

Inspection of Outwood Academy Hemsworth

Wakefield Road, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF9 4AB

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Sixth-form provision

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff rightly identify Outwood Academy Hemsworth as an improving school. They recognise and appreciate the changes taken to improve their experiences at the school.

In lessons, pupils routinely behave well and work hard. This is partly because pupils are well taught. It is also because teachers have very clear expectations. In most cases, pupils follow these. When they do not, effective procedures are in place to provide support for pupils. Out of lessons, pupils' standards of behaviour are improving, but leaders have more to do to embed a wider culture of respect.

Pupils are well prepared for their next stages in education, employment or training. An extensive 'enhancement' curriculum, addressing life skills such as tolerance and respect, complements the school's academic offer. This work is important, not least because some pupils say that hearing unkind comments and bullying happen more often than leaders are aware.

The school's extra-curricular offer, including after-school clubs and activities, makes appropriate use of the school's vastly improved buildings and other facilities.

A small number of pupils attend alternative provision. Some of these pupils do not benefit from the same quality of education received by those at the main school.

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

Since taking over the leadership and management of the school in 2018, school leaders, supported by colleagues from the Outwood Grange Academies Trust, have implemented an ambitious school improvement programme. Long-standing staff are positive about the changes introduced during this time. For example, a teacher told the inspectors that they were 'enjoying being able to teach again'. Non-teaching staff, including support staff and cleaners, told inspectors they were once again proud to work at the school. Older pupils who have been at the school for several years commented highly on their improved classroom experiences.

Rates of attendance have risen rapidly. This is the case for most groups of pupils, including those who are identified as disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Behaviour in lessons is calm. Clear systems and routines are in place. Most pupils follow these. A sensible system is in place to support pupils who struggle to regulate their behaviour. This includes a range of sanctions, interventions and therapeutic support. Over the last 18 months, the number of suspensions has fallen rapidly. While classroom behaviour is appropriate, pupils' behaviour out of lessons and across the school site is not meeting leaders' expectations. Pupils do not consistently show each other the levels of respect that they should. Some pupils say they hear unkind and hurtful comments too frequently.

Leaders have overhauled the school's curriculum. Pupils study challenging, academic courses across all year groups, including in the sixth form. Subject leaders have developed curriculum plans which clearly set out the order for topics to be taught. These plans are closely followed in lessons. The most important aspects of learning are well defined and, in most subjects, teachers use these to help assess pupils and monitor their progress. Sometimes, there are inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' academic experiences in lessons. Leaders have an appropriate training programme in place to help reduce this variation.

Pupils with SEND are well supported in this school. These pupils access the same challenging curriculum as their peers. Leaders work closely with families and external agencies to help meet the needs of these pupils. Pupils who require help to read fluently get extensive support from well-trained staff. This support is part of an exciting wider-reading curriculum.

Leaders from the trust have worked with school staff to design a package of 'life lessons'. These lessons, in addition to content covered in daily form time, provide pupils with information about healthy relationships and careers guidance, while also providing pupils with opportunities to debate and discuss life in modern Britain.

The number of students on roll in the sixth form has reduced over recent years. Leaders, including trustees and governors, are fully committed to keeping this provision open. They have worked hard to ensure the standards in the sixth form are high. Leaders have plans to take a group of 30 sixth-formers on a fully-funded trip to Malta later this year. This is one part of a wider coaching and development programme designed to raise aspirations. The vast majority of sixth-form students who recently applied for university were successful in securing a place at their first-choice setting.

A group of governors provide support for school leaders. The trust board provides additional oversight. There is a clear and consistent vision across both groups. Their oversight of school improvement processes is mostly tenacious. However, leaders, including those with responsibility for governance, have not been as forensic in their oversight of alternative provision. Checks on pupils' experiences have not been frequent enough and leaders' records are not precise. Governors do not receive regular information about the school's use of alternative provision. As such, they are not able to challenge leaders about these arrangements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school's designated safeguarding leader is supported by a large on-site team, including deputy safeguarding leaders, safeguarding officers and education welfare officers. The work of this team, combined with extensive training for staff, has helped embed a culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Leaders take rapid and appropriate action when incidents arise. They engage well with external agencies to ensure pupils get the support they need.

Leaders undertake checks to ensure that pupils are safe when they attend alternative provision. However, these checks are sometimes not thorough enough. Other aspects of leaders' ongoing oversight of these arrangements are less thorough than they could be.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The oversight that leaders, including governors, have of the school's use of alternative provision is not thorough enough. The curriculum and suitability checks leaders make, both before pupils' placements begin and throughout such placements, do not go far enough. Leaders should review the internal procedures in place when using alternative provision. Governors and trustees should play a greater part in quality assuring these important procedures.
- Pupils' behaviour out of lessons is variable. Some pupils hear derogatory language too frequently. These factors are limiting the success of the revised behaviour policy. Leaders should continue their efforts to improve pupils' behaviour out of lessons, ensuring there is an appropriate culture of respect between pupils.
- Some pupils are worried about bullying, including hearing unkind and hurtful comments from others. They are not fully confident that when these incidents occur they will be addressed successfully. Leaders should further encourage pupils to report their concerns, and ensure the school's zero-tolerance policy towards bullying is fully realised.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	145938
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10241403
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1055
Of which, number on roll in the sixth-form	72
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of the trust board	David Earnshaw
Principal	Toby Rutter
Website	www.hemsworth.outwood.com
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has left Wakefield City Academy Trust to join Outwood Grange Academies Trust. This change took place on 1 May 2018.
- The school uses six alternative providers of education. Four of these are registered providers and subject to inspection by Ofsted. The other two are unregistered providers.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the principal and several other senior leaders. They also met with senior leaders from the trust, including the chief executive officer.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of the board of trustees. He also met two local governors, including the chairperson.
- To evaluate the quality of education, deep dives were carried out in English, mathematics, history and modern foreign languages. These involved meeting subject leaders, reviewing curriculum plans, visiting lessons, speaking to teachers, talking to pupils about their learning and looking at samples of their work.
- The school's personal development offer was also reviewed by inspectors. Inspectors considered the school's provision to support pupils to read.
- Inspectors met leaders of SEND, reviewed SEND paperwork and spoke to pupils with SEND. They also visited additional lessons to review the classroom provision for pupils with SEND.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons. They also spoke to pupils and staff about standards of behaviour and safeguarding matters. Behaviour, bullying and attendance records were reviewed.
- As part of the evaluation of the effectiveness of safeguarding, the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and other records were reviewed. The checks made when appointing new staff were scrutinised.
- An inspector visited three of the alternative providers of education used by the school, including both unregistered settings.
- The views of parents and carers, staff and pupils who responded to Ofsted's surveys were also considered.

Inspection team

James Duncan, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Angela White	Ofsted Inspector
Garry Stout	Ofsted Inspector
Adam Ryder	Ofsted Inspector

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