

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Outwood Academy Ripon

Clotherholme Road, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 2DE

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Inspection dates:

10 and 11 May 2022

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are supported by caring staff who know them well. Pupils know that learning is important and apply themselves diligently to their work. Leaders have put an ambitious curriculum in place. Teachers make sure that pupils understand and remember what they have learned over time.

Pupils enjoy the extra opportunities that they can take part in. A recent school production of 'Matilda' was enjoyed by both parents and the pupils who took part in it. There are a range of extra-curricular clubs available to pupils. These include academic support for those pupils who need additional help with their studies. Pupils enjoy the sporting clubs that they can attend. For others there is plenty provided, including photography, music and a Lego club.

All staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. The behaviour policy is applied consistently. Staff are highly visible around school. They ensure that there is a calm environment as pupils move between lessons. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around school. The great majority of pupils respect the school rules. However, a few pupils do not consistently meet the high expectations set by leaders. Some parents are concerned by this.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum in all subjects. They have considered carefully the important subject knowledge that they want pupils to know and remember. There is an effective whole-school focus on broadening pupils' use of vocabulary, including subject-specific words. This is reinforced in lessons and on displays around school. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and are passionate about their subject. They check carefully that pupils understand new concepts. Teachers ensure that there are

regular opportunities for pupils to revisit important knowledge. As a result, most pupils can remember what they have previously learned.

Pupils who need help learning to read are quickly identified when they come to school. Those who need support with phonics benefit from carefully planned support with trained staff. This helps pupils to quickly learn to read.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND are supported by knowledgeable staff who know them well. 'Pupil passports' set out important information so that staff can help pupils in lessons. However, some plans do not contain sufficiently precise information about the support pupils need. As a result, the support that some pupils with SEND receive is variable. Some parents of pupils with SEND are concerned about how well their child is doing. They would like more frequent communication from the school.

During the inspection, inspectors saw a calm and orderly environment around school. Pupils listened carefully to their teachers. They behaved well at social times and enjoyed talking with their friends. However, a number of pupils voice concerns about behaviour and bullying. Some pupils hear derogatory language used by other pupils at school. Some pupils lack confidence that staff would take appropriate action if they raised a concern. Some staff and parents voiced similar concerns regarding the behaviour of a minority of pupils. Leaders recognise that there is work to do to ensure that all pupils demonstrate consistently high standards of behaviour, especially after the prolonged period of disruption to staffing caused by COVID-19. Leaders have worked hard to support those who do not behave well. Although leaders have ensured that suspensions are now reducing, the number of internal exclusions remains too high.

There are many opportunities at school beyond the taught curriculum. Pupils take part in the 'pledges' initiative which rewards pupils for getting actively involved in their wider school community. Pupils proudly display the badges which acknowledge their achievement. There are many opportunities for pupils to discuss and debate important issues through the wider curriculum. This includes in 'Life' lessons and in tutor groups. The personal development curriculum promotes diversity and respect for others. Leaders ensure that it responds to relevant concerns, such as the importance of using social media responsibly. However, a number of pupils have a limited knowledge of different religions and faiths.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, know the school well. Governors support and challenge school leaders effectively. They work well with the trust board. Together, they carefully check that school leaders are making the right decisions. Leaders know that the recent pandemic has impacted on staff workload. They have made changes to reduce the number of times teachers have to provide assessment data. Staff appreciate this.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a good understanding of the local safeguarding concerns. They ensure that all staff receive regular training, including important safeguarding updates. As a result, staff know the signs that suggest a pupil might be at risk of harm. Staff report their concerns swiftly and leaders take prompt action to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Leaders make timely referrals and draw on the expertise of wider safeguarding partners. Pupils are taught to understand the risks they may encounter and what they should do if they have any concerns.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A few pupils do not behave as well as they should. Although the number of suspensions has reduced over time, there are too many incidents of poor behaviour leading to internal isolations. Leaders should take action to improve pupils' behaviour so that the number of internal isolations is reduced.
- The teaching strategies within a small number of support plans for pupils with SEND are not sufficiently detailed. This means that some teachers do not have the information they need to ensure consistently effective support for these pupils. Leaders should ensure that teachers are provided with the information needed so that all pupils, including those with SEND, are well supported.

## Background

When we have judged outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 may 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 as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in January 2016.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137412
<b>Local authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199495
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	717
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of Trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	David Earnshaw
<b>Principal</b>	Will Pratt
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ripon.outwood.com/">www.ripon.outwood.com/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 and 15 January 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The principal and vice principal have taken up post since the previous inspection.
- Leaders have temporarily suspended the sixth-form provision.
- At the time of the inspection, a very small number of pupils attend unregistered alternative provision at Strive for Education, Farm Adventure Yorkshire and Nudge Education.
- 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.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders. They have taken this into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, including the chief executive officer of the trust, a representative of the trust board and representatives of the academy council, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, physical education and history. They met with subject leaders to discuss their curriculum planning. Inspectors talked with pupils about what they had learned in these lessons. Inspectors visited lessons, talked with teachers and looked at pupils' work. Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- An inspector spoke to leaders about curriculum plans in mathematics and French.
- To evaluate the school's safeguarding processes and culture, inspectors discussed safeguarding with a range of staff across the school, including senior staff from the trust. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation related to safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils, including single-sex groups of pupils, and observed social times. Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and reviewed information about the wider curriculum, including personal, social, health and economic education.
- The views of parents were considered through the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey. Inspectors considered the views of pupils through responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, as well as through meetings held with pupils.
- The views of staff were considered from meetings held with staff and from the responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Eleanor Belfield, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Martin Featherstone

Ofsted Inspector

Matthew West

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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