

Inspection of a good school: Oakwood High School

Moorgate Road, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S60 2UH

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 November 2021

Outcome

Oakwood High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Oakwood High School. They feel safe and enjoy their lessons. They have access to a broad range of subjects regardless of their background, ability or any individual needs. Leaders recognise the potential of every pupil and ensure that any barriers to learning are addressed.

Pupils have access to many extra-curricular activities. These include local, national and international trips. After-school clubs add to pupils' academic, creative and sporting experiences. Visitors are invited into the school to help enrich pupils' learning. High-quality support is provided to pupils in preparing them for life after school. Older pupils benefit from a structured work experience programme.

Pupils respect each other. They respect the diversity of the pupil population. They know that teachers and other staff will support them if they have concerns. Pupils and parents and carers consider incidents of bullying to be rare. However, when problems do arise, they have confidence that these will be addressed quickly.

Staff have high expectations of all pupils. Most pupils behave well in and out of lessons. If a pupil struggles to self-regulate their behaviour, leaders provide them with personalised support. This is one part of leaders' effective 'care, prepare and repair' pastoral programme.

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

Leaders have designed a challenging and exciting curriculum that considers pupils' aspirations and interests. In key stage 3, pupils study all subjects in the national curriculum. Younger pupils who need additional support with reading or mathematics get the help they need. Parents and pupils all praise the transition arrangements in place before pupils join in Year 7.

In key stage 4, leaders offer subjects closely linked to local careers, such as those in engineering and health and social care. Leaders have high ambitions for all pupils. Some pupils, for example, study more than one modern foreign language in key stage 4. All pupils are given the opportunity to study triple science.

Senior leaders undertake regular checks on pupils' learning. They have used this information to evaluate each subject. Their own evaluations are accurate. As such, they have been able to target support to certain subjects. In mathematics, for example, the subject leader has been supported to improve the curriculum. Teachers have been provided with coaching. This support is helping. Pupils speak highly of their lessons in mathematics and can remember more of what they have been taught.

Although all subject leaders' plans are well thought through, there remain some inconsistencies in the implementation of these in lessons. Leaders are already aware of this. They have identified subjects that need support to improve, including science, geography and history. Leaders are now turning their attention to these subjects. Addressing this will help ensure that pupils are able to recall more of what they have been taught.

Pupils who require additional support receive it quickly and effectively. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive help from specialists. The needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well known and understood. Teachers use this information to create 'class profile' documents that set out precisely how they are meeting the needs of all pupils. Although pupils who require additional help to read receive appropriate support, the wider culture of reading is less well established. Many pupils do not read often or widely. The lessons that younger pupils currently have in the school library are not well planned and are not helping to broaden their vocabulary.

Pupils behave well, especially in lessons. The number of exclusions is low. When incidents of poor behaviour do occur, leaders provide effective support for pupils. As a result, many pupils do not make the same mistakes again. Pupils understand why sanctions such as detentions are used, and say that these are used consistently. Some pupils are livelier out of their lessons, for example at lunchtime. However, leaders provide effective supervision. Pupils benefit from leaders' efforts to provide a calm, purposeful learning environment.

The school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) provision supports pupils with their wider development. In addition to a weekly timetabled PSHE lesson for every pupil, leaders enrich learning in other ways. For example, Year 7 pupils are challenged to widen their own cultural experiences through 'passports for learning'. Pupils in Year 10 take part in a work experience programme. All pupils have access to a broad extra-curricular offer.

The school is well led. Leaders value the opinions of staff and are mindful of their workload and well-being. Inspectors could clearly see why 98 per cent of staff who responded to the inspection staff survey said that they were proud to work at Oakwood. The responses to Ofsted's parent questionnaire showed that the vast majority of parents would also recommend the school.

There have been several recent changes to the local governing body. A new chair has recently been appointed. Training has been provided to support the chair in this role. All statutory responsibilities are met. However, governors are less well informed about the curriculum. They have not received training in this area. Governors do not always effectively challenge leaders' decisions and opinions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take safeguarding seriously. They make appropriate checks on new members of staff to ensure that they are safe to work with pupils.

Systems to keep pupils safe are in place and embedded. Pupils who require help are identified quickly. Support is arranged, including with external agencies where appropriate. Record-keeping is detailed and secure. Pupils know where to go for help and speak highly of the pastoral care they receive. They know the risks they face locally, nationally and online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are inconsistencies in the implementation of the school's curriculum. Pupils' experiences in subjects vary. In subjects including English, mathematics and graphics, there is clear evidence of the work leaders have done to improve the way in which subject plans are planned and delivered. Leaders should ensure that these strategies are now deployed in other subjects, including science, geography and history.
- Governors have provided leaders with support throughout the pandemic to help the school run well. However, their focus on the school's curriculum has been diluted, and therefore they have not been able to support and challenge leaders as well as they could. Ensuring that governors are more aware of the school's curriculum is important for the school to make further improvements to its quality of education.
- The work leaders are doing to create a culture of reading is not fully developed. Pupils are not exposed to books or other texts as often as they could be. Some pupils read rarely. This is not supporting leaders' work to broaden pupils' vocabulary. Leaders should ensure that improving the reading culture in the school is addressed.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Oakwood High School, to be good in December 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	140459
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10200105
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,039
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Jagger
Headteacher	Christopher Eccles
Website	www.oakwood.ac
Date of previous inspection	27 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one alternative provision: The Chislett Centre.
- The school is part of the Inspire Multi-Academy Trust.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator and several members of teaching and non-teaching staff. The lead inspector also met with the chief executive officer of the trust, in addition to representatives from the local governing body.
- To evaluate the quality of education, inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics and computer science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject

leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also spoke to other subject leaders and reviewed their curriculum plans. Additional lesson visits were conducted across all subjects. The inspection team reviewed the PSHE curriculum and other strategies used to support pupils' wider personal development.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school site and in lessons. Inspectors spoke to several members of staff to understand their views about the conduct of pupils. The team also spoke to pupils, formally and informally, to discuss their perceptions of behaviour. Behaviour and attendance records were reviewed.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors met the school's designated safeguarding lead, child protection officer and human resources manager. The school's safeguarding policies and procedures and other records were reviewed. The checks that the school makes when appointing new staff were checked.
- The inspection team considered the views of 88 members of staff and 248 pupils who responded to Ofsted's surveys. Inspectors also took into account the 48 responses to Ofsted's survey, Parent View.

Inspection team

James Duncan, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Katherine Spurr

Her Majesty's Inspector

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