



**AMBITION, DETERMINATION, EXCELLENCE, INTEGRITY, KINDNESS, RESPECT**

Headteacher: Mr N Wright MMATH

26 February 2026

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am delighted to share with you the outcome of our recent Ofsted inspection, which took place on 6 January 2026. This was our first inspection under Ofsted's new framework, which replaces the old single-word judgement with a more detailed 'report card' across key areas of school life. We are extremely proud of what this report says about our school, our pupils, our staff and the remarkable community we have built together.

### **Understanding the new report card**

Under the new Ofsted framework, inspectors no longer give a single overall grade. Instead, schools receive a report card with separate evaluations for key areas of school life, graded on a five-point scale:

Exceptional • Strong • Expected • Needs Attention • Urgent Improvement

### **What we are celebrating**

**Safeguarding standards met:** We are proud that inspectors confirmed our safeguarding standards are fully met. Leaders have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, concerns are actively identified and acted upon, and as a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

**Attendance and behaviour – Strong standard:** We are thrilled that inspectors recognised attendance and behaviour as a **strong standard** – the second highest grade available. We are the only Secondary school in Hampshire to have achieved this.

Attendance has significantly improved over recent years, and inspectors praised our clearly articulated high expectations, perceptive systems and individualised approaches to supporting families. Pupils are keen to attend because of the school's welcoming, kind and supportive culture. Pupils' positive behaviour was also highlighted as a real strength: Oakmoor was described as a calm place that many pupils call a community or a family. Our value of respect is central to our ethos and is evident in everything we do.

**Inclusion – Expected standard:** Inspectors found that inclusion is at the heart of Oakmoor. They praised the way we strive to know each pupil individually, quickly identifying and reducing barriers to learning. Our use of research and best practice, targeted Pupil Premium funding, well-developed reading programmes, and our innovative new life skills and workplace skills curriculum in Key Stage 4 were all commended. Support for pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and looked-after children was described as impactful and effective.

**Leadership and governance – Expected standard:** Inspectors recognised that leaders have rapidly improved the way the school helps pupils to learn and thrive. They noted that staff praise our inspiring and energetic leadership, and that our planning for school improvement is systematic and research-based. Governors and the trust were recognised for their shared ambitious vision and their strong, collaborative working relationship. We are particularly proud that inspectors noted the positive, highly inclusive culture that exists across the school.

**Personal development and wellbeing – Expected standard:** Our values strategy was recognised as a real strength of the school. Pupils have a detailed understanding of the importance of respect, kindness and responsible citizenship. Careers education was praised following a recent overhaul, with Year 11 pupils described as confident about their next steps and well-supported by knowledgeable staff.

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**Curriculum and teaching – Expected standard:** Inspectors noted that leaders have a detailed and accurate understanding of the quality, breadth and ambition of the curriculum, which is now carefully sequenced to ensure pupils’ knowledge builds steadily over time. Teachers’ detailed subject knowledge was praised, and inspectors noted that regular training is improving the consistency of teaching. Our work on reading was highlighted as a cornerstone of how we educate all pupils.

#### **What needs attention and why we embrace it**

The one area graded ‘needs attention’ was Achievement. While we respect the inspection process, we want to be open and honest with you: we are disappointed that this grading does not sufficiently reflect the context in which we work.

Our pupils arrive at Oakmoor with levels of prior attainment that are well below national averages, we have higher than national average percentage of students in receipt of pupil premium and those with special educational needs. Inspectors acknowledged that pupils with additional needs benefit from effective identification and adaptive teaching, and that pupils throughout the school are developing a suitable foundation for their subsequent learning.

Our Progress 8 scores are improving and are close to the national average, meaning our pupils make comparable progress to similar pupils nationally. Yet the achievement grade is heavily influenced by raw attainment data measured against a national average that does not take into account pupils’ starting points. This means it was never designed to reflect a school like ours.

We are not alone in raising this concern. A recent *Schools Week* article (February 2026) highlighted that leaders across England are questioning whether Ofsted’s use of national averages for achievement is fair to all schools. NAHT general secretary Paul Whiteman warned this approach could “unfairly mark down” schools with larger proportions of pupils in receipt of pupil premium or those with SEND, who may have low prior attainment but nevertheless make considerable progress.

The article quotes one trust leader asking: “How on earth can you use a national average against a population that’s clearly in no way average?” We share that question. Our data shows that GCSE attainment is below national averages, but this reflects where our pupils begin their journey, not the quality of education they receive or the progress they make with us.

We are confident that leaders’ well-judged and systematic improvements to curriculum and teaching are working, inspectors acknowledged this directly. We will continue to drive improvement in outcomes with focus and urgency, and we remain committed to ensuring every pupil at Oakmoor achieves as well as they possibly can. We will be sharing our views on this aspect of the framework with Ofsted directly.

#### **A final word of thanks**

This report reflects the dedication and professionalism of every member of our staff, and the hard work, resilience and spirit of our pupils. It also reflects your trust and partnership as families, thank you!

We are proud of how far we have come, and we are excited about where we are going. You can read the full Ofsted report card which is also attached to the email and will be on the Ofsted website on Monday.

Yours faithfully,



Nigel Wright  
Headteacher, Oakmoor School