

Inspection of Outwood Academy Freeston

Favell Avenue, Normanton WF6 1HZ

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Outwood Academy Freeston is a school where leaders continually seek to improve. This is the first inspection since the school joined Outwood Grange Academies Trust (OGAT). OGAT has ensured that the school benefits from stable and effective leadership. The curriculum is a strength of the school. This is because leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum with high aspirations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have worked closely with the Normanton Freeston Foundation to strengthen the links between the school and the local community.

Pupils spoken with and some of those who completed Ofsted's pupil questionnaire told inspectors that they are concerned about bullying and the use of discriminatory language in school. Although they felt safe in school, some of these pupils said a number of pupils use offensive or harmful language frequently. Several of the pupils who spoke to inspectors said they have stopped reporting this to adults in the school.

The school's approach to pupils' personal development is not as well developed as the academic curriculum. It is not preparing pupils well enough for life in modern Britain.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum, including for pupils with SEND. There are detailed curriculum plans in place for each subject. Plans highlight the order in which pupils learn important knowledge. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and receive high-quality professional development. This means that teachers make appropriate choices about how to deliver the curriculum.

In some subjects, such as science and art and design, assessment is well established. It allows staff to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. In some subjects such as history and English, leaders are still developing assessment and approaches to feedback. This means that some gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding remain.

A culture of reading is developing across the school. This is well established in subjects, such as English and history. In these subjects, pupils are taught key vocabulary that enables them to read complex texts as part of the curriculum. Leaders have ensured that pupils who need help with reading receive the right support.

Pupils with SEND are supported well. Teachers are given clear guidance on how to meet pupils' needs. Pupils study the same curriculum and teachers adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils.

Teachers say that pupils' behaviour has improved over time. However, low-level disruption happens too often. This disrupts other pupils' learning. A new behaviour policy is reducing the number of pupils receiving suspensions. Leaders are taking effective action to ensure pupils' attendance is improving.

Inspectors held discussions with several pupil groups. Some pupils told inspectors that the use of discriminatory language is widespread. They say racist, homophobic, transphobic and sexualised language is used to make some pupils feel uncomfortable. Some female pupils say that they are bullied about their appearance, repeatedly by the same group of boys. Leaders do take action and track these incidents carefully when they are reported.

The school's 'life' curriculum is not ambitious enough. Pupils do not learn enough about the importance of respect and tolerance of others. As a result, they are not prepared well enough for life in modern Britain. Leaders do not think proactively to ensure the content of this curriculum addresses the challenges that pupils face. For example, leaders have not ensured the curriculum is effectively teaching pupils about the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

Leaders have established a programme of careers information, education, advice and guidance (CEIAG). All pupils receive independent advice and guidance. However, leaders do not track this provision for individual students closely enough. Leaders do not have a clear enough vision for how CEIAG fits into the broader personal development of pupils. Pupils do not learn enough about careers linked to the local area or the subjects they study in school.

Leaders have an ambitious vision for the school. They are well supported by the Trust. Staff feel that they are well trained and their workload is considered. Leaders and those responsible for governance are pleased with the development of the school under the Trust. This development is evident, particularly in relation to the curriculum. However, leaders have not established a culture where all pupils consistently respect and treat each other equally and feel confident to report concerns.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are well trained in safeguarding. It is seen as everyone's responsibility. All staff know how to report concerns. Leaders have a strong awareness of the local context and safeguarding issues. The necessary checks on adults who work at the school are carried out diligently.

Leaders and staff work effectively with external agencies. They make appropriate referrals. Leaders show tenacity and this allows for appropriate support and interventions for pupils. Leaders keep accurate records of the actions they have taken to support the most vulnerable pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- When behaviour incidents are reported, staff take action to deal with them. However, a significant proportion of pupils said that they do not bother to report when they hear, and experience, the use of inappropriate and upsetting language. This means that some pupils are not receiving the support that they need and perpetrators are not helped to change their behaviour. Leaders should develop the culture in the school, so that all pupils are confident to report harmful language, and are able to receive the effective support that staff give when they know about these situations.
- Some pupils spoken with were clear with inspectors that some bullying does happen in school, often from the same group of pupils. Some female pupils reported repeated comments about their appearance. These pupils lack confidence in leaders' ability to deal with it. Some parents feel the same. Leaders should ensure that bullying is identified quickly, and actions are taken to eradicate this from the school.
- Planning of the personal development curriculum is not to the same level as subject curriculum planning. The programme is not targeted specifically enough to meet and revisit the needs of the pupils in this school. For example, the programme is often reactive rather than proactive. Leaders should review this curriculum and ensure that it is carefully sequenced, so that pupils are prepared well for life after school.
- Some pupils say that they do not get enough information about career opportunities. They do not know enough about the full range of opportunities that are available to them. Leaders should review the careers programme to ensure that pupils are well informed about what they can do in their futures.

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	145937
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10241393
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	939
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Earnshaw
Principal	Lisa Allott
Website	https://www.freeston.outwood.com/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school uses seven alternative providers of education.
- The school became part of Outwood Grange Academies Trust in May 2018, when it joined from Wakefield City Academies Trust.

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 provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history, art and design and science. As part of the deep dives, inspectors visited lessons, reviewed curriculum plans and spoke with curriculum leaders and teachers. They also talked to pupils about their learning and looked at the work they have completed.

- In addition, inspectors looked at curriculum plans and discussed assessment in mathematics and languages.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinators, spoke to pupils with SEND, reviewed plans to support these pupils and visited lessons to see how these pupils are supported to learn.
- Inspectors met with the leader responsible for reading to discuss how reading is promoted in the school. They also observed intervention to see how pupils are supported to improve their reading.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leads and reviewed a range of documentation, including safeguarding records and policies, to ensure that appropriate actions are being taken to keep children safe.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, parents and staff through Ofsted surveys, as well as additional communication from parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's records of bullying, reviewed the actions leaders take when bullying occurs and spoke to several groups of pupils, including some single-gender groups, to understand their experience of school.
- Inspectors met leaders to discuss pupils' behaviour and reviewed the school's data on suspensions, internal suspensions and permanent exclusion. They visited the reflection room and spoke to pupils about their views of behaviour.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the multi-academy trust and the local governing council.
- Inspectors scrutinised records relating to attendance and pupil movement.

Inspection team

Stuart Voyce, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gordon Watts	Ofsted Inspector
Kate Morris	Ofsted Inspector
Pritiben Patel	Ofsted Inspector

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