

Inspection of Oxted School

Bluehouse Lane, Oxted, Surrey RH8 0AB

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 February 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff have very high expectations and aspirations for all pupils. The school has a strong academic focus combined with a steadfast emphasis on personal development. Pupils' physical and mental health are well supported by the school. Relationships are positive, encouraging and purposeful. Pupils feel safe.

The school presents a calm and orderly environment that is conducive to learning. Pupils behave well. No low-level disruption was seen during the inspection. Pupils feel comfortable reporting any incidents of poor behaviour and harassment. They know that these will be dealt with quickly and efficiently.

Sixth-form students are excellent role models for younger pupils. They feel that they are given every possible opportunity to grow both academically and as individuals. Their leadership skills are actively encouraged and supported. They play a full part in the life of the school and its community.

The school's size allows it to offer a broad curriculum with considerable choice. Pupils also enjoy an impressive range of activities and opportunities beyond the classroom. This includes sports, arts, music and drama, as well as residential trips, expeditions and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

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

The curriculum is ambitious and effectively sequenced to reflect what pupils already know and can do. Curriculum information is detailed and matched to the national curriculum. The uptake of the English Baccalaureate is higher than that found nationally. There are supportive links with partner primary schools, ensuring continuity across the phases.

The curriculum intention is clear, but there remains some variability in how subjects are taught. Leaders have plans to refine the curriculum further. The strengths seen in subjects such as history and modern foreign languages are worthy of sharing across all subjects.

Teachers have strong and secure subject knowledge. Most are subject specialists. They use their knowledge to provide clear explanations to pupils about new learning. Teachers use assessment effectively to establish what pupils know and can remember.

Staff care about their pupils. The school has worked with determination to improve attendance and reduce exclusions. The dedicated attendance team has been successful in raising attendance. Exclusions, which leaders use appropriately, are falling. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do as well as their peers because of the extra support provided.

The SEND coordinator and her team have worked diligently to raise staff awareness and improve the quality of support for pupils with SEND. Information on the needs of individual pupils is of a very high quality. However, not all staff make sufficient use of this in their teaching. The provision for visually impaired pupils is exceptional.

Strategies for disadvantaged pupils are robust and appropriate. They are regularly reviewed and their impact, such as in the use of literacy intervention, is assessed. The school knows that there is still a gap in the progress made by disadvantaged pupils in comparison with their peers, but that this gap is narrowing.

Support for sixth-form students is highly effective. There is a well-established balance between support and challenge. Lessons are focused and challenging. Sixth-form leaders are inspiring. Students are very positive.

Literacy is developed well across the curriculum. Reading has a high profile, especially in Years 7 and 8. There is an appropriate catch-up reading curriculum to help pupils to become more confident readers.

Personal development is helpfully supported through assemblies, tutorials and the life skills and citizenship (LSC) programme. Pupils learn about appropriate relationships and personal safety. They talk knowledgeably about topics such as diversity, ethnicity and equality.

The careers curriculum is well designed and helps pupils to discover the opportunities available to them. The school provides pupils with the full range of information needed to make confident decisions about their future. The 'Future Fridays' sessions invite ex-pupils to come back and talk about their various careers. To date, pupils have heard from a doctor, a fire officer, a chartered accountant, a boxer and a personal trainer.

Leaders, governors and trustees have worked hard together to ensure that pupils receive a good quality of education. Leaders enjoy positive relationships with staff and work with them to ensure the success of the school. Most staff agree that their workload is well managed. A small number do not.

The local governing board has a good awareness of the school and its work through regular meetings with leaders and staff. Governors appreciate the support from the trust. The school has benefited considerably from ongoing training and from sharing experiences and expertise with other trust schools.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school's record of employment checks is detailed and up to date. It meets all statutory expectations and standards. The school ensures that staff have regular training and regular updates. Safeguarding issues raised are quickly resolved.

The school has effective arrangements in place to identify pupils who may need early help or who are at risk. Senior leaders have up-to-date safer recruitment training. References are sought and checked for authenticity.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They are aware of potential safeguarding risks. They know whom to speak to if they have any concerns. All staff work together well to ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is still some variability in the quality of the curriculum's implementation. This means that pupils do not achieve as highly as they could across all subjects. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is implemented more consistently across all subjects, so that pupils and students achieve as highly in these subjects as they do elsewhere.

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	142315
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10211711
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,777
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	286
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Alexandra Murdoch
Headteacher	Russell Bond
Website	www.oxtedschool.org
Date of previous inspection	6 July 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Oxted School is much larger than the average-sized 11–18 mixed school. It is part of the Howard Partnership Trust.
- The school has a specialist provision, funded by the local authority, for pupils with visual impairment.
- In total, 16 pupils attend alternative provision at seven registered education providers and two online tuition centres.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical educational qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science, history, modern foreign languages, and personal, social, health and economic education through the LSC programme. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, talked to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, as well as with other staff in the school. They reviewed the procedures for safeguarding and looked at curriculum documents, school policies, behaviour logs and attendance information. The lead inspector met with trustees and spoke to members of the local governing board.
- Inspectors considered 318 responses to the Ofsted Parent View online questionnaire and 226 written comments from parents and carers. They considered the survey responses from 87 staff and 280 pupils.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Fearon	Ofsted Inspector
Scott Norman	Ofsted Inspector
Nicholas Simmonds	Ofsted Inspector
Eliot Hodges	Ofsted Inspector

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