

Inspection of Oulder Hill Community School and Language College

Hudsons Walk, Rochdale, Lancashire OL11 5EF

Inspection dates: 4–5 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The pupils that we spoke with said that they enjoy school. Older pupils told us that the school is much better than it was at the last inspection. Pupils particularly appreciate the range of extra-curricular activities on offer.

Pupils behave much better than they did in the past. Exclusions have reduced and behaviour in lessons has improved. Incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils feel confident that staff deal with any incidents that do occur. Pupils know who they can talk to about any worries they may have. Pupils benefit from regular encouragement and rewards.

Pupils are tolerant of one another's views. There is an extensive and well-planned programme of personal development that pupils receive. We saw pupils and staff working and talking together with a positive, respectful manner.

Pupils' achievement is not good enough. Pupils' progress at the end of Year 11 declined in 2019. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations and the curriculum lacks depth and breadth.

The people who are responsible for this school have not ensured that it is as safe a place as possible for all pupils. Risks to pupils are not reduced as far as possible because some safeguarding systems and procedures lack rigour.

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

Leaders are introducing a new curriculum. However, it has not been fully planned or implemented. In the past, pupils did not gain the depth of knowledge that they needed to achieve well by the end of key stage 4. Consequently, pupils' achievement over the past few years has been varied between different subjects. Current pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

Leaders are reviewing what is taught and the order in which key knowledge and concepts are delivered in key stage 3. It is too early to see the impact of these changes on pupils' achievement. Over time, leaders have not ensured that pupils experience a key stage 3 curriculum that is as ambitious as that outlined in the national curriculum. For example, in history, pupils have not learned key knowledge and concepts. They are not well prepared for future study in key stage 4.

The quality of curriculum planning and how well the curriculum is delivered varies a great deal across subjects. This is because some leaders are only just getting to grips with what is required. For example, in mathematics, leaders have a clear vision for what pupils must know and remember. Pupils are beginning to benefit from a well-planned curriculum. However, in English, leaders have not ensured that pupils have access to a wide range of appropriate literature. The books and plays that

pupils study do not match pupils' needs or interests. This limits how well pupils learn and achieve.

Leaders have not ensured that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve as well as they should across the curriculum. This is because some teachers do not have the skills to adapt the curriculum so that these pupils get the help they need. The attendance of pupils with SEND is lower than that of other pupils nationally.

Some subject teachers are not effective in ensuring that pupils can recall important knowledge. Teachers have begun to focus their efforts on helping pupils to remember more of what they have been taught. However, this is inconsistent across all subjects.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have successfully improved pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. In most classes, pupils engage well in their learning. They enjoy the activities that their teachers plan for them. Teachers and leaders ensure that pupils understand the importance of good attendance. Most pupils attend school regularly.

Leaders ensure that pupils' personal development is given a high priority. Staff deliver a high-quality personal, social, health and economic education programme. This ensures that pupils are well prepared to become respectful, responsible citizens of the future.

Pupils receive high-quality careers guidance which enables them to make informed decisions about their futures. They have many opportunities to learn about the world of work. They benefit from interesting and relevant external presentations.

Leaders consider staff's workload. Staff feel well supported by senior leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders have not established a consistently effective culture of safeguarding. Too much is left to chance and there is a sense of complacency across the school. At the time of the inspection, leaders' approach to risk assessment did not ensure that potential risks to pupils were identified and addressed.

Leaders do not ensure accurate records of attendance. Errors in reporting attendance mean that leaders cannot assure themselves that pupils are safe from harm.

Leaders do not conduct appropriate checks on the small number of pupils who receive their education through alternative providers. Therefore, they do not know if these pupils are at risk of harm.

The school has appropriate systems to track pupils' activity online and to keep them safe. However, leaders do not take swift enough action when these systems flag potential issues.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- Safeguarding is ineffective. Systems to keep pupils safe from harm or to reduce the risk of harm are lax. Leaders need to ensure that appropriate systems and measures are implemented so that the safeguarding of all pupils is effective.
- Subject leaders are at different stages of curriculum planning and implementation. Consequently, there is variability in the way the curriculum is planned and sequenced across subjects. This means that pupils do not acquire the sufficient depth of knowledge and skills necessary for them to achieve well across the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders and teachers construct a curriculum that is well planned and enables pupils to build on their learning.
- Teachers do not consistently make sure that pupils can remember new knowledge. This hinders their future learning. Leaders should ensure that pupils routinely recall what they have been taught so that remembering and retaining important knowledge becomes a habit.
- Some staff lack the skills, training and information they require to adapt the curriculum for pupils with SEND. Currently, such pupils underachieve. Leaders need to make sure that these pupils experience an ambitious curriculum and that they receive the support that they require in order to succeed.
- Most pupils attend school regularly. However, the attendance of some pupils with SEND is lower than that of other pupils nationally. Consequently, these pupils miss out on school. Leaders need to support pupils with SEND to improve their attendance.

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

Unique reference number	105840
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10121968
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1359
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr. Z. Al-Hassani
Headteacher	John Watson
Website	http://www.oulderhill-school.com/
Date of previous inspection	8–9 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been some staff changes since the time of the last inspection.
- The school uses alternative provision provided by Academy21.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- We held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject and middle leaders, teachers, pupils, governors and the local authority representatives. We scrutinised school documents, including curriculum plans and school development plans.

- We observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, an assembly and at break and lunchtimes. During the inspection, we spoke with pupils about life at school and their work.
- We looked at a range of other information about behaviour, attendance, extra-curricular activities and wider enrichment events.
- We scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements and documentation, including the single central record.
- We reviewed the 60 responses on Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, and the 58 comments that were made using the free-text facility. Inspectors also considered the 89 responses to the staff survey and the 281 responses to the pupil survey.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and history. We met with subject leaders, pupils and teaching staff. We visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. We also considered the curriculum in other subject areas.

Inspection team

Dawn Platt, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Hollister	Ofsted Inspector
Colin Bell	Ofsted Inspector
Timothy Gartside	Ofsted Inspector
Jonathan Smart	Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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