

Inspection of Oakfield Academy

Oakfield Road, Frome, Somerset BA11 4JF

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 January 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Emma Wilkes. This school is an academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Kate Hellard.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel happy and safe at school. Treating one another equally and with respect is a trait pupils understand. Pupils told inspectors, 'people are kind here'. If pupils have a concern, they know staff will listen. The 'support and guidance' room is a place where they know they will receive the help they need.

The school has introduced a new behaviour policy. Pupils and staff understand the expectations and routines. As a result, most pupils focus well in lessons. However, some parts of the curriculum are not well implemented. When this happens, pupils are less motivated. During breaktime, pupils enjoy their time sensibly. Leaders have taken steps to manage the challenging behaviour of a minority of pupils. If there is an issue, staff deal with it promptly.

Pupils and staff are proud of the wide range of clubs, trips and school productions. For example, pupils participate in mixed-sports clubs, Shakespeare club and coding. Pupils relish the different ways in which they take on leadership roles, such as taking part in the academy council and acting as ambassadors or prefects. Through these forums, pupils share their thoughts and contribute to the school.

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

The school has planned a broad curriculum. This sets out what pupils will learn. In some subjects, such as geography, the curriculum is carefully sequenced. However, in other subjects, the curriculum is not implemented as intended. In mathematics, for example, some classes learn different concepts that do not build on what they already know. As a result, they do not have the skill to apply their learning to more complex problem-solving. In English, some parts of the curriculum are not taught with the intended depth. Pupils do not experience all the curriculum as the school intends.

Teachers plan adaptations to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils contribute to the planning of these strategies to support their learning. This means pupils with SEND receive effective support across some of the curriculum. However, where the quality of the curriculum is not effective, this hinders pupils, particularly those with SEND.

The school has prioritised reading across the school. A daily reading programme for all pupils promotes the ambition to read for pleasure. The school tracks reading through a whole-school reading programme. However, the school has not planned precisely for pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read. Pupils learn phonics and letter sounds. However, this learning is not well matched to what pupils need to know next. Often, it is not age-appropriate. As a result, this does not improve pupils' reading in a timely way.

The school is ambitious for all pupils to be successful. Most pupils attend school regularly. For pupils who need it, the school uses a range of alternative provision appropriately to support their needs.

The school has implemented a well-planned personal, social and health education curriculum. Pupils learn about relationships and sex education at appropriate ages. The school makes sure that pupils learn how to look after their mental and physical health. Pupils are well informed and find this helpful. Pupils from Year 5 to Year 8 learn about careers. Pupils experience careers fairs and enterprise week, and local providers frequently visit. As a result, Year 8 pupils are well prepared to make their option choices in preparation for their next steps.

The school has focused on developing the curriculum. It has successfully embedded the provision for pupils with SEND in some areas. However, the systems to check on the quality of education have not been rigorous. As a result, the school has not recognised quickly the important actions needed to improve further. However, parents are positive about the nurturing nature of the school.

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 effective mechanisms to review and evaluate the impact of the curriculum. This means important areas for development are not identified in a timely way. The school needs to ensure it reviews the curriculum in a way that identifies accurately the next stages for development.
- In some curriculum subjects, such as mathematics, the school has not identified the knowledge pupils will learn and when. As a result, pupils do not learn knowledge in a sequenced way, hindering their ability to remember more over time. The school must ensure the curriculum is sequenced effectively for all pupils.
- The school does not identify what pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read need to learn next. This means learning is not matched accurately to what pupils need to know. The school must make sure the teaching of reading is well matched to pupils' needs.

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

Unique reference number	136970
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10297987
Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	608
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kate Hellard
Headteacher	Emma Wilkes
Website	www.oakfieldacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 September 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a single academy trust.
- 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 apprenticeships.
- The school uses five unregistered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders and trust leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, mathematics, and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their experiences of school. They met with groups of pupils, as well as speaking with them in lessons and during social times.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, self-evaluation documents, minutes of academy council meetings and records of behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector spoke to a sample of the alternative providers used by the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also viewed the responses to the pupil survey and the responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Rachel Hesketh, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Tonya Hill	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Nicholson	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Butler	Ofsted Inspector

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