
- They collaborate well, displaying mutual respect.

Recommendations

2.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider:

- Developing library provision and book resources to extend pupils' reading experience.
- Enhancing the ICT curriculum and the training of staff to ensure consistent development of pupils' skills.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 The school aims to educate the whole person, with pupils' personal development and academic achievement supporting each other. Pupils reach high standards by the time they leave, and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Results in National Curriculum tests in Year 6 have been well above the national average. Standardised tests demonstrate attainment that is consistently above average, and increasingly so as pupils move through the school. Year 6 pupils are successful in entrance examinations for transfer to senior schools, and some win scholarships. Pupils gain breadth of knowledge and depth of understanding across a well-rounded curriculum, succeeding and often excelling in a wide range of subjects and activities.
- 3.3 The school's high standards are underpinned by careful use of assessment to check each pupil's progress. Its leadership analyses the data to pinpoint any weak areas of learning by individuals or groups, so that these can be worked on. Staff keep a 'Watch List' which is reviewed half-termly and lists pupils who are not achieving as well as they might, or who are not keeping up with the expectation for their age. Support is provided for these pupils in class or through additional teaching, and parents are kept closely informed, with the result that these pupils maintain progress in line with their peers. The school's special educational needs team oversees this provision and identifies specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. Pupils who have EAL progress well in English and in other subjects, as their fluency is monitored and extra teaching is arranged when required.
- 3.4 Pupils who are academically more able or talented in particular areas achieve well in relation to their abilities. They are identified from standardised scores and achievement in fields such as art, music and sport. These pupils engage in extension activities in class or for homework, and are challenged through a range of enrichment activities. 'The Aristotle Group' encourages the more able pupils to pursue independent projects over a period of time, exercising initiative and skill in tackling problems, designing and making, and presenting what they have produced.
- 3.5 A high proportion of parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and almost all stated that teaching enables their children to make good progress and develop skills for the future. A few parents felt that able pupils could be challenged more. The inspection found that the school aims high for all pupils, in the context of its commitment to a broad education. The school recognises pupils' abilities, provides appropriate challenge and gives support with preparation for external examinations where this is needed.
- 3.6 Children in the EYFS make substantial progress across all the specified areas of learning, so that almost all achieve and many exceed expectations for their age. This is because firm foundations are laid in basic skills during the course of imaginatively organised activities that fire children's interest, stimulate their thinking and extend their verbal ability. For example a child in the Nursery noticed and counted the engines on model aeroplanes, concluding that small planes have two engines and big ones have four. In Reception, speculation about why an electronic device was not working led to a probing discussion about the workings of electricity, batteries, cables, plugs and sockets. Technology is used widely and effectively in Nursery and Reception to enrich learning, building on a recommendation from the previous inspection.

- 3.7 Pupils listen carefully and speak with confidence and clarity. Children in Reception readily took their place in the 'Singing Chair' to sing a solo, and were able to identify other children's voices while listening carefully with their eyes closed. Older pupils know how to project their voice and to engage an audience. All pupils participate in concerts, verse-speaking competitions and annual drama performances, which build confidence. This was evident in rehearsals for the Nativity play, where children from Year 1 and Year 2 sang with tuneful verve and delivered their lines with conviction.
- 3.8 Pupils' reading skills are well advanced for their age and they use them to good effect across the curriculum. They read with comprehension, and with expression when reading aloud. Pupils become skilled in extracting information from text. They share books as a class and in reading groups, as well as reading individually. Pupils' reading is strongly supported by daily reading at home. The school is limited in its book supply and library provision, so many pupils choose to read books brought from home. Most pupils read widely, but school resources are not sufficient to extend the reading diet. Pupils write accurately and interestingly, applying their skills in recording and expanding on what they have learned across a range of subjects. Older pupils immerse themselves in developing their own ideas while writing at length, for example in a diary entry written as Oliver Twist or an account of life as an evacuee. Pupils strive for accuracy in their spelling, punctuation and grammar, and standards are high in these areas due to explicit teaching. Spellings of increasing difficulty are practised regularly and pupils speak of the strategies that they find effective in learning them. Older pupils are precise in their use of punctuation, discussing, for example, the appropriate use of colons, semi-colons and brackets. They have a clear understanding of grammatical terms. Linguistic skills including an appreciation of grammar and word origins are further reinforced by the teaching of Spanish throughout the school, and by the learning of Latin within classics in Years 5 and 6.
- 3.9 Pupils manipulate numbers with confidence. They know that the quick recall of number facts provides a foundation for solving more complex problems. Pupils explain their methods of working, for example when comparing the difference in length between two worms or instructing other pupils in how to use a protractor. They use mathematical reasoning in solving word problems. Pupils relish opportunities to apply their skills; when planning a sale brochure for a Roman villa, a pupil worked out costs in denarii currency using Roman numerals. They respond with enthusiasm to 'mastery challenges' in lessons and homework that require extended mathematical thinking.
- 3.10 Pupils gain useful technological skills, though these are not developed systematically through the school. They are enthusiastic and competent users of electronic devices such as programmable toys with motors and sensors. Older pupils carry out research in school and at home during the course of class and individual projects, and make lively screen-based presentations. They are well versed in safe and sensible use of the internet. Pupils make enthusiastic use of a rudimentary visual programming language. The organisation of the curriculum and staff training to support it are not yet sufficiently advanced to support ambitious intentions, such as for Year 6 pupils to be coding a simple app by the end of the year.

- 3.11 Pupils are extremely positive in their attitudes to learning. They apply the teaching that they receive about perseverance, resilience and personal responsibility to their work. Pupils collaborate well, appreciating and building on the contributions of others. They have well-developed study skills, supported by their competence in reading and writing. Older pupils are able to take notes effectively and to draw together information from several sources. They exercise initiative and independence in the process, as seen in group projects that required finding out about the world's different biomes. Pupils are responsible in their completion of homework. Pupils discuss and evaluate their own work, articulating what is good and what could be better, and committing to targets for improvement. They respond well to marking, which has developed since the last inspection to create an effective dialogue with pupils. Pupils' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire demonstrate strong agreement that they make good progress, lessons are interesting and teachers help them if they have concerns with their work.
- 3.12 Pupils' achievements are wide-ranging in and out of the classroom, as the school offers breadth for all and the opportunity for individuals to take their skills to a higher level. Work in art is of high quality, demonstrating skill, creativity and aesthetic responsiveness. Large numbers take part in speech and drama, frequently gaining distinctions in examinations. Pupils achieve well in music in many forms. All learn the recorder and the ukulele as they move through the school. A high percentage of pupils have instrumental tuition and often do well in grade examinations. Pupils sing well. The school has choirs for all age groups, and has had success at choir festivals. A popular pop band and an ensemble extend the range of musical engagement. Pupils do well in external competitions, such as a letter-writing competition and the Primary Maths Challenge. School teams have a strong record of sporting successes especially in netball and football, often against larger schools. Pupils of all abilities have opportunities to represent the school, while individual talents are nurtured and encouraged.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Several key factors which are distinctive to the school contribute to pupils' personal development: the character development programme; the partnership with parents; and the personal tutorial system. From Reception onwards, pupils have weekly lessons in character development which are applied across their life at school and at home. Pupils have a strong understanding of the virtues that they are taught, as they are related to their daily concerns and the decisions they make. For example the focus of the current half term is on courtesy; pupils have been considering how to be a good guest when invited to a friend's house, setting guidelines for themselves that included remembering that it is a privilege, respecting others' space and 'not shouting out that you want pudding'. The practical guidance they receive and the way they think issues through for themselves serve to create a shared understanding of virtues that is widely applicable to their life now and in the future.
- 4.3 Parents are kept fully informed about the character development programme in order to discuss it with their children. Parents understand and endorse the school's values, and work closely with the school towards shared goals. Of the large number of parental respondents to the pre-inspection questionnaire, all agreed that the school promotes an environment that successfully supports their children's personal development. Parents' questionnaire responses yielded a similar unanimity of agreement that the school meets children's pastoral and welfare needs effectively, and that it promotes good behaviour.
- 4.4 Pupils from Year 3 onwards have a personal tutor in addition to their class teacher, with whom they meet fortnightly, individually or in a small group. Any personal concerns can be aired, and personal targets are discussed that relate to character development at home and at school. The tutorial system helps to cement the partnership with parents, so that pupils are consistently supported in their children's personal development.
- 4.5 Pupils' self-knowledge is highly developed. They reflect in talk and writing on what the virtues really mean in terms of their own behaviour. Pupils take pride in the 'Character Star' awards, and gain insight by identifying the actions of others that exemplify the virtue they are currently studying. Pupils understand that they are on a lifelong journey of learning and personal growth, as are the adults around them whom they see as role models. Pupils articulate what is good about their work and what could be made better. They take the initiative in seeking help when it is needed, for example by signalling this with a paper clip on their work. Pupils know how well they are doing and are well-informed; they are made aware of their results in standardised tests so that they can set their own goals.
- 4.6 Pupils appreciate that the decisions they make, large or small, have consequences for themselves and others. They take their responsibilities seriously in many roles, including school captains, school council members, health and safety ambassadors, and travel ambassadors. They draw on others' ideas and work collaboratively to make the school better for everyone, and to achieve shared goals.

- 4.7 Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong, and are self-disciplined within a known framework of expectations. From the EYFS on, they understand the rules and routines, and ways in which they can contribute. They develop good judgement and a sense of appropriate behaviour in different situations, such as when talking about the line between 'fun' and 'silliness'. Their behaviour is generally impeccable. A small minority of pupils in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire said they do not always feel fairly treated. Inspection evidence found that such a view related to a few occasions in the playground. The school listens to pupils and takes their views into account, and is working to ensure consistency in dealing with any playtime incidents. Pupils all agreed that the school encourages good behaviour.
- 4.8 Hard work is recognised by pupils as bringing its own reward. This breeds resilience that encourages them to try when work is difficult. Pupils persevere, sometimes over a long period, on individual projects and sustain concentration, for example when writing at length. Pupils relish their frequent sporting successes, but when they do not win they talk about what has been gained from taking part. They have a strong sense of sportsmanship, teamwork and fair play.
- 4.9 The school's spiritual character and purpose are valued by the entire community. Pupils appreciate the Oratory as 'a place that makes Oakwood special'. Families and older pupils often visit it for a moment of quiet prayer. Teaching of religion focuses on Catholic Christian faith and practice, while other faiths are respected as sharing a spiritual quest. The school sets out to educate intellect, body and spirit, and spiritual awareness is fostered throughout its daily life.
- 4.10 Pupils work and play harmoniously, learning to resolve differences and to see other points of view. Peer mediators in Year 6 help to sort out any problems in the playground. They have been trained for the role and recognise the importance of listening and not taking sides. They see their contribution as significant in preventing any bullying or fighting, and ensuring that everyone feels included.
- 4.11 Pupils are alert and aware about keeping healthy and safe, and all said in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire that they feel safe at school. Although the school does not serve hot meals, pupils discuss healthy choices in relation to their packed lunches which some put together themselves. Health and safety ambassadors encourage others to eat well and to avoid sweet snacks. Pupils learn to identify and mitigate risks while being sensibly adventurous. The pupils themselves bring forward ideas about safety improvements such as cordoning off the car park, which are then tried out. They have a good understanding of e-safety, and the school shares guidance on this with parents. Pupils enjoy sports and want to keep fit. They value the opportunities for exercise offered in school, and in their regular sessions at a local sports club. Pupils understand the effects of exercise, including the importance of warming up beforehand.
- 4.12 Pupils are curious about the world and its diversity of people, places and cultural traditions. For example this was reflected in their interest in West African textile designs, stimulated by the celebration of Black History Month. Pupils appreciate the variety of languages spoken, and children in Reception take turns to choose the 'language of the day' for greeting each other. As the Catholic faith is important within the school, pupils appreciate that other religions are important to those who practise them. For example, a Muslim pupil was encouraged to tell others in the class about her religion and the celebration of Eid.

- 4.13 Pupils consider what the school motto 'in gaudio serviamus' means to them, and they find many different ways to 'serve with joy'. This is evident in the help which older pupils provide to younger ones, and the alacrity with which pupils volunteer for jobs. Pupils take part in many charitable fundraising activities to help those in need both locally and internationally. They know that charity is not just about donating money, but that the contributions of time and effort play a significant part too.
- 4.14 As a result of their experience throughout the school, pupils are confident about moving on to the next stage of their education. They appreciate the information provided by former pupils and enrichment days such as a chemistry workshop that provide a taster of what is to come. By the time they leave, pupils have a strong understanding of effective work habits including the value of hard work, punctuality, perseverance and the setting of personal goals and targets. Their personal development provides a strong foundation, not only for their senior education but for adult life ahead.