

Inspection of Outwood Academy Freeston

Favell Avenue, Normanton WF6 1HZ

Inspection dates:	20 and 21 May 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Lisa Allott. 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 (CEO), Lee Wilson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Earnshaw. There is also a community executive principal, Toby Rutter, who is responsible for this school and three others.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school with high ambitions, aspirations and expectations for all. Pupils take a great deal of pride in all that they do. They achieve well in examinations and assessments.

The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons. Teachers deal with occasional low-level disruption consistently when it arises. Pupils behave in a calm and respectful manner around the school site. They are polite to adults and visitors.

Pupils learn about the importance of valuing others. They take a pledge to demonstrate their commitment to tolerance and respect of people from different backgrounds. The school celebrates 'random acts of kindness', which are then celebrated and displayed on a 'kindness tree'. However, a small number of pupils report that bullying and racist or homophobic language still occurs. The school deals with this effectively, but some pupils are uncertain of the actions taken.

Pupils enjoy a huge range of enrichment clubs and activities, such as the debating society, role playing games and a culture club. Some pupils participate in drama productions at local theatres that emphasise the importance of diversity. Pupils proudly work towards achieving various 'Honours' badges that demonstrate their developing talents and personal achievements.

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

The school has a well-planned curriculum that is based on the latest educational research. Recently, the school has made some important changes that have further strengthened the curriculum in some subject areas. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education, training or employment.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. The curriculum is delivered effectively to allow pupils to learn and remember important knowledge. For example, in mathematics, teachers skilfully elicit answers from pupils through probing questions. However, occasionally, teachers do not check pupils' learning effectively. When this happens, teachers are less clear if pupils misunderstand what they have been taught, and so misconceptions and gaps in knowledge go unaddressed.

Pupils learn the curriculum increasingly well. They develop secure knowledge, which they apply with increasing skill. For example, in art, a 'progress wall' shows how pupils progress from learning basic skills in Year 7 to the production of exquisite and inspirational work in Year 11. Pupils' improved achievements are reflected in their strengthening outcomes, including in the school's published data, which is improving year on year.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have their needs identified quickly. They receive expert support and are fully integrated into all aspects of school life.

Some pupils with more complex circumstances receive highly effective mentoring and support. This ensures that the school's provision is adapted to meet these pupils' needs.

Pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read receive swift intervention. This ensures that they can learn the curriculum. The school is developing similar support for pupils in older year groups. The school has prioritised a reading culture that is emphasised through competitions, pupil librarians and seasonal events.

The school has strong systems and processes for managing behaviour. These are having a positive impact. Pupil suspensions continue to reduce. A small minority of pupils report that derogatory language and bullying happens. Although there are clear reporting systems and staff deal with issues effectively, pupils are less clear on how issues have been resolved. This reduces their confidence in the school's approaches. The school uses an extensive range of strategies to improve attendance. These are having an impact and pupil attendance is continuing to increase over time.

Pupils receive a comprehensive programme that promotes their personal development. They talk confidently about the fundamental British values, world faiths and the importance of protected characteristics. They can discuss how to keep healthy and stay safe online. Pupils value the support and guidance they receive on future career decisions.

The school's provision is being improved successfully. Staff morale is high, and they are positive about their workload. However, a small proportion of parents are dissatisfied with the school. The school acknowledges that there is more work to do to strengthen relationships with the local community. Governors and trustees have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, some staff do not check pupils' learning consistently and effectively. This means that, at times, pupils have gaps in their knowledge or misunderstandings that go unnoticed, and so they are unaddressed. The school should ensure that staff check pupils' understanding consistently well so that gaps in learning or misconceptions are identified and then remedied.
- A small minority of pupils report concerns about bullying and derogatory language. Although the school has robust procedures for reporting and tackling these issues, some pupils are uncertain of the actions taken. This makes them feel uncomfortable. The school should ensure that its effective work to tackle bullying and derogatory language is commonly understood and trusted by pupils.

- The school's work to engage with parents and carers has had a mixed impact. This means that some parents continue to feel dissatisfied with aspects of the school's provision. The school should strengthen its work to engage with parents and carers so that relationships help the community to share in the school's successes.

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	145937
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10379405
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	984
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Earnshaw
CEO of the trust	Lee Wilson
Principal	Lisa Allott
Website	www.freeston.outwood.com
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 October 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school uses five registered and three unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school is part of Outwood Grange Academies 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.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders, staff and pupils. They met with governors and trustees. They met with the CEO.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, English, science, design and technology and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work. Inspectors also looked at elements of the wider curriculum.
- Inspectors observed and spoke with pupils at various times of the school day.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; considered the views of parents; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils’ interests first.
- Inspectors evaluated responses from parents to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also evaluated the responses that staff and pupils made to Ofsted’s online surveys.

Inspection team

Chris Carr, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Tony Guise	Ofsted Inspector
Penny McDermott	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Barber	Ofsted Inspector

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