

Inspection of a good school: Ormiston Beachcroft Academy

35 Finchley Road, London NW8 0NW

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 September 2022

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school each day. They said it is better than the mainstream schools that they come from. Teachers are kind and patient with them. Pupils enjoy being in small classes because teachers give them more attention than they have previously experienced. Staff encourage them to catch up on missed learning so they can improve their prospects. In the past, pupils received very little advice and guidance to plan their next steps.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, but these are not consistently reached. In a small number of lessons, teachers struggle to manage pupils' challenging behaviour. Leaders do not ensure that all teachers have the subject expertise to provide pupils with the building blocks of knowledge they need.

Pupils are safe. They are taught how to keep themselves safe online and in the community. Pupils said that the school feels like a family to them. If there are any incidents of bullying, adults resolve these problems effectively. Pupils value the Friday enrichment sessions. They enjoy taking part in reward outings. These celebrate improvements in their work, attendance and punctuality.

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

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils. It aligns with the national curriculum and subjects taught in local schools. This helps pupils to return to mainstream education where possible. The wide range of subjects available to pupils in Years 10 and 11 include creative writing, English, mathematics, science, physical education, and personal, social and health education.

Leaders check pupils' academic starting points on arrival at the school. Teachers also assess pupils' knowledge and skills in subject areas. However, leaders do not typically use this information to decide what pupils need to learn next.

Teachers have not identified all the important knowledge that pupils need to learn. Their curricular thinking does not build on what pupils have studied before starting at the school. Teachers have not identified the content that pupils need to know, and as a result pupils' learning is limited. Typically, teachers do not ensure that pupils learn new concepts which build on their prior knowledge. This makes it difficult for pupils to know and remember more.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the same curriculum as their peers. Teachers work together to review these pupils' support plans. Teaching assistants provide pupils with additional support. Teachers break learning into small chunks for pupils with SEND so that it is manageable. This helps to keep these pupils motivated.

Leaders have prioritised reading. In the primary phase, pupils have daily phonics teaching delivered by trained staff. Pupils in the secondary phase are fluent readers but sometimes lack confidence in reading. During weekly 'drop everything and read' sessions, pupils engage positively and enjoy reading for pleasure.

Typically, pupils behave well in class. On occasion, pupils find it difficult to display positive attitudes to learning. This impacts on their ability to acquire knowledge in lessons. Staff encourage pupils to reflect on any poor behaviour. Pupils' attendance improves once they join this school, sometimes from previously low attendance rates. However, pupils are often late to school at the start of the day.

Pupils enjoy enrichment activities each week. These include cooking, music and sports. Pupils learn about other faiths through the religious studies curriculum. The school celebrates events such as Black History Month. During this time, pupils share the diversity of their cultures. Leaders have started to provide careers advice to pupils in Year 11. They have not yet provided unbiased advice on careers from experts outside of the school.

Staff value the closeness of the school's community. Professional relationships with each other and pupils are strong. Staff's workload is manageable. Until recently, teachers have had little training to develop their subject expertise. Staff have appreciated planned opportunities to work with subject specialists from the new trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are trained to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. All staff are familiar with the need to log any concerns immediately. Staff training reflects the latest government guidance. Leaders recognise the risks faced by pupils at this school, including those pupils with erratic attendance. Leaders are aware of local safeguarding risks, including gang violence.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Pupils are introduced to a range of topics, such as health and hygiene and healthy relationships. The school works well with external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get timely help.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not ensure that all curricular thinking considers the important knowledge that pupils need to learn. Subject planning does not build routinely on what pupils have learned before. Leaders have not ensured that pupils learn new concepts which build on prior knowledge. As a result, pupils' learning is not secure. Leaders must ensure that teaching enables pupils to learn new concepts and that the curriculum in all subjects builds up pupils' knowledge and understanding cumulatively over time.
- Leaders have begun to provide careers information to pupils in Year 11. This is not impartial and does not meet the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 11 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. Leaders should continue to plan a well sequenced careers programme to pupils in Years 8 to 11.
- Leaders have not been successful in encouraging pupils to arrive at school on time. Too many pupils are not punctual when coming to school, which results in missed education. Leaders should ensure that they take effective steps to improve pupils' punctuality.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 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.

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	140806
Local authority	Westminster
Inspection number	10200483
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	47
Appropriate authority	The local governing body
Chair of local governing body	Devan Ganeshanathan
Principal	Michelle Burgess-Allen
Website	www.oatlondonacademies.co.uk/academies/beachcroft
Date of previous inspection	14 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides full-time education for pupils who have been permanently excluded and those at risk of permanent exclusion from their mainstream schools. The school provides a timed turnaround provision for younger pupils to help them reintegrate back into mainstream education.
- Many of the pupils who attend the school have complex social, emotional and behavioural needs.
- Since the last inspection, the school has joined the Ormiston Academies Trust.
- The new principal has been in post since the start of the autumn term 2022. The former principal continues to work with the school as regional director. Leaders are established members of staff but new to their current roles. Members of the governing body are also relatively new.
- The primary and secondary phases operate separately.
- The school does not make any use of alternative provision.
- Currently, the school does not meet the requirements of the Baker Clause.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the local governing body and another member of the governing body. They met with the regional director of the multi-academy trust and the school's principal. They spoke to other staff about a range of relevant issues, including workload.
- Inspectors met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in art, English and reading, as well as mathematics. They met with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, met with pupils to discuss their learning and met with teachers.
- Inspectors also met with leaders of other subjects to discuss their thinking about the curriculum.
- Through discussions with leaders, staff, pupils and members of the governing body, inspectors considered the effectiveness of safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at breaktimes and throughout the school day.

Inspection team

Lisa Strong, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Janice Howkins

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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