

**A report on**

**Oaklea Grange**

**Sandy Lane  
Hope  
Wrexham  
Flintshire  
LL12 9RP**

**Date of inspection: November 2025**

**by**

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education**

**and Training in Wales**

## About Oaklea Grange

Name of provider	Oaklea Grange
Proprietor status	Young Foundations Limited
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Independent
Residential provision?	Yes
Number of pupils on roll	7
Pupils of statutory school age	3
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	{PreviousInspectionDate}
Start date of inspection	17/11/2025

### School context

Oaklea Grange School is an independent school set in a rural location near Wrexham. The school opened in January 2023 and is part of Young Foundations Limited, a group which operates schools and children's homes in Wales, England and Scotland. The group sits within the portfolio of MRA UK Investments Limited, a private limited company.

The school is registered for up to eight pupils aged 11 to 18 who have social, emotional and mental health needs, trauma and attachment needs or autism spectrum condition. There are currently seven pupils on roll, all resident in the on-site children's home. All pupils attend the school through local authority funding and each pupil has an individual development plan or equivalent.

The headteacher has led the school since its establishment. They are supported by an executive headteacher who works across the wider company and by a small team of class teachers and teaching assistants.

## Summary

Teaching at Oaklea Grange School is shaped closely around each pupil's needs. Staff know pupils well and plan purposeful activities that build on their individual starting points. This helps pupils who have previously struggled with education to re-engage. Teachers work collaboratively to make helpful links across subjects, which strengthens pupils' understanding. Lessons are calm and focused as a result of strong relationships between pupils and staff. Consequently, pupils behave with respect and trust.

Teachers set clear expectations and use questioning, verbal prompts and success criteria effectively to help pupils understand how to improve. Many pupils make secure progress, particularly in numeracy and writing, and a majority gain recognised qualifications at a range of levels. These achievements build confidence and support pupils' future choices.

The school's approach to cultural and international awareness contributes significantly to pupils' wider development. Staff provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to learn about democratic processes, European citizenship and global issues. Activities such as Europe Day celebrations, online climate-change events and visits to the UK Parliament increase pupils' confidence and broaden their understanding of the world.

Staff place strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. Through personal, social and health education (PSHE), themed weeks, trips and enrichment activities, pupils learn about themselves, other cultures and different beliefs. Opportunities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's award, community performances and local visits help pupils build resilience and a sense of belonging.

Some aspects of the school's work are still developing. Progress in reading varies and work to strengthen reading provision is at an early stage. Limited access to suitable technology restricts pupils' digital experiences. Although most pupils improve their attendance after joining the school, low attendance affects progress for around half of the pupils.

The school has a strong safeguarding culture with clear systems and well-trained staff. Close partnership working with the residential home and external agencies supports pupils' well-being and stability.

Through effective self-evaluation, leaders have identified the school's priorities for improvement. They understand these priorities well and are embedding consistent practice to secure sustained progress.

## Main evaluation

Teaching at Oaklea Grange School is shaped closely around each pupil's needs and circumstances, ensuring that learning is purposeful and accessible. Nearly all learning activities draw on a suitable range of resources and are informed by detailed planning. Staff use their strong knowledge of pupils to adapt activities and build programmes that respond well to individual starting points, including for those who have previously struggled to engage in education. Teachers also work closely with each other and make purposeful links across curriculum areas to deepen pupils' understanding.

As a result of consistently effective and supportive relationships, nearly all lessons are calm and purposeful. Pupils show high levels of respect towards staff, whom they trust to act in their best interests. Building on these strong foundations, teachers set clear learning intentions and structure lessons so that pupils engage with appropriate challenge, supported by skilful questioning that extends their thinking. Teachers' regular verbal prompts, written feedback and well-established success criteria help pupils to understand how to improve and to evaluate their own progress with increasing accuracy.

During their time at the school, and from their diverse starting points, many pupils make secure progress in their learning and particularly in developing their numeracy and writing skills. A majority of pupils gain accredited qualifications at entry level, level 1 and level 2. This is particularly noteworthy for those who have previously found it difficult to engage with formal assessment. These achievements help many pupils build self-confidence and provide an important platform for future study and adult life. However, pupils' progress in developing their reading skills is variable. Staff have begun to separate reading for pleasure from reading for fluency to provide more focused practice, although this work is at an early stage. In addition, limited access to suitable software and technology restricts opportunities for pupils to experience the full breadth of digital learning, though leaders have begun work to address this.

Although nearly all pupils make significant progress in their attendance rates when compared to their previous settings, for around half, low attendance continues to limit their progress. The school works closely with the residential home, families and external partners to encourage regular attendance, but for a minority of pupils these efforts have not yet resulted in sustained improvement.

The school's taught curriculum, through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, actively promotes fundamental values and is highly effective in enabling pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. Throughout the year, pupils take part in a wide range of themed activities, visits and events. These

experiences help pupils to develop an appreciation of, and respect for, their own and other cultures and encourage respect for different faiths and beliefs.

Most pupils also benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities that support their personal development and wider skills. For example, contributing to a Welsh mental health choir concert, school heritage days, day trips to local beaches, visits to Liverpool docks and the pupils' prom night celebrations. In addition, last academic year, a minority of pupils completed the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's award, and this year a few pupils are working towards the Silver award. These experiences help pupils to develop confidence, resilience and a sense of belonging.

The school's provision for careers and future pathways is a particular strength. Timetabled careers lessons provide accurate, up-to-date guidance that enables pupils to make informed choices about a broad range of options. Nearly all pupils take part in meaningful work experience placements and mock employment interviews. The school also works in close partnership with local further education providers to increase pupils' awareness of their next steps and to smooth transitions.

### **Cultural and International Awareness**

Oaklea Grange School is currently the only accredited *European Parliament Ambassador School* (EPAS) in Wales. The school uses this status to broaden pupils' understanding of European citizenship, democratic processes and cultural diversity. Staff plan a coherent programme of experiences that link well to pupils' personal development and contribute positively to their wider skills.

Over the last year, most pupils have taken part in purposeful activities linked to the EPAS programme. These have included contributing to a *Europe Day* celebration, participating in an online event with an innovation lab focused on climate change, and updating an in-school information point following the European elections. As part of this work, many pupils have also visited the UK Parliament at Westminster, developing their confidence in planning a trip and travelling independently, as well as improving their understanding of parliamentary structures and history. Pupils also engage in events that promote language learning and cultural awareness, including activities linked to international cuisine.

Overall, the school uses the curriculum highly effectively to provide pupils with worthwhile opportunities that enhance their cultural awareness and deepen their understanding of democratic processes.

The school has a strong safeguarding culture built on clear systems, consistent staff training and a whole-school commitment to keeping pupils safe. Well-established mechanisms, including questionnaires, regular check-ins and the pupil post-box, support pupils to feel safe, and staff listen to them and respond promptly to any issues raised.

The curriculum also plays an important role in strengthening the school's safeguarding culture. Safeguarding themes are embedded across the curriculum, giving pupils regular teaching on valuable topics including healthy relationships, consent, online safety, substance misuse and recognising risk. The school also uses external professionals, such as the local police liaison officer, to deliver focused workshops on issues such as exploitation, cyber safety and personal safety. These sessions provide structured and relevant learning that helps pupils to understand risk, develop resilience and know how to keep themselves and others safe. Overall, the school promotes a safe and supportive environment where safeguarding is prioritised and embedded across practice and the curriculum.

There is strong partnership working between the education team and staff in the linked residential home. Regular, well-focused communication ensures that the school has a clear and timely understanding of any issues arising at home, which supports sensitive planning and consistent approaches for pupils. This disciplined, well-managed exchange of information contributes strongly to the stability and progress pupils make in school.

The school has built effectively on its work since opening in 2022 and has taken appropriate action in response to the recommendations from the follow-up to the registration visit. Leaders continue to embed consistent practice across the school to support sustained improvement. They have a clear understanding of the school's priorities and are taking purposeful steps to address them.

## Compliance with the regulations for registration

Independent school inspections are governed by the Education Act 2002 and related regulations: the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024. These regulations require an independent school to meet an appropriate standard in the following areas:

### **The quality of education provided by the school**

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this standard.

### **The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this standard.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this standard.

### **The suitability of proprietors and staff**

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this standard.

### **Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools**

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this standard.

### **The provision of information**

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this standard.

### **The manner in which complaints are to be handled**

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this standard.

## **New recommendations**

We have made three recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1. Continue to strengthen the provision for developing pupils' reading skills, ensuring that planned interventions have a measurable impact on pupils' progress
- R2. Broaden opportunities for pupils to develop a wider range of digital skills
- R3. Continue to improve pupils' attendance

## **Safeguarding**

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern.

## **What happens next**

Estyn advises the proprietor to amend its current development plan to show what actions the school intends to take in response to the recommendations. It is also advisable to circulate this plan, or a summary of it, to all parents/carers at the school.

## Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and support staff through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors/proprietor(s), leaders and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit lessons and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school had taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body (where appropriate), information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

## Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references to different quantities and proportions e.g. '*most pupils...*' or '*very few pupils...*'. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (<http://www.estyn.gov.wales/>)

The report was produced in accordance with section 163 of the Education Act 2002. The main purpose of inspection under this section is to report on compliance with the Independent Schools Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024. In schools that provide non-maintained nursery education, this report also satisfies the requirements of Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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