

# Inspection of a good school: Oak Wood Secondary School

Morris Drive, Nuneaton, Warwickshire CV11 4QH

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Inspection dates:

26 and 27 September 2023

## **Outcome**

Oak Wood Secondary School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Suzanne Whiston. This school is part of Central England Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, George Smith, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Hilary Ward.

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

Pupils are benefiting from positive changes happening at Oak Wood Secondary School. Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school. They look forward to meeting their friends and teachers.

The school has high aspirations for pupils' next destinations. Pupils are well prepared for life after school. For example, many pupils are supported to access college and employment opportunities. All pupils learn skills towards developing their independence.

The curriculum provides wide experiences for pupils. The school listens to the interests of pupils and includes this into the curriculum. For example, pupils who are curious about floristry learn how to care for plants. They enjoy arranging flowers for local shows.

Pupils behave very well around school. Staff understand how behaviour is a form of communication. They know how to support pupils' behaviours carefully. Some pupils need extra help in managing their behaviour. They receive effective support which helps them to quickly manage their behaviour before it escalates.

Pupils' safety is very important here. Leaders have regular meetings to make sure that all pupils are safe and happy. Pupils know how to communicate when they need help. This includes using symbols, signing and language. Staff can quickly identify if a pupil's change in behaviour may mean they need help.

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

This is a time of significant change at Oak Wood Secondary School. However, it is an exciting time with many effective improvements impacting across school.

Leaders have created an ambitious curriculum, including in the sixth form. This is carefully planned with high expectations in meeting pupils' academic and special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has recently broadened the range of subjects that pupils study. Several new subjects have been introduced. All subject areas build key knowledge and skills in small steps over time. Pupils have regular opportunities to revisit their learning. This helps pupils to know more and remember more key knowledge and skills. However, the school does not have an accurate view of how well the curriculum is being delivered. This means that the school is not able to identify strengths and areas that may need further improvement.

The school has introduced new approaches to teaching pupils with additional needs. This is helping staff to effectively support pupils with SEND. All pupils have an educational health and care (EHC) plan. These plans are mostly for severe learning difficulties (SLD), autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and other complex needs. Pupils are well engaged in lessons. They have a wide variety of resources and stimuli to support them in class. Teachers use assessment opportunities during lessons effectively most of the time. This helps them plan pupils' next steps in learning. However, the school system for measuring the impact of the curriculum on pupils over time is less well developed.

An effective reading and phonics curriculum is in place for all pupils. Many pupils are able to read fluently. Pupils receive extra help to catch up quickly. Pupils who do not use verbal language to communicate are supported to identify words, letters and sounds. Pupils enjoy reading. They talk about their favourite stories and books. All pupils read regularly with an adult in school.

Careers education is a strength at Oak Wood Secondary School. Pupils are given various opportunities for accessing careers advice, work experience and vocational learning. The school provides a wealth of experiences for pupils to learn about different types of jobs, colleges and how to live independently. Staff have a secure understanding of the local labour market. They work closely and engage regularly with local employers. Pupils discuss their aspirations and talents with staff. The school provides pupils with the necessary skills and experiences towards achieving these.

Staff use a wide variety of communication systems effectively. Pupils use these to share their thoughts and needs. In some parts of the curriculum, communication aids have been created to support subject-specific learning. This is working well. However, this is not consistent across all subjects.

A range of extra-curricular activities are planned to support pupils' personal development. These include residential trips, lunchtime clubs and achieving the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

The school knows that some changes have impacted on staff workload. Some staff have expressed concerns about this. However, leaders are taking steps to improve this.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- The school does not have an accurate view of how the curriculum is being implemented. This means leaders do not have a clear view of what is working well and if agreed initiatives are being implemented as they expect. The school needs to ensure that robust processes are in place for checking how well the curriculum and other areas of work are being implemented.
- The purpose of assessment and how it is used to measure the impact of pupils' learning is not clear. This means the school does not have a comprehensive view of how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum. The school should ensure that the system for assessing pupils' knowledge is well understood and purposeful.

## **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 July 2013.

## **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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139469
<b>Local authority</b>	Warwickshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290600
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Academy special converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<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>	167
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	50
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Hilary Ward
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	George Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Suzanne Whiston
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.oakwoodschoools.co.uk">www.oakwoodschoools.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There have been several changes in leadership and governance since the last inspection.
- Oak Wood Secondary School is part of Central England Academy Trust.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- All pupils have an EHC plan. These are mostly for pupils with SLD, ASD and other complex needs. Pupils also have additional needs, such as profound and multiple learning disabilities, sensory and medical needs.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeship.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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 and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the CEO, chair of trustees, chair of governors, one representative from the trust, school improvement partner, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. Inspectors also spoke to leaders from the alternative provision. They also talked informally with parents, carers, transport escorts, drivers, staff and pupils to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, communication, physical education and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with areas of learning leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at additional areas of learning.
- Inspectors looked at individual pupils' EHC plans and checked these against the school's provision.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils formally and informally about their learning and experiences at school.
- Inspectors observed informal times to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Safeguarding documents were reviewed, including the checks that leaders make on staff's suitability to work with children. The inspectors examined how staff implement safeguarding policies and procedures effectively across the school. They also considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text responses received during the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation, school policies, curriculum documents and SEND records.

## Inspection team

Anna Vrahimi, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Julie Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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