

Outwood Academy City

Stradbroke Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S13 8SS

Inspection dates

6–7 February 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive principal and the principal are exceptionally skilled leaders. Together, they have galvanised the school. As a result, there have been significantly marked improvements since the previous inspection.
- Middle leaders are empowered and contribute to continually improving the quality of teaching and behaviour in the subject areas they lead. As a result, teaching is consistently good and pupils' outcomes are good and improving.
- The chief executive officer (CEO) and the chief executive principal for secondary of the trust make a formidable and ambitious team. At the centre of their work is the children they serve. They are unwaveringly dedicated to providing support, challenge and resources so that every pupil can achieve their very best.
- Governors are highly skilled. They are knowledgeable and have a wide range of skills. Consequently, they have a precise and incisive understanding of the school. Therefore, they have been able to support and challenge leaders, at all levels, so that standards have been sustained and continually improve.
- Safeguarding is effective. Systems and processes in place ensure that pupils, including the most vulnerable, are well cared for. Staff understand the important role they play in ensuring pupils' safety and welfare.
- Teachers have high expectations of all pupils. They are determined that pupils will achieve their full potential. This benefits pupils as they acquire strong knowledge, skills and understanding, particularly those who are disadvantaged.
- Staff use professional development and opportunities to share good practice to continually reflect on and improve their teaching. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and improving.
- Teachers plan learning that meets the varying needs of pupils. They use questioning skilfully to develop and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding, and to tackle misconceptions. However, this is not wholly consistent across each subject. In some instances, teachers are yet to deepen pupils' knowledge as well as they could.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. This area of the school's work has improved markedly and significantly since the previous inspection. However, leaders are not complacent. They are determined to continue ensuring that all pupils attend school as regularly as they should. Leaders are unrelenting in their drive to ensure that fixed-term exclusions continue to reduce at the current rapid pace.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly so that disadvantaged pupils' outcomes continue to rapidly improve, by:
 - ensuring that the consistently high expectations teachers have continue to accelerate disadvantaged pupils' outcomes
 - teachers building on their skilful questioning so that pupils are consistently encouraged to think deeply about subject content and any misconceptions pupils have are tackled consistently well
 - continuing to provide staff with beneficial opportunities to share the good practice that exists in the school and across the trust.
- Continue to improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - embedding the positive attitudes and behaviours for learning so that all pupils contribute positively to their learning and progress
 - ensuring that work with parents, carers and pupils continues so that everyone is aware of how important attending school regularly is, therefore improving absence and reducing persistent absenteeism
 - continuing to refine and implement appropriate strategies and support so that the proportion of pupils who are excluded on a fixed-term basis continues to reduce, particularly for those who are disadvantaged.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leadership at all levels, including governance and support and guidance from the trust, is truly outstanding at Outwood Academy City.
- Since their appointment, the executive principal and principal have galvanised the school. A highly focused and strategic approach to leadership and, consequently, school improvement is evident. As a result, pupils' attendance has improved markedly, and fixed-term exclusions have reduced significantly. Together, the executive principal and principal have brought about and are continuing the momentum of sustaining rapid improvements. There is a strong child-centred focus at the helm of Outwood Academy City.
- The principal has a well-informed and deep understanding of the context of the school and the community it serves. He is resolutely passionate and determined that all pupils will be actively prepared for their future. This provides a strong foundation in which the strategic planning for improvement is based. As a result, barriers are broken down swiftly and opportunities are embraced to enable pupils to achieve their very best. Consequently, current pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are making good progress across a wide range of subjects and attending well.
- The executive principal and principal, supported by leaders at all levels, have a profound understanding of the many strengths of the school and those areas that need attention. Self-evaluation and improvement planning are precise and incisive. As a result, since the previous inspection, standards have improved and continue to do so at a rapid pace, especially pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare.
- Leaders' actions to improve the quality and consistency of teaching have paid off. It is evident that progress is rising across the curriculum, particularly in humanities, modern foreign languages and for disadvantaged pupils. In subjects such as English, mathematics, science and art, for example, it is being substantially sustained over time.
- Leaders at all levels are actively involved in the monitoring of pupil assessment information. This enables them to intervene swiftly and provide planned opportunities for pupils to catch up or address any gaps in their learning quickly. Leaders' strategies to intervene ensure that pupils are not allowed to fall behind in their learning. As a result, outcomes for pupils are good and they are being sustained and improving, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.
- Middle leaders provide a decisive and strong layer of leadership. They know the subjects they lead very well and, consequently, are taking effective and appropriate actions to effect improvement. As a group, they are a driving force for change. For example, a systematic structure to consistently monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning is contributing to driving up standards and provides support to the minority of teachers who may need it.
- Middle leaders are fervently involved in improving behaviour. They actively identify pupils who have had regular praise and rewards in their subject areas and build on this to motivate pupils and develop their positive attitudes to learning. Middle leaders also

actively monitor those pupils who do not meet expectations. They identify trends and patterns of pupils' behaviour. As a result, they can intervene quickly so that those pupils who choose to misbehave do not fall behind in their learning, but also understand that there are consequences to their actions.

- Staff appreciate the high-quality professional development opportunities they receive. They enthusiastically explained to inspectors how the training programme they can access enriches their skills and is contributing to developing their practice. As a result, staff morale is high. Staff are very proud to be a part of Outwood Academy City.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils have access to a wide range of subjects as the highly tailored, distinctive curriculum is designed to meet pupils' needs and also take into account their future aspirations. The broad curriculum offer inspires pupils to learn, particularly in creative subjects. As a result, strong outcomes are evident in art, music and drama. There is a strong emphasis on literacy across the curriculum. This is further enhanced as a result of bespoke reading programmes to allow pupils to catch up and have every opportunity to reach their chronological reading age. Similarly, pupils' numeracy skills are developed and improved through bespoke programmes to support pupils. The emphasis on literacy and mathematics is contributing to pupils making strong and sustained progress in English and mathematics by the end of key stage 4. For disadvantaged pupils, these skills are improving rapidly.
- Leaders put high importance on ensuring that pupils are provided with impartial careers information, advice and guidance. Leaders at all levels are extremely ambitious for pupils. As a result, and along with many aspects of the school's curriculum, the school prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- Leaders' promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is integrated into the curriculum and through a discrete programme. As a result, pupils have excellent understanding of values such as respect, tolerance and what is right and wrong. They are prepared well to be active and caring citizens in modern Britain.
- The school is oversubscribed for September 2019. This reflects the community and parents' understanding that the school has improved rapidly and continues to do so. A high number of parents appreciate the information they receive from the school about their child's progress. Similarly, the vast majority of parents would recommend the school to a friend.

Governance of the school

- Governors, who form the local academy council, show an excellent and precise level of detail and knowledge about the school.
- This provides them with an insightful understanding of the strengths and, particularly, those pertinent areas that need to improve. Information they receive from the principal and other leaders allows them to incisively challenge all aspects of the school's performance.
- Governors' stringent and systematic challenge has ensured deployment of appropriate staff and that resources are best placed so that pupils' attendance has improved rapidly. Similarly, this has contributed to fixed-term exclusions continuing to significantly reduce.

- Governors continue to contribute, support and challenge leaders so that pupils' outcomes continue to improve, especially for disadvantaged pupils.
- The trust's scheme of delegation is detailed and appropriately articulates the trust's underlying principles.
- Trustees and governors have a clear understanding of how their roles and responsibilities differ. Nonetheless, they have an evident understanding of how the two bodies work together, and link, to bring about change, support and challenge to leaders at all levels.
- The CEO leads by example to promote his strong moral purpose. This is deeply rooted in exceptionally high aspirations and ambition for the pupils at Outwood Academy City. As a result, he provides a candid and compassionate level of leadership so that standards continually improve. His high aspirations permeate the work of the school; he is resolute that pupils will receive consistently high-quality teaching, so that pupils foster a passion and love of learning. All leaders and staff at the school share these aspirations.
- The CEO and the chief executive principal for secondary show outstanding leadership. They are steadfast, and as a result they have created a culture at the school so that leaders, staff and pupils can excel.
- Together, they have a deep and accurate view of the school's effectiveness. As a result, they have deployed swift, costly and effective support to the school so that, for example, attendance improves rapidly and pupils' outcomes improve, particularly in humanities and modern foreign languages.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders, governors and the trust ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and meet statutory requirements. For example, the school's single central record is exemplary. Processes in place for vetting staff before they begin employment at the school are rigorous and thorough.
- Staff training is appropriate and timely. As a result, they are vigilant and ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for. Staff understand the important role they play so that pupils feel safe and are safe.
- Leaders carry out their duties with vigilance and tenacity. They have a clear understanding of risks that pupils may face in the local community. As a result, they respond swiftly and effectively. For example, links with external agencies are sought to support pupils, particularly those who suffer from social or emotional issues.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They understand about how to stay safe and protect themselves from harm or risk, for example how to use social media safely and responsibly. Pupils benefit from assemblies and opportunities within the curriculum to learn about different risks they may face. As a result, pupils can speak with a degree of confidence about how to ensure that they are not exploited or pressured into doing something they do not want to.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders and teachers demonstrate high expectations for all pupils. They are determined that pupils achieve well in their subjects. As a result of frequent opportunities to share good practice at the school and within the trust, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and improving at Outwood Academy City.
- Teachers utilise and demonstrate their secure subject knowledge across the curriculum. They use this well to plan learning. Learning activities take into account pupils' varying needs. As a result, current pupils make strong and, in some instances, substantial progress over time, for example in English, mathematics, science and art.
- Teachers' positive relationships with pupils are enabling the vast majority of them to make gains in their learning and progress. Pupils quickly respond to teachers' expectations and instructions. The positive relationships evident are strongly contributing to pupils' progress and their resilience when learning from their mistakes.
- Pupils work well together and are happy and confident to learn from each other. They share ideas and, in some instances, teach each other new ideas or concepts. For example, pupils check each other's work, offer supportive advice and guidance and, as a result, they consolidate learning collaboratively and supportively.
- Pupils' literacy skills are developing and consolidating over time. Teachers concentrate on ensuring that pupils grasp skills in punctuation, spelling and grammar. As a result, they can write at length in a wide range of subjects with technical accuracy. For example, extended writing opportunities afforded in history and geography are contributing to improved pupil outcomes. Pupils also use and apply subject-specific vocabulary well in the subjects they study, this is particularly so in science. Teachers make every effort to support pupils' literacy skills and develop their vocabulary.
- Teachers use skilful questioning to check pupils' knowledge and understanding. In some subjects, particularly English, this is leading to strong and sustained levels of knowledge and understanding. In many instances, teachers in different subjects reshape explanations or tasks so that pupils' misconceptions can be addressed and corrected. However, because of some inconsistencies, this is not yet systematically having a positive impact on all pupils' rates of progress across the curriculum.
- Pupils typically receive high levels of challenge in their learning. In the main, they are challenged to develop and extend their ideas and, in most subjects, they are encouraged to think hard about ideas and concepts. This is particularly prevalent in English, art and history. However, there remain some instances when pupils are not consistently expected to think deeply or hard about an aspect of subject content.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The vast majority of pupils are confident and self-assured young people. They demonstrate this well in the subjects they study. As a result, the vast majority of pupils make strong gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills.

- Pupils, in the main, show a great pride at being a part of the school. Pupils wear their uniform with pride and look very smart and professional.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and are safe. They are aware of the different forms of bullying that can take place. Pupils told inspectors that bullying incidents are rare and that if it does happen, they are confident that teachers will deal with it quickly and effectively. Pupils have confidence in, and trust, staff. They believe that staff genuinely care for them and their well-being.
- Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to develop their personal, social and emotional skills, for example through assemblies, visiting speakers and enrichment activities. Pupils speak confidently about how diversity is accepted, respected and celebrated. Pupils show high levels of tolerance and respect.
- Pupils are prepared well for their next steps in education, employment or training through a programme of external speakers and visits to different establishments. This has had a positive effect on reducing the proportion of pupils who do not access education, employment or training to well below the national average.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are largely positive. Where pupils consistently demonstrate these positive attitudes, it is having a solid effect on their learning and progress. However, some are yet to understand the importance of how such positive attitudes can contribute to them achieving much better in the subjects they study.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Leaders' actions over the past 18 months to improve pupils' behaviour have had a positive and marked effect.
- The school keeps meticulous records of any behaviour incidents that may occur. Leaders and managers follow up incidents of poor or inappropriate behaviour diligently and effectively. Such records indicate that the number of incidents of poor behaviour has reduced dramatically since the previous academic year.
- The vast majority of pupils show respect for each other. Similarly, the vast majority of pupils are respectful towards staff and visitors. Pupils conduct themselves well during movement, break and lunchtime. Pupils' conduct reflects leaders' efforts to promote high standards. Pupils are confident that most staff deal with poor behaviour fairly and effectively.
- Pupils' attendance has markedly improved over time. As a result of leaders' concerted and fastidious actions, overall attendance is currently broadly in line with the national average for all pupils. It continues to significantly improve for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- Currently, nearly a third of pupils have 100% attendance. Again, this is an improvement on last academic year. Pupils are punctual to school and to their lessons. They arrive quickly and, in the main, prepared to take part in their learning.
- Systematic and effective procedures are in place to monitor pupils' attendance. Staff effectively follow up attendance issues and absence. They take into account pupils' barriers or issues and, consequently, provide high-quality wraparound care and support. This is contributing to some of the most vulnerable pupils attending school regularly. Despite these dramatic improvements and leaders' efforts, some pupils do

not attend school as regularly as they should. Leaders are committed to continuing their work with some hard-to-reach parents so that they understand the importance of their children attending school as regularly as possible.

- Leaders' efforts and determination to reduce the proportion of pupils excluded on a fixed-term basis have paid off. The number of pupils excluded so far this academic year has significantly and markedly reduced in comparison to this time last year. This is particularly evident for boys and disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders and managers' conscientious and strategic approach to dealing with incidents of poor behaviour, in a much more proportioned way, is allowing fixed-term exclusions to continue to reduce. Work with vulnerable pupils and pupils who need additional guidance and support, through early intervention and support programmes, to develop their positive attitudes and behaviours is contributing to this important reduction. As a result, pupils are behaving more responsibly and making better gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. However, leaders acknowledge that work must continue to sustain these improvements and further reduce the proportion of pupils who are excluded, particularly those who are disadvantaged.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' outcomes are good because across a range of subjects current pupils' rates of progress are improving in a sustained way. Throughout the inspection, leaders provided compelling evidence, alongside work in pupils' books, that demonstrates that current pupils' progress, particularly of disadvantaged pupils, is strong and improving.
- Over time, pupils' overall progress and attainment have been sustained with a high degree of consistency. For example, pupils' progress by the end of Year 11 in 2018, from their different starting points, demonstrates that they progressed well over time at Outwood Academy City. Although, disadvantaged pupils' attainment demonstrated improvement from previous years, their progress was inconsistent.
- The proportions of pupils achieving a grade 4 and above or grade 5 and above in both English and mathematics have been consistently above the national averages for the past two years. This is because pupils benefit from strong teaching in mathematics and excellent teaching in English. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who achieved both English and mathematics in 2018 showed improvement, particularly the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who achieved at grade 5 or above. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils is diminishing steadily.
- Pupils currently in the school benefit from teaching that is solidly good and in some areas of the school, for example English, excellent. Teachers' promotion of high standards and expectations, alongside their determination that pupils will achieve well is benefiting current pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged and with SEND. As a result, pupils make good progress across a range of subjects and year groups.

School details

Unique reference number	140415
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10081704

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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	1,045
Appropriate authority	Board of Trustees
Chair	James Smythe
Principal	Andrew Downing Philip Smith (Executive Principal) Julie Slater (Chief Executive Principal) Martyn Oliver (Chief Executive Officer)
Telephone number	0114 235 8120
Website	www.city.outwood.com
Email address	enquiries@city.outwood.com
Date of previous inspection	27–28 September 2016

Information about this school

- The school is a broadly average-sized secondary school serving 11- to 16-year-olds in Sheffield, South Yorkshire.
- The school is part of the Outwood Grange Academies Trust.
- The current principal has been in post since September 2017. The chair of the local academy council has been chair since September 2017.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is well above that found nationally. The school serves an area of high deprivation.
- Most pupils are White British. Very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils identified with and needing support for SEND is broadly similar to that found nationally.

- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below average.
- A minority of pupils attend alternative provision. Inspectors spent time examining the school's records regarding attendance, behaviour, safeguarding, curriculum and pupils' progress of those who attend the alternative provision providers. An inspector spoke to different members of staff at the providers too.
- Where appropriate, leaders receive support in specific areas of the school, for example in humanities and modern foreign languages, from the wider resources available in the Outwood Grange Academies Trust.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a wide range of lessons across a range of subjects and year groups.
- All observations were completed jointly with leaders from the school. Inspectors also observed pupils' conduct at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors held various discussions with senior leaders, other leaders and class teachers. The lead inspector met with the CEO of Outwood Grange Academies Trust and the chief executive principal for secondary, and with a group of governors, including the chair.
- Inspectors met with six groups of pupils, ranging from Years 7 to 11. An inspector also met with the school's pupil council. Inspectors also spoke with a number of pupils informally and in lessons.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in classrooms and they also evaluated pupils' work in other identified subjects on day two of the inspection. Discrete checks took place to evaluate work completed by disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Inspectors considered a wide range of information provided by school leaders regarding the achievement of current pupils in the school.
- Inspectors looked at and evaluated a wide range of documentation provided by the school. This included documents relating to safeguarding and child protection, including the single central record. The lead inspector spent time analysing and evaluating the school's behaviour, attendance and exclusion records.
- Inspectors took into account the 31 responses to the questionnaire for staff and the 123 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, including the 26 comments made using the free-text service. No pupils completed the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Darren Stewart, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Fiona Dixon	Ofsted Inspector
Janet Sheriff	Ofsted Inspector
John Edwards	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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