

Outwood Academy Danum

Armthorpe Road, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN2 5QD

Inspection dates

29–30 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The effectiveness of leaders, governors and the trust is good. They have implemented strategies that have significantly improved the quality of education pupils receive. The school is improving quickly and securely. It is well served by capable and committed staff.
- The impact of teaching on pupils' learning and assessment is good. Staff are knowledgeable and hard-working. They have high expectations for pupils and ensure that lessons are productive and focused on developing pupils' skills and deepening their understanding. The curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs and ambitions.
- Outcomes are good. Pupils start at the school with prior attainment usually below average. By the time they leave, their attainment is above national averages in a range of subjects. This represents strong progress for most pupils, when set against their starting points.
- The effectiveness of the sixth form is good and underpinned by strong leadership, effective teaching and sound care and guidance. Value-added scores exceed national averages across a range of vocational and academic subjects.
- The promotion of pupils' personal development and welfare is good. This is reflected in their increasing confidence and the acquisition of several interpersonal, life and work-place skills. These attributes stand them in good stead for the next stage of their education, training or employment, when they leave the school.
- Pupil premium funding and the additional money the school receives to boost Year 7 pupils' literacy skills are deployed effectively. They are contributing to improved learning, especially among disadvantaged pupils.
- The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils, boys and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have improved substantially. But they still lag behind those of other pupils in the school. The progress of the small numbers of pupils at alternative provisions is variable. Addressing these deficits is pivotal to the school securing outstanding outcomes.
- Pupils' behaviour requires further improvement. Historically, the number of fixed-term exclusions has been very high. To its credit, the school halved the number of these exclusions last year. However, the need to exclude pupils for a fixed term or permanently still occurs too frequently. The school must become more effective in managing and moderating pupils' behaviour, so that the need to exclude reduces even further. Pupils' attendance remains stubbornly below the national average, and the rate of persistent absence is much higher than average. There is an urgent need to improve this situation, as the negative impact of poor attendance on pupils' learning and progress is well documented. The hardest hit groups are disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Building on the improvements already secured, further increase the quality, consistency and effectiveness of teaching, so that all pupils' learning and development are consistently good or better by:
 - raising the attainment and accelerating the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and boys, so that their outcomes match the excellent performance of other pupils in the school
 - eliminating the remaining inconsistent impact of teaching on pupils' learning in subjects where progress is not yet rapid and sustained, so that all groups of pupils make strong progress, when set against their starting points, in all of their studies
 - ensuring that all pupils with SEND and pupils who attend alternative provisions consistently make good or better progress, when set against their starting points
 - maintaining high expectations of all pupils and continuing to provide them with a high degree of challenge, so that they remain ambitious, further develop their resilience, and sustain good engagement and a strong work ethic, which will support them in achieving the exceptionally high standards they are capable of.
- Sustain and build on the increasingly effective impact of school leaders, governors and the trust in improving the school's overall effectiveness, so that the quality of education provided and pupils' outcomes are outstanding by:
 - embedding the strategies which have proved successful in raising academic standards; improving the effectiveness of teaching on pupils' learning; raising pupils' aspirations and supporting their personal development, so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training
 - more effectively moderating and improving the behaviours of a hard-core minority of pupils who defy school rules, and further reduce the numbers of behaviour incidents and fixed and permanent exclusions
 - reducing persistent absence rates and increasing the overall rate of pupils' attendance, so that it is high for all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, boys and pupils with SEND
 - working more effectively with parents and carers to help them better understand the importance of excellent attendance and the negative impact poor attendance can have on their children's education.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- 'Skilled and relentless' aptly describes leaders. They are well supported by talented staff, astute governance and strong, overarching, strategic leadership from the trust. The cumulative effect of this cohesive team is undeniable. In the 26 months since the trust took over the school, the school has improved substantially in almost every area of its work. In this regard, leadership and governance have been transformational. Recruiting quality staff and holding them rigorously to account; instilling an aspirational ethos and vision across the school; systematically implementing strategies, which equip pupils with the tools they need to be successful learners; and routine monitoring, assessment and refinement of all of these processes have been key to the improvements secured.
- Leaders' introduction of non-negotiable aspects to the planning, assessment and feedback to pupils and the delivery of teaching, and effective training, coaching and mentoring of staff have enhanced the quality and consistency of teaching in the school.
- Leaders ensure that pupils follow a balanced curriculum that is structured to build knowledge incrementally, deepen understanding and hone pupils' skills in a range of subjects. The curriculum is enriched by artistic, creative and sporting opportunities. Courses are interlaced with a focus on pupils' personal development, spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth, including the active promotion of fundamental British values. The strides pupils make in confidence, resilience, tolerance and ambition contribute greatly to their good attitudes to learning, strong work ethic and robust mental well-being. Pupils get good careers information, advice and guidance, as they move through and leave the school.
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is spent effectively and assists their rising attainment and increasingly rapid progress. Year 7 catch-up funding is also well deployed. Targeted pupils have improved their literacy and numeracy skills. The impact of funding for pupils with SEND is variable and requires improvement.
- The school's reputation is at an all-time high and 94% of the parents and carers who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, would recommend the school.
- Newly qualified and recently qualified teachers feel well supported. They especially value the weekly mentoring sessions and high-quality training and guidance they get.
- Leaders are realistic. They accept there are several aspects requiring more improvement, before they can justifiably be recognised as an outstanding provider of education. They are working hard to develop and embed strategies they hope will secure the progress.

Governance of the school

- Governance is strong. Members and trustees bring to bear considerable experience, education-related expertise and business acumen. This enables them to challenge, monitor and evaluate the school's efficiency and strategically influence improvement planning and implementation very effectively. Statutory duties are diligently fulfilled.

- The chair of the local academy council is a national leader of governance and provides strong leadership of delegated responsibilities. He is well supported by the trust board members, who provide an excellent, overarching, strategic thrust and impetus.
- Governors know the school well. They have an accurate understanding of the relative effectiveness of additional funding for pupils with SEND, disadvantaged and Year 7 pupils. Governors are very ambitious for the school and drive improvement effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and a strong culture of safeguarding exists in the school. Staff are vigilant and very aware that safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility and not just that of designated leaders. In the event of crises and in dealing with disclosures or concerns, protocols are well understood. Staff receive regular updates and training on the latest legislation. This reinforces their confidence in dealing with any concerns and in recognising associated signs and symptoms.
- Leaders make appropriate checks to ensure that staff are safe to work with pupils. Safe practice is well integrated into the curriculum, which ensures that pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe. Pupils say they feel safe and they are confident that staff would help them, if they raised a concern. Risk assessment is comprehensive.
- The school links effectively with several specialist agencies and professionals to support its work with the most vulnerable pupils. The current spotlight on fortifying pupils' mental health and well-being is noteworthy, as is the work to counter radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Over time and currently, it is crystal clear that teaching is good and improving securely. Compelling evidence from evaluation of pupil performance information, scrutiny of pupils' work, observations of pupils' learning and the school's own credible assessment data, along with discussion with pupils about their knowledge, understanding and skills confirm this. Interventions for pupils who need extra help to catch up are equally effective. The cumulative effect of this strong teaching is the rapid and sustained progress most pupils make in their learning.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge and high expectations of what pupils are capable of, together with engaging and challenging teaching, inspire pupils to work hard and be ambitious for their futures. They see that staff work hard on their behalf and show their appreciation by working diligently. Lessons are characterised by a productive buzz and pupils' strong work ethic.
- Teachers use questioning skilfully to deepen and reinforce pupils' understanding. All groups of pupils are challenged and supported appropriately, including the most, and least, able pupils. Consequently, pupils' concentration and commitment do not drift because the work is pitched at the right level for them. It is not too hard or too easy. Support staff play an effective role in assisting targeted pupils' learning.
- Teachers' development of pupils' literacy skills is good. Literacy is taught across the curriculum in individual subjects and discrete sessions and reinforced in the assembly programme. This has had a good impact on the expansion of pupils' vocabulary and has led to significant improvements in the quality of their reading, writing and oracy

skills. This is especially true for targeted pupils identified as needing to catch up because of their lower prior attainment. Pupils are encouraged to use subject-specific vocabulary and demonstrate their comprehension, as well as the accuracy of their work.

- Mathematics is taught very effectively, which is reflected in pupils' good learning and progress in the subject. Teachers are especially good at improving pupils' mathematical fluency and mastery of key concepts and theories.
- Teaching in key stage 3 and key stage 4 is equally effective.
- Teachers use assessment effectively to gauge how well pupils are learning and to plan the next steps in their learning. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows teachers provide them with insightful feedback, which pupils take account of and use to help themselves.
- Currently, there is some good provision for the teaching of pupils with SEND. However, the impact of teaching on these pupils' learning and for pupils who attend alternative provisions is mixed and requires improvement. Most disadvantaged pupils learn well, because of good teaching. However, there is room for improvement here also, as their learning is not always as swift or secure as that of other pupils in the school.
- The challenge for the school going forward is to build on this effective provision. Leaders appreciate that they must eliminate the remaining inconsistencies in the impact of teaching on pupils' learning, in the few subjects where pupils' progress is not yet rapid and sustained.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires Improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils welcome visitors and maturely engaged in discussions about the school, their learning and their aspirations for the future. They are confident, take pride in their work, and are developing a range of additional skills and qualities in 'life' lessons. These are preparing them well for any future education, training or employment.
- The school's mission is to 'put pupils first' and this is reflected in the supportive and caring ethos that leaders are cultivating. Pupils feel safe and described the ways the school has raised their awareness of potential dangers they might encounter, in and out of school. They say they are developing suitable coping strategies. They feel better able to identify risks to their physical and mental well-being and mitigate them.
- Good relationships between pupils and staff are a cornerstone of the mutual respect that exists. The effective support and guidance pupils receive as they join, move through, and leave the school, equip them to make considered choices about their futures.
- Pupils benefit from several leadership opportunities. The 'pledges' initiative requires pupils to undertake a series of events during their time at the school. This encourages pupils to be actively involved in the wider school community and to understand that their school experiences should stretch beyond the classroom. Through this initiative, pupils develop and apply new skills. They improve their confidence, through a range of

practical activities, such as organising fundraising activities for charity, taking part in a formal presentation to an audience, attending a sporting, cultural or academic event or taking part in an outward bound or residential experience.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. The conduct of most pupils is appropriate, and pupils' attitudes to their learning are generally positive. However, there remains a hard core of pupils who do not follow the school's rules to the extent that they are either removed to the behaviour reflection room or externally excluded. Because these pupils are removed from the general population, there is an artificial impression of how good behaviour is, as these pupils are taken out of the equation. In addition to this, pupils' attendance is not good enough and pupils are persistently absent too often.
- Leaders have halved the number of pupils excluded for a fixed term, compared with last year. But, because the previous figure was extremely high, fixed-term and permanent exclusions remain well above national averages. The same pattern exists in relation to the number of 'removals' to the behaviour reflection room and behaviour incidents. Leaders know they must get better at mitigating the need to use these sanctions, by moderating and improving the behaviour of these more belligerent pupils. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are disproportionately excluded. This can have a negative impact on their learning.
- Rates of attendance remain stubbornly below the national average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is above average, despite the school's best efforts to date. Leaders acknowledge that they need to be more effective in tackling these deep-rooted problems. They recognise that, if pupils are missing school, they are missing the opportunity to learn. Pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils are disproportionately persistently absent. This can have a negative impact on their learning.
- During the inspection, pupils' behaviour was invariably positive and they interrelated well. Staff adhere consistently to the school's policy for managing behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes for pupils have improved significantly since the sponsor took over the school. Pupils' attainment in several subjects, including mathematics and English, is good. This is reflected by the fact that, typically, pupils join the school with below-average attainment, but, by the time they leave, their overall attainment is above average.
- In 2017 and 2018, key stage 4 pupils' overall rate of progress was also above national averages. The impact of effective teaching over time and high-quality pupil support helped them to securely improve their knowledge, skills and understanding in the subjects they studied. This is the case for low-, middle- and high-prior-attaining pupils.
- Inspection evidence, including work scrutiny and the school's own credible records, indicates that current pupils' progress is good. Subjects in which pupils had previously underperformed, such as history and French, have also improved their effectiveness.

- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is in line with other pupils nationally. While improving, their progress lags behind that of other pupils in the school and the deficit needs narrowing. Outcomes for pupils with SEND and those attending alternative provisions are mixed.
- The school's work to strengthen pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is effective.
- Pupils find suitable further education, training or employment when they leave the school.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The sixth form is effective in ensuring that students make good progress from their starting points, and they typically thrive on the courses they study. This is due to good teaching, good levels of support and students' good attitudes to learning. This is true for those on vocational and academic courses.
- In recent years, leaders have successfully driven up standards of attainment and increased the amount of progress students make. For example, students' overall value-added score has risen from when the sponsor took over, to being currently above the national average. Similarly, on a range of vocational and A-level courses, students' attainment has improved significantly. This is particularly the case in subjects where pupils performed poorly in the past. This includes subjects such as English language and chemistry. It also includes improvements in the performance of specific groups, such as the most able students and students re-taking GCSE English.
- Leaders' strategies designed to improve the quality of education in the sixth form are bearing fruit. They regularly monitor and evaluate the impact of teaching on students' learning and consider how they can provide more effective pastoral support. They have a realistic understanding of the sixth form's strengths and areas for development.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is currently good. Teachers know their students well. The mutually respectful relationships that exist between students and teachers create a positive climate for learning. Teachers plan lessons which are engaging and challenge students to do their best and reach their potential. Students are confident learners and have high aspirations for the future.
- Leaders ensure students access wide-ranging, independent careers information, advice and guidance. This is much appreciated by students. They feel well informed about their choices for the future, including university, employment and apprenticeships. This effective support ensures that the number of students not in employment, education or training is very low. Retention rates are high on both academic and vocational courses, because students are well supported to choose the right courses for them.
- The school's work to provide work experience opportunities for students is developing well. It was only introduced last academic year. Leaders acknowledge there is room for further improvement in expanding the range, and quality, of experiences on offer.
- Students' attendance has improved, but requires further improvement to be good.
- Leaders recognise they must be more effective in ensuring that students who retake GCSE mathematics are successful in improving their grades.

School details

Unique reference number	143938
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10081417

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 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1124
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	280
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of the local academy council	Mr John Mounsey
Principal	Jayne Gaunt
Telephone number	01302831385
Website	https://www.danum.outwood.com
Email address	enquiries@danum.outwood.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most pupils are White British. The remaining pupils originate from a diverse range of minority ethnic heritages. Most pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils receiving support from the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of pupils receiving support for SEND is below average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is above average.
- The school joined Outwood Grange Academies Trust in September 2016. The mission statement of the trust is 'Students first: raising standards, transforming lives.'
Responsibility for the school lies with the board of trustees. The local academy council has some delegated powers. The structure of the trust's governance and management can be found on the school's website.
- The school uses several alternative providers to educate a small number of its pupils. These include: St Wilfrid's Academy, First Class Tailored Solutions, Learning Centre North, Centre Central, Maple Young Mums and the JASP Education Centre.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 48 lessons across the school. Many of the observations in lessons were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the principal, the associate executive principal, senior and subject leaders, members of the trust board and the local governing board, including the chair of governors. Inspectors also met with the chief executive officer of the trust and the head of secondary schools from the trust.
- Inspectors spoke to teachers, including newly qualified teachers and recently qualified teachers, about their practice and pupils' learning.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work during lessons and with a group of subject leaders in English, mathematics, history, geography and science. They also scrutinised a selection of work from the sixth form with the leader of post-16 provision. The scrutiny focused on the performance of the different groups of pupils in the academy, such as: the most able; disadvantaged pupils; those with SEND; those who speak English as an additional language; and pupils with low prior attainment. Inspectors also watched several after-school activities.
- An inspector spoke to representatives from the alternative education providers used by the school. Inspectors also visited the school's internal specialist provisions for more vulnerable pupils and those exhibiting behaviours contrary to academy's policy, such as the Bridge, the PLC, and the consequences room.
- Inspectors held formal meetings with several different groups of pupils from across the academy. Inspectors also talked to many pupils in lessons, during social times and at the start and end of the school day.
- Inspectors heard Year 7 and Year 8 pupils read and discussed their work with them.
- Inspectors examined wide-ranging evidence provided by the school, including self-evaluation and analysis of performance information, action plans, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding files, recruitment checks and governor minutes.
- Inspectors considered the 53 responses from parents and carers who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. The views of 49 members of staff and 11 pupils who completed Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys were also considered.

Inspection team

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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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