

Inspection of Outwood Academy City Fields

Warmfield View, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF1 4SF

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 March 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected nine years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Outwood Academy City Fields is a school where leaders want the very best for pupils. Their motto of putting 'students first' is something that directs and guides leaders' actions each day. Because leaders set such a strong example of their high ambitions for pupils, other staff mirror these aspirations.

At Outwood Academy City Fields, the curriculum is organised in such a way as to encourage pupils to aim high and achieve highly.

Most pupils behave well most of the time towards each other, their staff and visitors. However, a minority of pupils do not match the school's expectations of good standards of behaviour. These pupils disrupt lessons and cause frustration for the majority of pupils who conduct themselves as asked and want to get on. Leaders are working hard to improve the behaviour of this minority.

Pupils feel safe in school, and inspectors agree that this is the case. Bullying is not seen as an issue by most of the pupils who spoke to inspectors. Most pupils feel that they can talk to their 'learning managers' or other staff if something is worrying them. Some pupils, however, think that some staff should take unkind pupil-to-pupil 'banter' more seriously when it happens.

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

Subject leaders, supported by the trust, have put in place ambitious and well-planned programmes of study. This includes the opportunity to study the subjects of the English Baccalaureate. Sequences of lessons are joined up in a rational way that makes sense to pupils. They told inspectors that they like the way in which teachers help them to remember what they learned in their previous lesson, and how that connects with what they will be learning in this lesson. Teachers have strong subject knowledge, and present new learning with clarity. They are effective in checking that pupils have understood.

Leaders have made reading a priority. In particular, they have introduced appropriate schemes to support the weakest readers, and those for whom English is an additional language. These schemes are effective in helping pupils to quickly catch up with their reading.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is in a period of transition. At the moment, the support is variable, with some pupils receiving effective help, while for others it is less effective. Leaders have a plan to strengthen provision and further improve support for pupils with SEND, so that the quality is consistently good.

Many pupils behave well, showing respect for each other and the staff. These pupils conduct themselves well in class and around the school. However, the behaviour of a substantial minority of pupils is not good, with disruption of lessons and disrespect

towards staff not uncommon. Leaders are working hard with this group of pupils to improve their behaviour, although the rates of exclusion and internal isolation of these pupils are high. However, there are signs that the use of exclusion and internal isolation is beginning to fall as a consequence of leaders' actions. Similarly, the attendance of some pupils is not good enough. Leaders are acting with tenacity to improve this situation, with some positive results in individual cases. The school needs the support of the parents and carers of those pupils whose attendance is not good enough.

Leaders' 'life' curriculum provides pupils with ample opportunities to learn about the community and the world around them. An effective careers programme is in place, and 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 education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The school is well led, with strong support from the trust. Leaders are determinedly ambitious for pupils. Trustees and the academy council know the school well, and support and challenge leaders through established systems for checking how well the school is performing. They keep a close eye, for example, on provision for pupils with SEND and checked what leaders were doing during COVID-19 restrictions to provide an education for pupils. The very large majority of staff feel supported with their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained in safeguarding matters, including how to report any concerns. The necessary checks on adults who work at the school are carried out diligently. Leaders with particular responsibility for safeguarding are knowledgeable about the correct processes to follow when pupils are in need of help. Leaders make timely and appropriate referrals to external agencies, such as the local authority's children's social care team.

In addition, leaders go the extra mile to check that pupils and families who may be under additional pressure are coping.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's systems for behaviour management, particularly the use of exclusion and internal isolation, have not been as effective as they need to be. As a result, the standard of some pupils' behaviour, particularly those whom leaders call 'a significant minority', is not consistently good. Leaders should continue to implement the wider range of support strategies that have started to show

improvements in some pupils' behaviour, as well as continuing to re-establish their basic expectations for consistently good pupil behaviour.

- Leaders' efforts to improve pupils' attendance are currently limited to successes with individual families. In part, this is because leaders' capacity to effect an overarching strategic approach to attendance is stretched, and partly because some families are proving stubbornly resistant to the school's necessary and legitimate attempts to improve the situation. The trust should ensure that the planned increase in the senior leadership team's capacity is implemented.
- The provision for pupils with SEND is variable, because the organisation of SEND provision in the school is going through a period of transition. The trust should ensure that the planned actions to strengthen the support for pupils with SEND take place, so that the provision is consistently strong.

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	136394
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10225284
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	771
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Earnshaw
Principal	Michelle Colledge-Smith
Website	www.cityfields.outwood.com
Date of previous inspection	14 and 15 March 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has been left Wakefield City Academy Trust to join Outwood Grange Academies Trust (OGAT). This took place on 1 July 2018. Since then, approximately 66% of the staff have changed, including the principal.
- The school uses two alternative providers of education. Both are registered providers and subject to inspection by Ofsted.

Information about this inspection

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

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

- Inspectors met with the principal and other senior staff. They also met with senior leaders from OGAT, including the chief executive officer. Inspectors met with trustees and members of the school's academy council of governors.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, history and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the school's provision to support pupils' reading, including hearing some pupils read.
- To evaluate safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the school's records of checks carried out on adults who work at the school, and records of how leaders support pupils in need of help. Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils, formally and informally, about safeguarding matters.
- Inspectors took into account responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for staff and parents.

Inspection team

Steve Shaw, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
James Duncan	Her Majesty's Inspector
Joe Barton	Ofsted Inspector
Christina Jones	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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