

Inspection of a good school: Ousedale School

The Grove, Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire MK16 0BJ

Inspection dates:

7–8 January 2020

Outcome

Ousedale School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be members of Ousedale School. They take advantage of the many extra-curricular activities available to them, such as rugby, cheerleading, football, coding club, 'eco club' and art club. There are a wide range of opportunities to develop pupils' musical talents. Many pupils learn to play musical instruments and are keen to join the school orchestra. There are a wide range of opportunities on offer to pupils. They take on positions of responsibility enthusiastically in areas such as careers, sports, facilitating clubs, running the school library or being part of the student council.

Pupils feel safe in school and they behave well in lessons. They are keen to do well and are respectful of their teachers. Pupils concentrate in lessons. Around school, pupils behave sensibly. Bullying is unusual and dealt with well when it does happen.

Staff prioritise the needs of pupils and value pupils' views. Leaders regularly ask pupils what they think about their school. Leaders listen to pupils and make sure that they are a key part of decision-making processes. Pupils feel listened to. This is a school where, as one pupil put it, 'everyone is included'.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Pupils have a broad and rich curriculum in key stage 3 and in the sixth form. In key stage 4, pupils choose from a varied range of GCSE subjects. Some subjects are more popular than others. For example, almost all pupils study either history or geography in key stage 4. However, the proportions of pupils studying all the English Baccalaureate subjects is relatively low because too few pupils study a modern foreign language. These proportions have fluctuated over the past three years. Consequently, the curriculum in key stage 4 is not as ambitious as it could be. While leaders have ensured that the proportions of pupils studying languages in the current Year 11 are higher than last year, there is still more to do in this area.

Curriculum leaders have ensured that subjects are well planned. They have thought about

how to organise knowledge across year groups so that pupils are able to understand complex topics and concepts. Curriculum leaders have planned how to teach pupils about concepts across year groups. For example, in English, the concept of society is weaved through the curriculum. In Year 8, pupils learn about conflict and its effect on society while studying Shakespeare plays. Similarly, in key stage 4, pupils learn about social class. In Year 13, students use what they know about social class to develop their understanding of how language develops in society.

Committed teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to ensure that all pupils, and particularly pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well. Teachers develop pupils' learning over time successfully so that lessons encourage pupils to be attentive, inquisitive and hard working. Pupils complete work that is demanding. In the sixth form, students quickly grasp complex concepts by applying their prior knowledge. For example, in history, students analysed sources about Germany at the end of the First World War and answered challenging questions on the topic.

Sixth-form students feel that staff support them well. Students appreciate the varied sessions on personal development. For example, students take part in lessons or assemblies about personal safety, healthy lifestyle choices and driving safety. They also receive high-quality advice about possible career opportunities. This means that they are well prepared to leave sixth form and pursue their goals.

Staff are ambitious for pupils with SEND. They are well supported by adeptly trained staff. Teachers adapt their planning so that pupils with SEND learn the knowledge and skills they need. When necessary, changes are made for disabled children. This means that they are able to participate fully in the curriculum.

Parents are very positive about the school. They believe that standards of behaviour, safety and teaching are high. Parents value the leadership opportunities available to pupils. Increasing proportions of parents attend school events, such as the numerous school plays and musical events that pupils participate in throughout the year.

Staff morale is high. They appreciate leaders' work to reduce workload and support staff well-being. Teachers and support staff believe that senior staff are approachable and supportive. New members of staff in particular are very appreciative of the support that they get in improving their teaching and dealing with work pressures. Staff feel that leaders think about ways to help them manage their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and well thought through. Leaders carry out thorough checks on the suitability of staff to work with children. Leaders work very well with external agencies so that extra help is provided quickly when it is needed. Leaders also make sure that external agencies contribute to the curriculum by visiting school to speak to pupils about local issues related to the safety of young people. Staff are well trained. They understand how to spot signs that a child may be at risk of harm and how

to refer these concerns to leaders. Pupils know who to speak to if they are worried about something.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The proportion of key stage 4 pupils who are entered for English Baccalaureate subjects has fluctuated over the past three years. Too few pupils study a modern foreign language at GCSE. Further improve the ambition of the curriculum at key stage 4 by increasing the proportion of pupils who study modern foreign languages so that the English Baccalaureate is at the heart of the curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged Ousedale School to be good on 10 May 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 137052 |
| Local authority | Milton Keynes |
| Inspection number | 10126219 |
| Type of school | Secondary Comprehensive |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 2179 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 420 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | David Moulson |
| Headteacher | Sue Carbert |
| Website | www.ousedale.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 10 May 2016 |

Information about this school

- Ousedale School is an above average-sized school. There are two school sites, the Newport Pagnell site and the Olney site.
- A very small proportion of pupils in key stage 4 attend lessons at Bridge Academy alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and curriculum leaders, and governors. The lead inspector held a telephone meeting with the school improvement partner and the alternative provider.
- On the first day of the inspection, we did deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, PE and history. This meant that in each subject, inspectors met with curriculum leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke

to teachers and looked at pupils' work.

- Inspectors considered the views of staff from a formal meeting with a group of staff and from the 195 staff who responded to Ofsted's confidential questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of 289 parents who responded to the confidential Ofsted parental questionnaire and 288 parents who provided free-text responses.
- Inspectors considered the views of 300 pupils who responded to Ofsted's confidential pupil questionnaire. Inspectors also met formally with two groups of pupils.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Peter Rodin

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