

Inspection of Outwood Alternative Provision Eston

Burns Road, Eston, Middlesbrough TS6 9AW

Inspection dates: 15 to 17 November 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a caring and compassionate school. Pupils are taught in small groups by specialist staff. Pupils appreciate the high level of individual support they receive. Pupils are safe at this school. Bullying is rare. If any pupil is unkind to another, staff sort it out quickly. Many pupils arrive at this school reluctant to learn. Pupils' behaviour improves significantly once they are settled. Pupils at this school have often struggled to attend their previous schools. The attendance of most pupils improves dramatically at this school. Leaders are aware that there a small number of pupils whose attendance still needs to be better.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils. Pupils are proud of their school and what they achieve in their lessons. They access many opportunities that support their personal development. For example, pupils go on a wide range of educational visits. They enjoy these opportunities. Pupils learn how to manage themselves in different situations in and out of school.

Leaders find out a lot about pupils before they join the school. Each pupil has an individual support plan. Staff implement these plans well. Leaders are aware, however, that teachers need more information about pupils' speech and language needs.

Leaders encourage reading, and staff help pupils to become more confident readers. Some pupils are still at the early stage of reading. These pupils get extra help to become independent readers.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that fits the needs of pupils in the school. All pupils follow national curriculum subjects. Older pupils are also offered vocational courses. Pupils who stay at the school to the end of Year 11 gain qualifications that include entry-level certificates, GCSEs and recognised vocational awards. Some pupils return to their home school. Teachers plan for this. They link their subject plans to those of the referring mainstream schools. In subject plans, teachers break down key learning into small steps. These plans meet the needs of pupils well. Teachers provide pupils with constant feedback and encouragement. Pupils show a sense of achievement in their work.

Each pupil's individual support plan describes the additional support they need in lessons and around the school. Staff follow these plans carefully. They meet pupils' social and emotional needs very well. In a small number of subjects, some pupils struggle to understand the specialist vocabulary required. The information provided to staff about pupils' speech and language needs is not as detailed as it could be. Leaders are aware of this and have plans to address this issue.

Leaders recognise the importance of pupils becoming confident readers. There is dedicated time for reading in tutor periods through the week. All staff are trained in

the school's general reading strategies and implement these well in lessons. Some pupils are still at the early stage of reading when they join the school. These pupils have phonics-based sessions. These are delivered by a small number of staff at present. Leaders know that all staff would benefit from phonics training.

Pupils' behaviour around the school is generally calm and well ordered. Staff know pupils well. Supervision of pupils is highly effective. Staff constantly model for pupils how to behave in different situations. Some pupils still struggle, at times, to use language appropriately. Staff respond promptly when this happens.

There is a well-planned curriculum for pupils' personal development. Leaders are committed to pupils learning about how they can contribute to their local community. Leaders organise a wide range of visiting speakers and educational visits out of school. Pupils learn about faiths and cultures that are different to their own. Pupils learn how to stay safe and healthy. This learning includes how to stay safe online.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education or training. They access independent careers' guidance. Pupils speak warmly about the help they get to move on to further education. Staff accompany pupils on college taster days and help them to complete college applications. One year group has left the school since it opened in February 2021. Most of these leavers made a successful next step into further education or training.

The proprietor's vision comes through strongly in all school policies and working practices. There is a clear determination to give pupils the learning, and the care, they need to improve their future life chances. The proprietor's governance structure is effective. The proprietor recognises that the school has only been open for a short time and some developments are at an early stage. The proprietor is committed to the school's continued improvement.

Leaders have developed a very positive culture around the school. All staff are proud to work at this school. The proprietor ensures that staff receive high-quality training. Staff are pleased with the support they get to build their expertise and develop their personal careers.

The proprietor has ensured that all the independent school standards are met. This includes the proprietor's duties under the Equality Act 2010. The proprietor group has regional leaders who bring additional expertise to the school. These leaders support the school leadership team well. The proprietor has well-trained and knowledgeable site staff who maintain the building to a high standard.

Most parents and carers are positive about the school and the difference they have seen in their child since they joined Eston. External agencies speak highly of the school. One local authority representative said of the school staff, 'You can tell that they really care about the children at the school'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff understand that pupils who attend the school have additional needs that make them vulnerable. Pupils trust staff and know who to talk to if anything is worrying them. Staff refer any concerns promptly to leaders. The designated lead for safeguarding (DSL) knows how to refer to external agencies for help when pupils need this. The DSL records and monitors the progress of any referrals carefully.

The proprietor ensures all required checks are completed on adults before they work, or volunteer, at the school. The proprietor provides staff with training in safeguarding and child protection. The DSL and her deputies have received enhanced training. The school safeguarding policy is published on the school website. This policy is compliant with government guidance. The proprietor ensures that the school's premises, equipment and fire safety systems are in safe working order.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- A small number of pupils either continue to have poor attendance or have low resilience to staying in lessons. This is limiting outcomes for these pupils. School leaders should review, in detail, the specific barriers to all aspects of attendance for these pupils. School leaders should use the full range of information they have on pupils to refresh the strategies they are using to maximise pupils' attendance at school and resilience to staying in lessons.
- Teachers do not have enough information on pupils' expressive and receptive understanding of spoken language. This is limiting the intervention support available to some pupils in lessons. School leaders should ensure staff have access to comprehensive information on pupils' speech and language needs. Leaders should ensure that strategies to support these needs are used consistently in all lessons.
- Not all staff are knowledgeable about phonics. This is limiting opportunities to maximise pupils' phonics knowledge, and to help pupils become strong readers, across the school day. Leaders should review the training on the teaching of reading, including phonics, that is available to staff. Leaders should ensure that all staff are contributing to the teaching of reading and implementing the school's reading strategies.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	148341
DfE registration number	807/6003
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	10212961
Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	38
Number of part-time pupils	9
Proprietor	Outwood Grange Academies Trust
Chair	David Earnshaw
Headteacher	Rachel Conway
Annual fees (day pupils)	£105 to £130
Telephone number	01642 374792
Website	www.eston.outwood.com
Email address	j.wray@eston.outwood.com

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs. Some pupils have an education, health and care plan but it is not a requirement for admission. Some pupils will have been excluded, or are at risk of exclusion, from mainstream schools.
- Pupils are referred to the school from the proprietor's mainstream academies. Local authorities also refer pupils to the school.
- The school provides education for up to 110 boys and girls, aged between 11 and 16. Most pupils attend full time but retain a dual registration with their home school. The school also runs a short-term provision for pupils who are suspended from their mainstream school.
- The school occupies premises that were previously a sixth form. The building has been refurbished to meet the independent school standards.
- The school does not have a religious character.
- The school commissions vocational courses from a local college of further education. The school does not use any other alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- This is the school's first standard inspection since it was registered as an independent school by the Department for Education on 18 February 2021.
- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding. They also met with a range of other staff and the proprietor.
- Inspectors undertook a tour of the school and visited the classrooms, social areas and other facilities. They checked the school buildings and grounds against the independent school standards.
- Inspectors did deep dives into English (including reading), mathematics, science, and information and communication technology. The deep dive for each subject included a meeting with curriculum leaders and a review of subject documents

and plans. The deep dive also involved lesson visits, meetings with pupils, meetings with staff and scrutiny of pupils' work.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school throughout the day, including breaktimes and in lessons.
- Inspectors scrutinised school documents and the arrangements to safeguard pupils. This included checking the school's safeguarding systems and the single central record of staff recruitment checks, meeting with the DSL and speaking with staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- A small number of parents and carers submitted responses to Ofsted's survey, Parent View. Inspectors considered surveys completed by staff. Inspectors met with pupils to gain their views.
- Inspectors spoke to representatives from schools and local authorities who commission places at the school. Inspectors also spoke with representatives of external and voluntary agencies who work with the school.

Inspection team

Patricia Head, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Cummings

Ofsted Inspector

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