

Inspection of a good school: Oastlers School

Flockton Road, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD4 7RH

Inspection dates:

3–4 December 2019

Outcome

Oastlers School continues to be a good school.

There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a section 5 inspection now.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Oastlers, pupils learn to believe in themselves. Despite the many challenges pupils face in their lives, pupils gain GCSEs, move on to college and get jobs. Pupils aspire to live happy and fulfilling lives. They know that to achieve this, they must work hard and behave well.

Pupils are proud to be part of Oastlers. They are smartly dressed, well mannered and polite. They wait patiently in line for their lunch, hold doors for adults and each other and make sure that they are on time for their lessons. Pupils follow the school rules. They know that poor behaviour and bullying are not acceptable here. This means that the school is calm and orderly throughout the day.

When they join the school, pupils quickly settle in. This is because everyone, both pupils and staff, makes them feel welcome. Pupils get help and support with the things they find hard. This might be counselling, help with reading or therapeutic exercise.

Pupils trust the adults who work with them. They know that these adults will keep them safe and help sort any problems out. This means that pupils enjoy their time at school and focus on their learning.

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

This school transforms the lives of its pupils. Many pupils have had unhappy experiences in their previous schools. They have struggled to keep up with their learning, been excluded and missed out on opportunities such as trips and clubs.

At Oastlers, every pupil is able to make a fresh start. Staff find out what each pupil needs to help them do well at school. Staff put the right help and support in place quickly. Leaders continually review the range of interventions that they offer. For example, the

new Churchill class provides a more nurturing approach for some pupils. Leaders have made sure that there are specialist staff who provide a wide range of therapies, including talking therapy, to help pupils deal with any worries they may have. These help pupils to overcome their barriers to learning.

All staff have very high expectations for their pupils. They expect that pupils follow the school rules, try hard with their work and treat everyone with respect. The school's curriculum has the same breadth and ambition as successful mainstream schools. All pupils sit several GCSE and BTEC National Diploma qualifications, including English and mathematics.

Subject leaders have thought carefully about what pupils need to learn and when. Most pupils have missed lots of learning at their previous schools. This means that teachers often have to teach knowledge from the primary national curriculum. Teachers make sure that younger pupils get a good grounding across the curriculum, including in computing and history. Subject-specialist teachers help older pupils build on this good start. Pupils are well prepared for the demands of the examination syllabuses. For example, in science, pupils spend time carrying out experiments and investigations. These help them to test out predictions based on their subject knowledge.

Teachers know their pupils well. They make sure that they step in quickly when a pupil is struggling with their learning. This might mean the teacher spending some time helping that pupil at breaktime. Or, in other cases, this might mean more formal support, such as catch-up programmes.

When they join the school, most pupils are lagging well behind where they should be in reading and writing. Across the school, teachers devise individual and group curriculum plans for their pupils in English. These ambitious plans mean that pupils achieve exceptionally well. Almost all pupils successfully sit the English GCSE examination. As the number of pupils rises, there is the potential for increased demand of this approach on teachers' workload.

Teachers use high-quality texts to develop pupils' love of reading and writing. These texts engage and enthuse pupils. For example, Year 7 pupils enjoyed telling inspectors about their favourite characters in 'Oliver Twist'. There are intensive support programmes in place for those pupils at the early stages of reading and writing.

The school is calm and orderly. Across the school, all staff have consistent, high expectations for pupils' behaviour. When pupils are struggling to manage their behaviour, staff step in to give them the help they need. This means that lessons proceed without interruption. Also, staff make sure that pupils catch up on any work they miss if they leave the class. This means that teachers are able to teach and pupils to learn.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. From the start, staff help pupils to be well prepared for their next steps. Pupils learn about how to pay bills, how to apply for a job and the risks of drugs and criminal gangs. Every day, staff and pupils sit down together to eat lunch. Staff take pupils to tour stately homes, watch theatre shows and visit London. Pupils meet potential employers, visit different workplaces and practise their

interview skills. Pupils raised over £3,000 last year for charities, for example holding a coffee morning in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support. For the school's most disadvantaged pupils, staff make sure that they can have a shower, clean uniform and other essentials when needed.

The small number of pupils who move into the sixth form follow bespoke programmes. These pupils benefit from this 'half-way house' between school and college, apprenticeships or employment. Pupils resit some examinations, take further examinations and earn certificates. Staff help these pupils to use their time well so that they are ready to move on within a short space of time. These pupils provide excellent role models for younger pupils to aspire to.

Leaders take good care of their staff. All staff, regardless of role, feel that they are important, valued members of the team. Everyone works well together. Staff feel well supported to do their jobs effectively. Leaders listen to and act on staff suggestions. This helps leaders nip any potential issues in the bud. Staff are proud to work at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff make sure that they keep pupils as safe as they can. Leaders carry out thorough checks to make sure that all adults are suitable to work with children. Staff record all concerns and follow-up actions meticulously. The school's safeguarding team follow up assiduously on any concerns about pupils. Staff keep a close eye on those pupils who attend alternative provision to make sure that they are well cared for and safe. Specialist staff, such as the safer schools officer and the lead for personal, social and health education, make sure that pupils understand the risks they face and how to manage them. The responsible governor checks that staff put in place the school's policy and procedures effectively.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers devise individual curriculum plans in English for the pupils in their class. These ambitious plans mean that pupils achieve very well. However, leaders recognise that since the number of pupils is increasing, it would be appropriate to further develop the English curriculum plans. This will support leaders' effective work to ensure that teachers' workload continues to be manageable.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 4–5 March 2015.

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 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

Unique reference number	138099
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10059193
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
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	95
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	7
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair/Chair of trust/Chair of governing body	Sue Mawson
Headteacher	Lyndsey Brown
Website	www.oastlers.com
Date of previous inspection	4–5 March 2015

Information about this school

- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. All pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs. A number of pupils join the school at times other than the start of Year 7.
- The school uses one alternative provider, Joint Activities and Motor Education Service (JAMES).
- The number of pupils on roll at the school has increased significantly since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, we held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers and support staff. We spoke with the school's former school improvement partner, representatives of the local authority and four members of the governing body,

including the chair of governors.

- We spoke to staff about their workload and well-being.
- We considered the three responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and met with nine parents and carers.
- We considered the 16 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 21 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. We also met with groups of staff and pupils.
- We met with the people responsible for safeguarding in the school. We scrutinised a wide range of documentation and spoke with staff, pupils and parents about safeguarding.
- We observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- As part of this inspection, we considered how leaders plan and organise the English, science and computing curriculums. We spoke to teachers and subject leaders. We visited lessons with leaders. We talked with pupils about their learning and looked at the work in their books, as well as other evidence of their learning.
- At the school's next section 5 inspection, inspectors and school leaders agreed that inspectors should focus on the English, mathematics, music and physical education curriculums.

Inspection team

Pippa Jackson Maitland, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Louise Greatrex

Ofsted Inspector

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