

Inspection of a good school: Olive AP Academy - Thurrock

Leicester Road, Tilbury RM18 7AX

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 June 2024

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 be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The head of academy is Anna Timms. The school is part of Olive AP Academies, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mark Vickers, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Philip Whall. There is also an executive headteacher, Collette Hunnisett, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils join Olive having previously had negative experiences of education and periods of absence. The school quickly gets to know their specific needs through the well-designed induction process. Staff quickly help pupils to re-engage with learning. As a result, most pupils significantly improve their attendance.

Staff build highly positive relationships with pupils. This begins with a warm welcome as pupils settle for breakfast in the hall. The school has high expectations that pupils rise to. The improvements they make to their behaviour help them to settle promptly and learn well. They understand why school is important and relevant for their futures.

The school tailors the curriculum to meet pupils' needs and interests. Pupils value this greatly. Outdoor learning is the highlight of the week for many. Exciting opportunities to learn to paddle board, ski or sail help pupils to overcome their anxieties and build their self-esteem. They learn valuable life skills they apply to other areas of learning. As pupils build their confidence, they secure important qualifications and develop ambitions for their futures. This helps them to return successfully to mainstream schools or move on to their next stages at the end of Year 11.

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

The school has carefully designed the curriculum to enable pupils to secure the knowledge they need to be successful. Across subjects, the school has broken important knowledge down into logical, small steps. Teachers use these steps to make intelligent links between what pupils are learning and what they have learned previously. For example, during personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education pupils apply their knowledge of the dangers of substance abuse to other areas of the curriculum. This helps pupils secure their knowledge very well over time.

The school checks what pupils can do and remember effectively. Teachers identify pupils' gaps in knowledge and any specific needs when they join. They use this information to inform their teaching. For example, where pupils need support to secure their understanding of language, the English curriculum is adapted accordingly. Teachers effectively adapt the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This helps pupils with SEND secure the important outcomes they need to achieve well. For example, pupils learn to manage their feelings and emotions throughout the school day. This helps pupils to engage with learning in a range of subjects.

The school ensures staff have relevant training. This means teachers have high-quality subject knowledge. They teach the curriculum very well. Teachers provide pupils with work that typically matches their needs. Over time, pupils secure the important knowledge they need for their next steps. The school and the trust, understand where they need to provide additional training to further enhance the subject knowledge of staff.

Pupils value showing 'the Olive way'. Time to reflect on the choices they make helps pupils to become more responsible. Opportunities to develop new and existing talents and interests sparks pupils' ambitions. Planting tomatoes at gardening club, cooking their lunch, or learning about motor vehicle mechanics help to do this. The school provides relevant advice through the careers programme. Staff help pupils to successfully apply for college and apprenticeships. This means the world to pupils. They know they would not have the confidence to do this without the support of the school.

Those responsible for governance are highly knowledgeable and experienced. They effectively support and hold leaders to account. There are rigorous systems in place to ensure the trust quality assures the work of the school. A strong, shared moral purpose permeates all aspects of the school. Incredibly strong relationships are formed with parents, local schools and the local authority. These partnerships help to ensure the school provides high quality support to pupils and their families. Staff are highly appreciative of the support of the school and the trust. They value how leaders help them manage their workload and wellbeing.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

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 December 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](#)' 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	140861
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10323742
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy alternative provision sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	96
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Philip Whall
CEO	Mark Vickers
Headteacher	Anna Timms (Head of academy) Collette Hunnisett (Executive Headteacher)
Website	apthurrock.oliveacademies.org.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	4 and 5 December 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Olive AP Academy Thurrock provides onsite education for pupils in key stage 3 and key stage 4 who are at risk of exclusion or have been permanently excluded from education.
- The school is commissioned to admit pupils from Thurrock local authority. A fair access panel convenes to consider places for pupils who are at risk of exclusion or have been permanently excluded from education in the local authority.
- The school provides outreach support for pupils, families and schools across the local authority.
- The head of academy was appointed in April 2024.
- The school uses three unregistered alternative providers to support with the teaching of the curriculum.
- 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.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the CEO, deputy CEO, director of academies, executive headteacher, head of academy, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, staff, members of the academy advisory board, trustees, a representative of the local authority and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, outdoor learning and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered evidence from other curriculum areas.
- 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.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including behaviour logs, bullying records, attendance records, pupil records, minutes of academy advisory board meetings, school development plans and school policies.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through their responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also took account of responses to the Ofsted staff survey and spoke with pupils to gain their views of the school.

Inspection team

Michael Williams, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jonathan Rockey

His Majesty's Inspector

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