

Outwood Academy Bishopsgarth

Harrowgate Lane, Bishopsgarth, Stockton-on-Tees TS19 8TF

Inspection dates

29–30 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school is being rapidly transformed through the highly effective actions of leaders and the trust. The capacity of the trust to sustain improvements is obvious to see.
- Leaders communicate a clear vision and moral purpose. Members of staff across the school are fully on board. Pupils are increasingly aspiring to reach the high standards expected of them.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving quickly. The trust has successfully recruited many new teachers and is supporting them well. Teachers are held firmly to account. Morale in the school has improved significantly since the sponsor took over the school in November 2016.
- Leaders are aware where teaching is not as effective as they expect. They are working quickly to address any remaining variation in the standard of teaching.
- The curriculum is well designed to meet pupils' needs, interests and aspirations. There is good provision in place to address the many gaps in pupils' knowledge when they start at the school.
- Considerable effort is going into helping pupils secure good literacy and numeracy skills. Most pupils make rapid gains, although a few need more support to improve their reading as soon as they join the school.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted well through a lively and wide-ranging curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities have increased dramatically. Together, these opportunities are preparing pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils feel safe. Leaders take appropriate actions to protect pupils at risk. However, the quality of record keeping needs developing.
- Careers guidance is of good quality and helps almost all pupils secure a suitable place in further education, employment or training.
- Leaders have taken an uncompromising approach to the poor behaviour and entrenched apathy of some pupils. They acknowledge that exclusions and other sanctions have been used extensively to improve the climate for learning. The use of such sanctions has reduced considerably this year, reflecting the positive learning environment that now exists in school. Nevertheless, too many pupils continue to miss valuable classroom time because they do not conform to the school's expectations for behaviour.
- Although improving, overall attendance remains stubbornly below the national average. A minority of pupils remain uninterested in education and miss school regularly. The trust recognises this and is ploughing considerable financial resources into improving attendance.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to build on the improvements already secured and further improve the quality of teaching and learning, so that pupils make more rapid and more consistent progress across the curriculum, by:
 - ensuring that teaching is of good or outstanding quality across all subjects
 - ensuring that all teachers contribute to improving pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar
 - providing weaker readers with bespoke support to help them decode unfamiliar words and improve their reading fluency, so that they quickly catch up with their peers
 - ensuring that the work provided for the most able pupils consistently challenges them.
- Sustain the positive impact of the work of school leaders and the trust, by:
 - further developing the climate for learning within the school, so that more pupils develop genuine curiosity, a love of learning and a determination to excel
 - reducing the number of days lost to learning through fixed-term exclusions and referrals to the consequences room
 - ensuring that, where concerns are raised about behaviour or bullying, pupils are clear how issues will be comprehensively addressed by staff
 - working more effectively with parents and carers, so they better understand the importance of excellent attendance and the negative effect of poor attendance on their children's education
 - ensuring that safeguarding records capture clearly the history of actions being taken to protect pupils at risk of harm, so that the effect of these actions can be evaluated to inform decisions.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Outwood Academy Bishopgarth is undergoing a rapid transformation. The combined knowledge and experience of school improvement the trust has brought have been pivotal to the changes being made. In the 27 months since becoming the school's sponsor, leaders have rapidly improved the climate for learning and raised everyone's expectations. A talented team of experienced leaders has challenged entrenched views about the value of education held by some pupils and the community and they are now reaping the rewards, as perceptions have undoubtedly changed for the better.
- Leaders have recruited good-quality teachers and provided them with a high level of support from experienced directors of learners with a proven track record of raising standards. There are now rich opportunities for teachers to develop their practice. They are closely monitored and held to account for the progress their pupils make. In a few subjects, good-quality teachers have only been recruited recently, but these teachers have quickly begun to improve the quality of learning for pupils.
- Leaders have successfully implemented a broad and balanced curriculum. The timetable is sufficiently flexible to provide extra English and mathematics sessions for pupils with low prior attainment throughout key stages 3 and 4. Learning within each subject is carefully sequenced, so that pupils accrue knowledge and understanding incrementally. The proportion of pupils following GCSE courses that make up the English Baccalaureate is rising. Last year, only 9% of pupils were entered for this combination of subjects. In contrast, 25% of pupils in the current Year 10 are doing so, reflecting the shift in academic ambition. The curriculum also makes a considerable contribution to pupils' personal development. Tutor time and 'life' lessons interweave learning about sex and relationships, safety, democracy and the rule of law. The range of extra-curricular opportunities has increased considerably. The number of pupils staying on after school for clubs has more than doubled this year. Collectively, these opportunities are broadening pupils' awareness and preparing them well for life in modern Britain. A comprehensive careers guidance programme is also helping to raise pupils' aspirations and to give them a sense of purpose and direction.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. There is little difference between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of others in the school. Extra help provided for pupils in Year 7 who start at the school having attained below the expected standard in English and/or mathematics has some effect, but does not do enough, in some cases, to help pupils catch up with their peers, particularly in reading.
- Leaders have been resolute and determined to challenge poor behaviour and negative attitudes. They have successfully created a more positive climate for learning. Rigorous application of the trust's behaviour policy initially led to very high levels of exclusion. Leaders acknowledge that the number of exclusions and the amount of time some pupils spend in the consequences room are still too high. Pleasingly though, the use of these sanctions is reducing rapidly as most pupils increasingly conform and engage with education. The behaviour of a minority of pupils requires improvement and, understandably, some pupils remain concerned about the impact this behaviour has on their experience of school. The trust has made changes to its behaviour policy and

continues to keep it under review. Further improving behaviour remains a key priority on this year's school improvement plan.

- Not all changes to the school have been embraced by the community. The relatively few responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, are mixed. Leaders are working hard to build a positive relationship with parents and carers, although their efforts to improve pupils' life chances are hindered by some parents, for example, when they condone their children missing school regularly.

Governance of the school

- The trustees and members of the local academy council are experienced, astute and demanding. They systematically check on the school's performance and hold leaders firmly to account. They ensure that all statutory responsibilities are fulfilled.
- The chief executive officer ensures that the trust board is well informed and well placed to provide strong strategic oversight of the school. His comprehensive knowledge of the school is supplemented well by the delegated work of the academy council. Members of the council make regular visits to explore how well different aspects of the school are working.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders make all necessary checks on adults who work in or visit the school. They ensure that all members of staff receive up-to-date training in line with the Department for Education's latest guidance. Members of staff understand fully the procedures to follow if they are concerned about a pupil's safety.
- The curriculum is well designed to help pupils understand risks they might encounter when outside school.
- Leaders take effective action to safeguard pupils. They work effectively with the local authority and other agencies. Leaders acknowledge that they need to do more to improve attendance, because too many pupils miss school regularly and are therefore potentially at risk within the community.
- Leaders keep thorough records of safeguarding information. However, this information is not organised so that it is easy to review the timeliness or effect of actions over time.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The standard of teaching has improved rapidly since the sponsor took over the school. Teaching is now strong in most subjects. There are pockets of weaker teaching that leaders are aware of and are addressing.
- In the space of 27 months, well over half of the teachers have moved on and new teachers have joined the school. Teachers have received excellent induction and support to deliver the curriculum. Expectations have been raised and staff morale has been transformed. In discussions with inspectors, and through their responses to Ofsted's survey, teachers showed that they are proud to be members of staff at the

school and that they strongly back the vision and direction promoted by senior leaders.

- Teachers plan lessons carefully. Pupils are introduced to new knowledge and skills in a thoughtfully sequenced manner. In most lessons visited during the inspection, teachers skilfully assessed pupils' grasp of new learning as the lesson progressed and were prepared to move the learning on and extend pupils further as soon as they were ready. Consequently, lessons progress at a good pace. Some teachers tailor the learning so that the most able pupils are stretched by more challenging work. For example, in mathematics, teachers prepare a range of resources of increasing difficulty, which they carefully introduce depending on their assessment of each pupil's grasp of the topic. However, some teachers do not challenge the most able pupils sufficiently.
- Teachers ask probing questions to check pupils' depth of understanding. They target their questions around the class to make sure that all pupils are involved. In some lessons, such as in modern foreign languages, sharp questioning keeps pupils very much on their toes.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are positive. Teachers apply the school's behaviour management policy consistently and pupils understand the consequences of inappropriate behaviour. The vast majority of pupils follow instructions quickly. They arrive promptly for lessons and are ready to work.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and other more vulnerable pupils. They skilfully work with pupils to extend their thinking, keeping them interested and motivated. Teaching assistants and other tutors are also used to provide extra teaching for pupils who fall behind or have gaps in their knowledge. These extra sessions are very much a normal part of the school's approach to teaching and are much appreciated by pupils.
- Periodic assessments are used by all departments to gauge how well pupils have grasped the topics covered. Approaches such as, 'Nothing new, let's review' tests in mathematics check to see what knowledge pupils have retained. Teachers use the results of these and other assessments well by re-teaching and consolidating aspects that pupils have found more difficult.
- Teachers of English have a range of well-designed programmes in place to improve pupils' reading and writing. However, not all teachers challenge errors in pupils' spelling and punctuation.
- Most pupils display positive attitudes to learning and take pride in the presentation of their work. They concentrate throughout lessons and strive to complete tasks to the best of their ability. They respond well to the teacher's guidance and instruction. However, inspectors noted that few pupils display real curiosity and a love of learning about the topics they are studying. Not many pupils ask questions themselves or seek out information to extend their understanding.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The curriculum places considerable emphasis on supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies, 'life' lessons and tutor time are all used to maximum effect to broaden pupils' understanding.
- Teachers' consistent application of the behaviour policy has instilled discipline. Teachers also consistently praise pupils' efforts and acknowledge the positive behaviours they see in class. Inspectors saw many occasions when pupils helped and guided one another under the direction of the teacher. These approaches are helping to foster good levels of commitment and resilience.
- Pupils who are more vulnerable receive good support from The Bridge. For example, pupils with specific medical needs and those who experience anxiety felt that staff work hard to understand their needs and help them to thrive. The school has many support staff who get to know pupils well and work with them across the day to help them feel happy and involved.
- The quality of education for pupils in the additionally resourced provision has been transformed. These pupils are now fully integrated into mainstream lessons and are welcomed and well supported by their peers. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) ensures that their specific needs are fully met. Their academic progress is reviewed regularly to ensure that everything is being done to help them make good progress.
- The school's careers guidance programme is fully integrated across Year 7 to Year 11. The careers programme is successfully informing and inspiring pupils. Included within the programme are one-to-one careers meetings so that each pupil's interests can be fully explored, and next steps considered.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Most pupils currently in the school conduct themselves well and are respectful to members of staff and one another. However, a minority of pupils continue to challenge the expectations of the school's behaviour policy and are removed from lessons to spend time in the consequences room. Pupils say that behaviour is now much better than it was, but pupils told inspectors that they still have some lessons disrupted by inappropriate conduct.
- Most pupils who spoke with inspectors, and the majority of pupils who responded to the inspection questionnaire, indicated their confidence in staff to address any issues of bullying or poor behaviour. However, some pupils who shared their views with inspectors expressed less confidence that incidents would be fully resolved.
- In the recent past, the level of exclusions was very high. Leaders have reduced the number of fixed-term exclusions by two thirds this year compared with the same period last year. Although much lower, the level of exclusions is still above the national average. A similar reduction has happened in the number of pupils spending time out

of normal lessons in the consequences room. However, records for this year show that one in four pupils have spent time in the consequences room. Time out of the classroom in isolation equates to over 300 days of lost learning so far this year.

- The overall level of attendance is low. Attendance this year is better than last year, but remains stubbornly well below the national average. Around a fifth of pupils are persistently absent. Leaders state that some parents are unwilling to work with the school to improve matters. However, over two thirds of pupils now attend 100% of the time. Furthermore, leaders have improved the attendance of pupils with the lowest attendance considerably. When inspectors scrutinised books, they found some pupils had gaps in their learning because they had missed lessons. As a result, these pupils underachieved in assessments.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes for pupils are improving rapidly. Although the standards attained in public examinations in 2018 were well below average, the achievement of pupils currently in the school shows that expectations have risen and the quality of learning has been transformed. The picture of rapid improvement is now well established across all year groups and across most subjects.
- On average, pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are well below the national average. Many pupils enter with considerable gaps in their basic literacy and numeracy skills. The school's curriculum ensures that pupils with lower starting points get extra time to develop their knowledge and skills in English and mathematics. Scrutiny of books shows that weaknesses in skills such as spelling, punctuation and grammar persist for some pupils, but, for most, these improve consistently as pupils progress through the school.
- In 2018, the legacy of weak teaching and poor staff morale was still reflected in the progress pupils had made over time. Pupils in Year 11 left the school last summer having made significantly less progress in a broad range of subjects than other pupils nationally. However, in subjects such as English and mathematics, pupils had made good progress because of the intensive improvement work by the sponsor. Swift actions by senior leaders this year have rapidly improved the progress being made by pupils currently in the school in most other subjects.
- Scrutiny of pupils' books and other inspection evidence support leaders' assertions that standards are on track to rise considerably in public examinations this summer.
- The school's own credible assessment information indicates that different groups of pupils are making similar progress to one another. When scrutinising books, inspectors found no difference in the progress being made by disadvantaged pupils currently in the school compared with that of others. The progress being made by disadvantaged pupils currently in the school is in line with that of other pupils nationally.
- The progress being made by pupils with SEND lags only marginally behind that of other pupils. Inspectors found that the support for pupils with SEND is well planned and organised. Pupils typically receive ongoing help in lessons from effective teaching assistants so that they can access the full curriculum.
- The school promotes reading effectively for most pupils. All pupils in Years 7 and 8

follow a reading programme that ensures the books they read are matched to their reading ability. The library has been relocated to a central location so that it now has a heightened profile and is used by more pupils. However, inspectors found some younger pupils still do not read fluently. Some cannot decode new words effectively and their understanding of texts is limited by a narrow vocabulary.

- Last year, almost all pupils leaving Year 11 went on to suitable destinations in further education, employment or training.

School details

Unique reference number	143146
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10081527

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	468
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of academy council	Mr Ralph Pickles
Principal	Stephen Merifield
Executive Principal	Mark Hassack
Telephone number	01642 586262
Website	www.bishopsgarth.outwood.com
Email address	enquiries@bishopsgarth.outwood.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Outwood Academy Bishopsgarth is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most pupils are White British. A small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above average.
- Outwood Academy Bishopsgarth opened on 1 November 2016. It is sponsored by the Outwood Grange Academies Trust (OGAT). The trust's mission statement is, 'Students first: raising standards, transforming lives'. Responsibility for the school lies with the board of trustees. The board of trustees appoints an academy council to oversee some

delegated responsibilities of governance at the academy.

- The school currently uses two alternative providers to educate three pupils on a part-time basis. The alternative education providers used are The Skills Academy and Education Plus.
- The school has an additionally resourced provision for up to 30 pupils with medical and sensory needs. Currently, there are 24 pupils attending this provision. These pupils are fully integrated into mainstream lessons.
- The executive principal of Outwood Academy Bishopsgarth is a national leader of education who provides support and expertise to academies within the trust. In addition, the chair of the academy council, who is also a trustee for OGAT, is a national leader of governance and provides support and expertise to academies within the trust.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the principal, the executive principal, the chief executive officer of the trust, the chair and other members of the academy council, subject leaders and a group of teachers.
- Inspectors also met with two groups of pupils and spoke to others more informally at social times.
- Inspectors listened to some Year 7 and Year 8 pupils read and discussed their interest in books with them.
- Inspectors visited lessons across key stage 3 and key stage 4. Many observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. During lesson visits, inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and sampled a range of pupils' workbooks.
- An inspector met with the SENCo and together they visited lessons and talked to pupils to evaluate the quality of provision for pupils with SEND.
- An inspector spoke to representatives from the alternative education providers used by the school. Inspectors also visited the school's specialist provision for more vulnerable pupils and those who exhibit more challenging behaviour, such as the consequences room, The Bridge and the Personal Learning Centre.
- Inspectors scrutinised a sample of pupils' books from across the full 11–16 age range in subjects, including English, mathematics, science, humanities and modern foreign languages. The sample of books included those of pupils who entered the school with different starting points, those who are disadvantaged, and pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, policies, assessment information and records of meetings of the trust board and the academy council. Inspectors also looked at records of attendance and behaviour and safeguarding information.
- Inspectors took account of the 10 responses to Ofsted's parent questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, the inspectors took account of the 27 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 33 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

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