

Inspection of a good school: Outwood Academy Shafton

Engine Lane, Shafton, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S72 8RE

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 September 2023

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 not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The principal of this school is Alison McQueen. This school is part of Outwood Grange Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Martyn Oliver, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Earnshaw. There is also an executive principal, Cara Ackroyd, who is responsible for this school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have created a safe and welcoming environment for pupils. Alongside academic studies, leaders give equal importance to developing pupils, who go on to become positive members of their community.

Leaders have worked to ensure that the school is inclusive. Staff teach pupils to be safe, respectful and responsible. Since the disruption to routines caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the behaviour of the majority of pupils has improved. Leaders have reduced incidents of bullying and other acts of unkindness. However, the poor behaviour of some pupils in lessons impacts negatively on the learning of others.

Pupils benefit from the school's effective pastoral care. Leaders work alongside families to support pupils. The school provides a range of additional support, such as to promote pupils' keeping mentally healthy or to deal with anxiety relating to examinations. Some pupils, particularly at key stage 3, take part in extra-curricular clubs which help to develop their talents and interests.

Too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough. Disadvantaged pupils miss more learning than their peers. Due in part to pupils' absence, some pupils' knowledge of the curriculum is not as secure as the school would like.

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

The school, with the support of the trust, has developed an ambitious curriculum for pupils across a range of subjects. Subject leaders adjust the curriculum to reflect the diverse needs of pupils in this school. Leaders have thought carefully about what the most important knowledge is. They have decided in what order pupils should learn this new knowledge. Leaders ensure that important vocabulary and misconceptions are identified and used to inform lessons.

Staff use an agreed approach to teaching in lessons. Leaders have developed this based on research. The way that staff use the school's approach to teaching in lessons is inconsistent. Leaders recognise this and provide staff with ongoing training. Pupils' experience in lessons is variable. A significant minority of pupils have not developed the body of knowledge and skills across the curriculum that leaders intend. This is reflected in the GCSE outcomes for some groups of pupils.

The school has strong systems for identifying pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders provide teachers with detailed information about how to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers use this information to adjust their teaching appropriately. If reading is a barrier for a pupil, they receive additional help that enables them to catch up with their peers.

Leaders analyse behaviour data regularly. They act swiftly based on what this analysis tells them. Leaders have significantly reduced the number of pupils receiving a suspension for poor behaviour. While, for some groups of pupils, suspensions and other sanctions remain more frequent than the school wants, leaders have appropriate strategies in place to reduce these further. Teachers actively teach pupils to behave positively using the school's behaviour curriculum. Despite this, a minority of pupils continue to experience lessons which are disrupted by the poor behaviour of their peers. This is most evident in younger year groups. In some cases, there is inconsistency in how this poor behaviour is addressed by adults.

The school knows that improving attendance is of the utmost importance. Leaders have increased the capacity of the inclusion team to aid this issue. They work with families to understand the causes of pupils' absence. When pupils return from absence, staff work with them to minimise the learning that pupils have missed. However, too many pupils are regularly absent from school. Disadvantaged pupils are significantly more likely than their peers to be persistently absent. These pupils miss important learning opportunities and develop gaps in their knowledge. They do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Leaders promote the values and culture of the school. Initiatives such as 'random acts of kindness' reinforce this with pupils. Some pupils take part in extra-curricular opportunities, such as The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Leaders use experiences such as this to develop pupils' independence and resilience. Other pupils are proud of their roles as reading ambassadors or eco-warriors in the school. The school engages pupils in charitable work which allows pupils to contribute to the wider community.

Leaders at all levels are ambitious for pupils. They have a clear understanding of the school's current issues and are implementing their vision to bring about improvement. Leaders support staff well, including through high-quality training. Staff are supportive of leaders' actions. The pandemic interrupted the school's work, in particular to improve behaviour and attendance. Leaders are working effectively with the school community to re-establish consistently high standards in these areas.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Too many pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, do not attend school regularly enough. These pupils miss important learning and develop gaps in their knowledge. The school, alongside parents and carers, should continue to identify and remove the barriers to pupils' regular attendance.
- Some lessons are disrupted by the poor behaviour of pupils. When this happens, pupils are not able to learn effectively. Pupils develop gaps in their knowledge. The school should continue to work with staff and pupils to ensure that its expectations for pupils' behaviour are commonly understood and that instances of poor behaviour are dealt with effectively and consistently.
- There is inconsistency in how effectively the school's approach to teaching is used in lessons. Some pupils do not develop the secure body of knowledge and skills that the school intends. The school should continue to work with staff, providing training which ensures that pupils receive a consistently high quality of education across the curriculum.

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 January 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	139211
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	10255802
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,385
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Earnshaw
CEO of the trust	Martyn Oliver
Principal	Alison McQueen
Website	www.shafton.outwood.com
Dates of previous inspection	23 and 24 January 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Outwood Grange Academies Trust multi-academy trust.
- The principal is new to this post since the previous inspection.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The school uses four unregistered alternative provisions.
- 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

- 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 met with members of the trust board, the local governing board, the trust's interim chief executive officer and the chief executive principal for secondary education.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the executive principal and principal. They also met with other senior and middle leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met 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 looked at a range of documentation regarding the support pupils with SEND receive. They looked at the quality of the provision for pupils with SEND in lessons.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. He checked records of actions taken by leaders to keep pupils safe.
- Over the course of the inspection, a wide range of pupils and staff talked with inspectors, formally and informally, about the safeguarding culture in school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes from governing board meetings as well as the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information regarding behaviour. They observed the behaviour of pupils in classrooms and at social times.
- The views of pupils and staff who responded to Ofsted's surveys were considered.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Thomas Wraith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Dan Whieldon

Ofsted Inspector

Helen Lane

Ofsted Inspector

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