

Oakwood Academy

Chatsworth Road, Ellesmere Park, Eccles, Lancashire M30 9DY

Inspection dates

21–22 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher and governors have created an environment where very high expectations enable pupils to flourish from the outset. Staff are committed wholeheartedly to helping pupils overcome their barriers to learning.
- Leaders' effective use of assessment information about pupils' performance results in activities that are very well matched to pupils' learning needs.
- The curriculum is broad and well-tailored to meet pupils' individual needs. Activities are interesting and engage pupils in their learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are motivated to help others, showing kindness and patience in equal measure.
- Pupils make excellent progress. Leaders work with other schools to check that their judgements about pupils' work are robust and accurate.
- Pupils complete external examination courses successfully, which prepares them well for the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- Leaders and governors make sure that systems for managing staff performance have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning that pupils receive.
- The well-maintained school environment and regular updating of quality displays inspire pupils to take pride in their work.
- The sixth-form provision allows students to continue thriving, both academically and socially, into their young adulthood.
- Leaders ensure that all staff and governors receive high-quality safeguarding training. The school's curriculum helps pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. As a result, pupils feel safe at school.
- While absence is below the national average, it is improving. The pastoral team acts swiftly to intervene where individual pupils' attendance is a cause for concern.
- Leaders' actions to promote literacy across the curriculum are not yet fully embedded across all subjects.
- The positive progress seen in most subjects is not yet evident in science, humanities and food technology.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that the positive progress that pupils make is seen consistently across all subjects, and particularly in science, humanities and food technology.
- Ensure that strategies to embed literacy across the curriculum are applied consistently across all year groups and in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher is determined, committed and passionate about ensuring that pupils reach the highest standards they can. This leads to a shared vision in which staff and pupils alike strive for excellence. Such unity and drive results in strong outcomes for pupils at every stage of their school career.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They use this information to ensure that staff receive relevant professional development opportunities, such as participation in research projects, which will have a positive impact on pupils' progress and outcomes. Staff's skills are also recognised by leaders when managing their performance. Staff are well supported to make further progress in their careers.
- Leaders check that staff make accurate judgements about pupils' performance. Staff participate in regular meetings with a network of local schools to moderate work and share good practice.
- Leaders make the best use of assessment information to analyse pupils' performance and maximise the use of resources to support pupils' learning. Leaders track pupils' progress closely so that they can make sure that pupils receive effective support and challenge.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of learning opportunities for pupils that are engaging, challenging and suited to their individual needs. Leaders recognise the importance of developing pupils' skills for life. Leaders make sure that teachers plan activities to enable pupils to become more independent learners.
- The school was awarded teaching school status in March 2016. As a result, student teachers are able to develop specialist skills in working with pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Student teachers told inspectors that they are benefiting from a strong culture of support and professional development and participate fully in all aspects of school life.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively to target support for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders track the use of the funding carefully to ensure that its use meets the needs of pupils requiring the most support. Leaders analyse this information conscientiously to establish where spending has the most impact. As a result, this group of pupils makes progress that is as good as, and often better than, their non-disadvantaged peers.
- Leaders have not yet ensured that strategies to improve literacy across the curriculum are fully embedded. The high standards seen in spelling and grammar in English are not yet seen consistently in other subjects. Inspection evidence saw a lack of precision in spelling and grammar in some workbooks.
- Leaders promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural lives of pupils well. Pupils are able to use the school's prayer room, and staff organise local school trips to develop pupils' cultural and social understanding of the wider area. Pupils were recently supported in a sensitive way to explore the events surrounding the recent Manchester atrocity. Pupils have also been learning about black authors, developing their

understanding of the diversity of modern Britain.

Governance of the school

- Governors ensure that leaders are held to account for their actions. Governors have a clear focus for their work. They contribute actively to the culture of high expectations that exists in the school and the continuous pursuit for further improvement.
- Governors receive appropriate training to enable them to hold specific and relevant responsibilities in relation to areas such as safeguarding, teaching and learning, and school finance. As a result, they are able to provide focused challenge and support to school leaders.
- The school benefits from an abundant range of specialist skills offered by the governing body. The development of the key skills curriculum, focusing on independent living skills, has been enhanced by governors' expertise in this area.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A culture of vigilance is evident throughout the school. When a group of staff were asked about whose responsibility safeguarding in the school was, they replied 'Ours' in unison. Such a response is typical of the school's proactive and effective approach to safeguarding. Inspection evidence, such as recent reviews and case studies, also confirmed this robust approach to safeguarding.
- The school's well-maintained recruitment records confirm that leaders and governors recruit staff appropriately, carrying out the necessary checks required.
- Safeguarding training organised and implemented by leaders involves the whole school community. Recent e-safety training was delivered to governors and staff simultaneously, ensuring a shared understanding of an aspect of the safeguarding curriculum.
- Leaders review and reflect on safeguarding practices frequently. For example, as pupil numbers have increased in the school, they have ensured that pupils are marshalled in a quiet and orderly way at the beginning and end of the school day, reducing congestion around the building.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching is of a high quality which leads to excellent outcomes for pupils. Pupils show high levels of engagement in lessons. They benefit from enthusiastic teachers who have excellent subject knowledge which supports pupils in their learning and helps them to make strong progress.
- Teachers use a wide range of information about pupils' individual needs to plan lessons well and identify their next steps for learning.
- Leaders ensure that teaching assistants are deployed effectively throughout the school. Teachers work very well in partnership with teaching assistants, forming cohesive teams that nurture and inspire positive responses from pupils. As a result, support for

pupils is targeted accurately by well-trained staff.

- Teaching resources are of a high standard. In physical education, for example, state of the art equipment brings an energy and professionalism to activities such as circuit training. As a result, pupils are motivated to engage in physical activity, and access well-structured and exciting lessons.
- The school's own pupil surveys show that pupils are overwhelmingly positive about their learning experiences at Oakwood Academy. Inspection evidence showed this to be the case in lessons. Pupils show resilience in their work, and a comment of 'I've got it', heard in a lesson, reflected pupils' commitment to, and perseverance in, their learning.
- Classrooms are filled with calming music and inspirational displays celebrating pupils' work. The learning environment is geared appropriately to the age of the pupils it serves. There is a strong sense of care and respect for the school environment, reflected in the way it is maintained and developed.
- Teachers' questioning draws out the best responses in pupils and encourages understanding through wide-ranging opportunities for discussion. Occasionally, in a few subjects, teachers' use of questioning is less effective and most-able pupils are not challenged sufficiently in their learning.
- Subject leaders meet with senior leaders on a half-termly basis to review pupils' progress, identify where additional support may be needed and set targets for further improvement. As a result, teachers use this information to continue to plan lessons that challenge pupils at an appropriate level.
- Where teaching is strong, pupils are making excellent progress in their learning. Leaders recognise that while pupils make progress in science, humanities and food technology, it is not to the same high standards as those seen in other subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- With the encouragement of nurturing and committed leaders and staff, pupils flourish into confident learners and independent thinkers. Pupils are encouraged to participate in discussions, both during lessons and at other informal times, where an idea has sparked wider interest.
- Pupils receive excellent support from a full-time speech and language therapist to improve their communication skills. As a result, pupils communicate their thoughts and ideas with confidence and self-assurance. For example, pupils on the school council take responsibility for sharing school aims and information with their peers. All pupils are able to share their thoughts and ideas with school leaders via the 'voice box' system.
- Half-termly pastoral meetings enable staff to identify where pupils may need extra support in their wider personal and social development. This leads to swift support for pupils, and the involvement of external agencies where appropriate.

- Staff make sure that lunchtimes are a positive experience for pupils. Pupils eat their lunch in purpose-built restaurant-style bays that suppress noise and replicate a real experience of eating out. Pupils learn skills and attitudes that prepare them well for eating out in the community.
- Incidents of bullying or name-calling are extremely rare. Pupils told inspectors that incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils' responses to school surveys also supported this view.
- Leaders make sure that pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe from harm. For example, they know how to keep safe on the internet, or use tools safely when working with resistant materials.
- All staff model high expectations of presentation and conduct at Oakwood Academy. As a result, pupils behave well, look after the school environment and wear their uniform with pride.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- All staff skilfully support pupils to manage their behaviour well and pupils respond extremely positively. Detailed and well-kept records show that staff use physical interventions very rarely. In the current year, no physical interventions have taken place.
- Because behaviour is managed so well, no pupils have been excluded from school for several years.
- Pupils form orderly, quiet queues for arrivals, meals and end of school days. The school atmosphere is uniformly calm and settled and movement between classes is prompt and well managed.
- Pupils confirm that they enjoy breaktimes at school. They are well supervised by staff and are able to engage in a variety of purposeful activities, including using the newly installed outdoor equipment.
- Although pupils' attendance is below the national average, it is improving. There are genuine medical reasons for some pupils' low attendance. The pastoral team work closely with families to make sure that those pupils who can attend regularly do so.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Leaders and staff ensure that pupils make outstanding progress from their low starting points. There is no significant difference in the rates of progress disadvantaged pupils make compared with their non-disadvantaged peers. In some subjects, disadvantaged pupils outperform non-disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are able to follow a wide range of accredited courses suited to their ability and future aspirations. Pupils complete GCSEs in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, as appropriate. In addition to this, pupils complete entry level, vocational and functional skills qualifications, preparing them well for their next phase of education, employment or training.

- At the end of key stage 4 in 2017, all pupils achieved externally accredited qualifications in a range of subjects. From their low starting points, a small number of pupils achieved higher grades at GCSE.
- The school's 'gifted and talented' programme enables pupils who show a particular talent or skill to follow appropriate pathways for their learning, ensuring that they are appropriately challenged.
- Pupils' work shows strong progress as a result of the high standards of teaching seen in the school. Workbooks show that pupils are set clear and challenging targets. Pupils know what they have to do to further improve their work.
- Strategies to improve reading are having a positive impact on pupils' reading skills. A school research project is currently focused on improving literacy skills further.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils transfer to the school's sixth-form provision. Staff make sure that pupils are well prepared for this transition, and build upon their achievements at the end of Year 11.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- Since the previous inspection, leaders recognised that students required additional support to enable a smooth transition to further education, employment or training. This led to the newly-established sixth-form provision, which now provides outstanding learning opportunities for its students, with a focus on vocational qualifications.
- The exceptional leadership of the sixth form has ensured that students access a broad and creative curriculum, relevant to their needs. Students participate in accredited courses and projects based in retail, cookery and iMedia, generating funds to allow them to pursue further enterprising projects.
- A dedicated careers adviser liaises with local work placements to develop work experience opportunities and funded employment for students. Students are supported to undertake temporary paid employment with local businesses. In some cases, this leads to more permanent employment positions. Some former students are now employed by the school. One student, when asked about her work experience schedule, explained that she found it hugely fulfilling. This attitude was typical of the thoroughly committed and engaged student population.
- The sixth-form provision receives direct involvement from a governor with experience in the most demanding areas of the catering industry. As a result, 'Chef School' has been introduced, enabling students to develop their catering skills at a high level.
- Leaders make sure that students continue to focus on improving their outcomes in English and mathematics. Standards of teaching and learning are high in the sixth form and, as a result, students improve on their previous achievements in Year 11 and improve their grades.
- Students continue to be well supported in all aspects of their personal development and welfare in the sixth form. Staff give just the right amount of support so that students learn to be as independent as possible, making sure that they are well prepared for life beyond school.
- Since the sixth form was established, nearly all students remain at Oakwood Academy

to complete their studies. Staff continue to support students to identify their appropriate career pathway or next steps. The vast majority of students transfer to the local further education college, adjacent to the school, so staff ensure that transition arrangements are seamless.

School details

Unique reference number	138130
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	10036756

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	9 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	33
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Laurence Cooper
Headteacher	Amanda Nicholson
Telephone number	01619 212880
Website	www.oakwoodacademy.co.uk
Email address	anicholson@oakwoodhighschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 July 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is larger than the average-sized special school. All students have an education, health and care plan. The majority of pupils have a moderate learning difficulty or speech, language and communication needs.
- More than half of the pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding.

- The school converted to a multi-academy trust in July 2015.
- In September 2013, the school introduced a sixth-form provision.
- The school began to admit pupils to upper key stage 2 in September 2015.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons. Some of these lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils regarding their attitudes to learning and their opinions about school. Pupils were observed at breaktime, lunchtime, during movements throughout school and at the beginning and end of the school day. There were no responses to Ofsted’s online pupil survey.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents, including information relating to governance, attendance, behaviour, safeguarding, pupils’ progress and checks made on the quality of teaching.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, administrative staff and school governors. Inspectors considered the 51 responses to the Ofsted online staff survey.
- Inspectors took account of parents’ views by considering 15 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online parent questionnaire, and the small number of free-text responses. Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day and during the inspection.

Inspection team

Matt Wilson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Doreen Davenport	Ofsted Inspector
Deb Jenkins	Her Majesty’s Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017