

# Inspection of Outwood Academy Portland

Netherton Road, Worksop, Nottinghamshire S80 2SF

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Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The principal of this school is Danielle Sheehan. The school is part of Outwood Grange Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Lee Wilson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Earnshaw.

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

Pupils value the focused, orderly and calm ethos across the school. Their conduct is polite, courteous and purposeful. High behavioural expectations are set and are mostly met. Respectful routines are well established.

The school's values, 'be kind, be proud and be resilient', are reinforced regularly and are lived daily. Pupils are known and cared for very well. They know who to turn to if they have any worries. They are safe. Pastoral care is very strong. Most pupils comment that they are happy at school.

The school has raised its expectations of pupils' learning. Pupils engage well with their learning. They work purposefully in lessons. Most are keen to learn.

Pupils benefit from a range of well-thought-through opportunities to support their personal and character development. They take pride in their achievements. They enjoy extra-curricular activities, for example singing in the school choir, which is a joy to listen to.

The school has undergone significant changes in recent years. However, many parents and carers do not fully appreciate the reasons for, and the benefits of the changes. There is therefore variability in parents' views about the school. Many parents express positive views, whereas others are less satisfied.

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

Leaders, including those with responsibility for governance, know the school very well. They lead with a shared vision and strong moral purpose. They strategically focus on what needs to be developed. The school has improved behaviour and the quality of education. High expectations of behaviour are consistently set. This has brought about much improvement in behaviour and most pupils' attitudes to school. As a result, the number of suspensions has reduced significantly in the last two years.

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance. Parents are appropriately supported and challenged when their children do not attend regularly. Consequently, attendance is improving. However, too many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, do not value their education and are often absent. This affects their learning and progress. The school strives for even better attendance.

The quality of education is good. The school's curriculum includes a range of subjects that appropriately meet pupils' interests and prepare them for their next steps. Subject curriculums identify the key knowledge that pupils must learn and when. Structured steps in learning enable pupils to build learning over time. For example, in art, younger pupils build key knowledge about tone, texture and form. They develop related skills through the use of different media.

The school enables pupils to gain knowledge, understanding and skills. Staff support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) by adapting teaching to meet their needs. For example, targeted questioning and breaking tasks down enables pupils with SEND to access the same curriculum as their peers. However, there is more to be done to embed higher learning expectations for all pupils, including pupils with SEND.

The school's published outcomes for disadvantaged Year 11 pupils in 2023 are not reflective of the curriculum that pupils are learning now. Currently, the curriculum and its delivery is enabling disadvantaged pupils to know and remember more.

Reading is a whole-school priority. The school's 'Portland Read' initiative is introducing younger pupils to a range of carefully selected texts that nurture a love of reading and extend their understanding of diversity. Pupils who struggle to read are given additional support to become fluent in reading.

The school sets high expectations of sixth-form students, including disadvantaged students. These expectations are met. Pastoral care is strong. Students value the support offered. They apply themselves purposefully. Students are taught by knowledgeable and skilled staff. Students are well prepared for their next steps.

The school has developed a comprehensive personal, social, health and economic education curriculum. This includes age-appropriate relationships and sex education. Pupils learn about healthy lifestyles. They learn about potential risks and how to keep themselves safe, for example when in the community and online. They learn to appreciate British values and the importance of different cultures. Careers provision is strong. Pupils receive appropriate advice and guidance. They are well prepared for their next steps.

Pupils have many opportunities to engage with extra-curricular opportunities. Some pupils cherish leadership roles, such as being part of the Pupil Parliament. Pupils are listened to, and their opinions are valued.

Overwhelmingly, staff are upbeat about the school. They value the positive changes in the school's culture. They appreciate training opportunities. They welcome steps to make their workload more manageable. Staff morale is positive and they are very proud to be part 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's learning expectations are not as high as they could be for all pupils. Consequently, some pupils, including some pupils with SEND, do not learn as well as

they could. The school should ensure that all pupils are enabled to know and remember more in the long term.

- The rationale for the school's approach to improving pupils' behaviour and learning has not been communicated successfully to some parents. As a result, some parents do not fully appreciate the reasons for, and the benefits of, the school's raised expectations. The school should ensure that parents understand the school's higher behavioural expectations and the school's raised aspirations for pupils' learning.
- Some pupils, including pupils with SEND, are absent too often. This means that too many pupils are missing out on important learning. The school must ensure that parents who require it receive the support and challenge needed to improve their children's attendance.

## 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>	138248
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottinghamshire County Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	10347526
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<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>	1,726
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	188
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	David Earnshaw
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Lee Wilson
<b>Principal</b>	Danielle Sheehan
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.portland.outwood.com">www.portland.outwood.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 March 2019

## Information about this school

- Outwood Academy Portland is part of Outwood Grange Academies Trust.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider and three unregistered alternative providers.
- The school's sixth-form provision is based at Valley Road, Worksop S81 7EN. This centre is shared with sixth-form students from another school in the same academy trust.
- The principal took up post in January 2022. New senior leaders have been appointed since then.

- 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.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 met with the principal and senior leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the vice-chair of trustees, the chair of the local academy council and representative council members.
- The lead inspector met with trust officers. He met with the CEO, remotely.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English and reading, history, art, modern foreign languages and music. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited sample lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of other subjects, including mathematics, computer science, physical education, government and politics, drama, design and technology, science and law. They visited lessons in these subjects.
- Inspectors visited assemblies and observed breaktimes, lunchtimes and the start of the school day.
- To review the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the view 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 met formally with groups of pupils to talk about the quality of education and other aspects of school life. They met with groups of teachers and support staff. They spoke with staff and pupils informally.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator and reviewed provision for pupils with SEND.

- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents. They looked at the school’s website and published information about the school’s provision. They reviewed the school’s policies, self-evaluation and development plan.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted via Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They reviewed the responses to Ofsted’s surveys for school staff and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Chris Davies, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Dick Vasey

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Ofsted Inspector

Martin Finch

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His Majesty’s Inspector

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