

Inspection of a good school: Oldbury Wells School

Oldbury Wells, Bridgnorth, Shropshire WV16 5JD

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 April 2023

Outcome

Oldbury Wells School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending school. Leaders have high expectations, and pupils live up to these expectations. There are strong relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils want to do well. Staff know what pupils' interests are and use these to engage them in lessons. As a result, pupils achieve well.

Pupils feel safe and cared for at school. They are well-mannered, polite and courteous. They behave well and are on board with the school's new behaviour systems. If any bullying does happen, pupils report it because they know staff will deal with it.

Leaders provide pupils and sixth-form students with a careers education that is relevant to their needs. This includes visits to universities, speakers from local colleges in assemblies, and information about apprenticeships. This means they are ready for their next stages of education, employment or training.

Pupils benefit from a well-planned wider development programme. This includes a range of extra-curricular activities, such as football, remote-control car club, and a sign language club. Many pupils attend these, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders recognise that more work needs to be done to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are included in all parts of school life.

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

Leaders have developed a curriculum which is ambitious and meets pupils' needs well. Pupils engage well and participate in lessons. In most lessons, teachers check that pupils understand the work. They then use this information to reteach and adapt the learning in a way that helps pupils to close any gaps in knowledge. This helps pupils to make good progress. Leaders recognise this approach is not yet consistent across the curriculum. Staff are experts in the subjects they teach. They adapt teaching resources to ensure that they meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. Staff have received training to help them meet the needs of pupils with SEND. They know pupils' interests and which

strategies work for them. Staff use this information to develop resources so that pupils can thrive in lessons.

Leaders have prioritised support for pupils who struggle to read. Staff are aware of what each pupil's individual needs are. This includes some pupils who need help with phonics, and some who need help with their comprehension. These pupils appreciate the extra classes that are available to them. As a result, these pupils are quickly learning to read with confidence and fluency. Pupils in key stage 3 have opportunities to read during tutor time. Leaders are aware that more work is needed to develop a love of reading across all year groups.

Leaders have developed a calm and purposeful atmosphere across the school. Pupils behave well during lessons and at social times. When pupils' behaviour falls short of the expectations required, staff will use appropriate strategies, including sanctions, and support and guidance from the pastoral team. These work well to improve their behaviour. Leaders recognise the need to continue to develop their approach to evaluating behaviour trends.

The wider development curriculum is well planned and ambitious. All pupils learn about topics such as healthy relationships, sex education and mental health. Leaders make staff and pupils aware about issues in the local area and beyond, and include these in the curriculum, for example drugs and criminal exploitation. At times, leaders' lack of evaluation can leave some pupils feeling that issues are not dealt with.

All pupils receive regular careers advice and guidance. This includes one-to-one interviews with the careers adviser, visits to careers fairs, and work experience in Year 10. All of this means that pupils are well prepared for their next steps, and are confident about making choices for their future.

Leaders have created many opportunities for staff development. These include subject enhancement courses and leadership opportunities. Leaders are introducing guided pathways for pupils taking their options in Year 9 to ensure that more pupils opt from the suite of subjects that make the EBacc. Leaders and those responsible for governance have a clear oversight of the school. They know what leaders do well, and what they need to do to make it better.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have instilled a culture of vigilance across the school. Pupils know how to protect themselves online and offline. Pupils know who to speak to if they have any worries.

Leaders have ensured that all staff undergo appropriate recruitment checks so that they are safe to work with pupils. Staff receive regular training to keep them up to date about new policies and guidance. Staff know their pupils well and are quick to report any concerns. The members of the safeguarding team work swiftly to deal with these in a timely manner.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, leaders are unclear about the impact of their actions, and what their next steps should be. This means that the impact of their actions on more vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils is not evaluated. Leaders should develop their evaluations of behaviour, and personal development, to ensure that any patterns and trends are consistently responded to.
- Leaders have created limited opportunities for pupils to read widely for pleasure. This means that pupils do not fully develop their confidence and enjoyment of reading as well as they could. Leaders should provide opportunities for reading to be developed across all aspects of school life in order to develop a love of reading.
- Assessment approaches vary across the curriculum. As a result, some pupils may struggle to identify how they can improve in a subject. Leaders should ensure that the areas where assessment is used well is shared across the curriculum so that all pupils clearly know how to improve in a subject.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2018.

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	142153
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10269449
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	795
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	71
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Chris Mathews
Headteacher	Lee Tristham
Website	www.oldburywells.com
Date of previous inspection	1 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school uses one registered alternative and two unregistered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.

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.

- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, designated safeguarding lead and the careers lead.
- Inspectors held discussions with those responsible for governance and the CEO.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in design technology, history and mathematics. 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 reviewed the school's tutor programme. Inspectors also visited tutor time and reading intervention at the start of the day.
- Inspectors met with members of staff and spoke to pupils formally and informally at various points in the inspection. Inspectors took account of responses to the pupil and staff surveys, as well as Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors looked at records and spoke to staff in relation to behaviour, bullying and safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by checking the school's approach to staff recruitment.

Inspection team

Sultanat Yunus, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Madden

His Majesty's Inspector

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