

# Inspection of Oldham Sixth Form College

Inspection dates: 17 to 20 October 2022

## Overall effectiveness

**Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Education programmes for young people	<b>Good</b>
Provision for learners with high needs	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

Oldham Sixth Form College (OSFC) is a 16 to 19 academy situated in Oldham, Greater Manchester. The college converted to an academy in September 2017. The college is part of The Pinnacle Learning Trust which consists of OSFC, a high school and a primary school. OSFC offer a range of courses for 16- to 19-year-old students who follow a full-time study programme.

At the time of the inspection, 2,369 students were studying education programmes for young people. Of these, just over half of students study A-level programmes in a wide range of subjects, just over a quarter study vocational programmes at level 3, 334 students study a blend of level 3 vocational and A-level programmes and 89 students study GCSE and vocational programmes at level 2. There were nine students in receipt of high-needs funding.

## **What is it like to be a learner with this provider?**

Students thoroughly enjoy their time at OSFC. They have positive and mature attitudes to learning, are enthusiastic and eager to participate. Attendance is very high. Students consistently demonstrate the college values of being 'responsible, respectful and ready to learn'. Students and teachers share a calm and focused classroom environment. Students feel comfortable and enjoy sharing their knowledge and working with their peers.

Students speak highly of the inclusive culture at OSFC. They describe how diversity is celebrated and everyone is welcomed. The equality, diversity and inclusion group focus on understanding and supporting all of the students at the college. This includes raising awareness of different cultures, sexual orientations and socio-economic backgrounds. Students benefit from studying and socialising with other students who are different to themselves.

Students access a wide range of additional activities through the college 'Xtras' programme. They take part in sports events and charity fundraising for mental health awareness and pink day for breast cancer. Students volunteer for reading-buddy schemes in schools and become science, and well-being ambassadors. Students on the aspiring medics' and aspiring lawyers' programmes access a range of talks from guest speakers which supports them in completing applications to university. Consequently, students flourish as individuals and become more active citizens in their communities.

Students feel safe. They learn about important topics such as healthy relationships, forced marriage, consent and the dangers of meeting people online. Students feel confident to come forward for support if they have a concern.

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

Leaders have carefully considered their curriculum offer. For example, four AS- level courses are offered in year 12 with a choice of reducing this to three A levels in year 13 to provide breadth of curriculum and a greater learner choice. Vocational programmes, such as health and social care, are offered in response to local and regional need for skilled workers in a variety of health, public service, teaching and early years roles. Most students progress to higher level study at university with a smaller number progressing to apprenticeship programmes.

Staff are appropriately experienced and qualified to carry out their roles. They have relevant industry experience and academic backgrounds. This enables teachers to use relevant examples in their teaching. A-level teachers teach valuable skills in critical thinking and evaluation that encourage students to ask questions and make judgements that they can support with evidence.

Most teachers have a strong and consistent focus on developing students' understanding of key concepts. Teachers in sociology use visual examples such as female members of the clergy and women wearing burkas to prompt students recall of feminist theories. However, in health and social care, teachers do not have high enough expectations for students to gain a detailed understanding of key topics. Almost a quarter of students are not expected to retake examinations in anatomy and physiology and almost a third are not challenged to retake safeguarding. These students have not yet gained a pass grade. As a result, these students do not have the deeper knowledge required for their next steps.

Teachers use a range of recall and retrieval teaching strategies to recap prior learning and to emphasise key information. In sociology, teachers use low stakes quizzes to help students to understand demographics. In economics, teachers bring the curriculum to life by relating the content to local area unemployment in Greater Manchester and comparing this to other parts of the United Kingdom. As a result, students gain new knowledge and become more confident in their recall.

Teachers give students helpful, constructive feedback that enables them to understand how to improve their work. For example, in history, feedback on literature reviews helps students to improve the structure of their work to gain higher marks in their coursework. In biology, feedback on tests enables students to reflect on and recall their prior learning which reduces exam anxiety.

Teachers in health and social care place too much focus on achieving criteria for the qualification at the expense of developing deeper knowledge of the content of the curriculum. Teachers do not teach topic content sufficiently well enough in advance of students completing their assignments. This leads to many students failing assessments on their first attempt.

Leaders provide high-quality support in lessons for students with high needs. This includes specialist information technology equipment, scribes, and British sign language mentors. Students are well supported and achieve their academic outcomes in line with their peers. However, leaders do not monitor the progress towards wider education and healthcare plan outcomes such as self-regulation and travel training. As a result, students are not equipped with all the knowledge and behaviours to fully develop their independence outside of their studies.

Students receive highly effective careers advice and guidance. Students with high needs benefit from bespoke careers advice from specialist advisors who help with access and support arrangements for higher education. Students receive support in completing applications for university and attend the college open day to gain specific advice and guidance from universities, employers and apprenticeship providers. As a result, the majority of students are successful in gaining their chosen place at university.

Leaders are committed to providing a high-quality education for students. They use a range of quality processes to monitor the quality of education students receive. Leaders carry out curriculum area reviews to identify areas of strength and areas of

improvement. They recently identified areas for improvement in health and social care and are in the process of implementing measures to improve this provision.

Leaders provide a comprehensive professional development programme for teachers to improve their teaching skills. Staff access training on topics such as metacognition, virtual classroom coaching and retrieval practice. As a result, the majority of teachers alter their practice to include more effective teaching strategies based on the needs of their students.

Governors are highly experienced to carry out their roles. They are extremely passionate about the college and have high expectations of senior leaders. They provide effective scrutiny and challenge to improve the quality of education for students.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a strong focus on safeguarding at OSFC. They deal with and monitor safeguarding referrals and well-being concerns swiftly and effectively. Students are signposted to appropriate external agencies for support where necessary.

The designated safeguarding lead and deputies are appropriately trained to carry out their roles. They have a detailed understanding of potential risks to students and provide staff with appropriate training to deal with these risks. For example, a post-pandemic rise in honour-based and domestic violence, regionally and nationally, has resulted in additional training for staff to manage sensitive conversations and deal with disclosures effectively.

Students are aware of the dangers posed by radicalisation and extremist views. They can articulate the risks and describe the behaviours in others that they need to be aware of.

## **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Leaders should raise expectations so that all students gain the detailed knowledge they require for their next steps and are challenged to achieve their highest potential.
- Leaders should ensure that all teachers focus on ensuring that students have sufficient knowledge in advance of assessments so that more students pass their assessments on their first attempt.
- Leaders should ensure that staff monitor the progress of students with high needs towards their wider education and health care plan outcomes so that students are fully equipped with all of the knowledge and behaviours required for independence.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	145002
<b>Address</b>	Union Street West Oldham Greater Manchester OL8 1XU
<b>Contact number</b>	01612878000
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.osfc.ac.uk">www.osfc.ac.uk</a>
<b>Associate Principal</b>	Suzannah Reeves
<b>Provider type</b>	16 to 19 Academy
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the assistant principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

### Inspection team

Ruth Stammers, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Alison Humphreys	His Majesty's Inspector
Tracey Greenaway-Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Alastair Mollon	His Majesty's Inspector
Jane Young	Ofsted Inspector

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