

Outwood Academy City

Stradbroke Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S13 8SS

Inspection dates

27–28 September 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' attendance is well below average and has not been improving rapidly. Too many pupils are regularly absent from the school. Consequently, personal development and welfare require improvement.
- Behaviour requires improvement as exclusions, especially for boys, are high and not reducing swiftly over time.
- The overall effectiveness of the school requires improvement as personal development, behaviour and welfare require improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- There is much to celebrate in the school. Good leadership has brought about strong improvements in pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching.
- Teachers' high expectations lead to pupils achieving well particularly in English, science and mathematics and a range of other subjects. Teaching assistants are highly skilled and contribute well to pupils' learning.
- Teachers' good questioning skills engage pupils strongly in their learning. Occasionally, questioning is not used skilfully to deepen the learning of all groups of pupils.
- Pupils make especially strong progress in key stage 4 and this leads to good outcomes in most subjects. Outcomes in a few subjects have yet to be strengthened.
- Pupils told inspectors they are very proud to be members of the school. They said they are safe and well cared for.
- The school is promoting reading very well and pupils say they enjoy reading. Pupils have good writing skills. However, in key stage 3, there are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects other than English.
- Subject leaders check the quality of teaching and learning thoroughly and have high expectations. In some subjects, there are times when the school's policies for presentation and marking are not fully adhered to.
- There are high-quality systems for checking pupils' progress. Leaders ensure that those pupils falling behind are given very effective support to catch up.
- Governors, and the academy trust, support the school very well. They have strengthened the capacity of the school to improve further. Occasionally, governors are not using national information to challenge the school's leaders strongly.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare to good by:
 - increasing pupils' attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, to at least average
 - reducing the proportion of pupils regularly absent from the school to average or below average
 - strengthening pupils' behaviour by further reducing the proportion of pupils excluded, especially boys, to average or below average.
- Further improve the quality of teaching to make sure that pupils' progress is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - skilful questioning consistently deepens and extends pupils' knowledge and understanding, particularly for the least able pupils
 - pupils have greater opportunities to write at length in a wide range of subjects in key stage 3
 - pupils are given sufficient time to respond effectively to marking and feedback to strengthen their progress.
- Increase the impact of leaders and managers by ensuring that:
 - subject leaders check that the school's presentation and marking policies are applied consistently well
 - governors measure the school's impact on attendance and exclusions in terms of national averages, to make sure that personal development, behaviour and welfare are at least good.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal, governors and the academy trust have been very successful in developing the quality of teaching and strengthening pupils' outcomes across the academy. They are ambitious and have very high expectations of pupils and staff. They have the full support of staff and most pupils in their efforts to improve the school.
- There are thorough and very effective systems to check the performance of staff, including teaching assistants and leaders. Senior leaders and subject leaders use a wide range of information to determine the quality of teaching and link this well to pupils' progress. Occasionally, subject leaders are not ensuring that the school's policies for presentation of work and pupils' response to marking and feedback are applied consistently by teachers and pupils.
- Leaders systematically identify bespoke professional development for all of the staff. There are good opportunities for staff to share best practice across the school and the trust. School information indicates that teachers have benefited from expert coaching and mentoring as well as opportunities to share their best practices with other staff. This has led to good outcomes and good teaching in most subjects.
- Recently qualified and newly qualified teachers are given good support to help them develop good teaching skills.
- A sophisticated system for checking pupils' progress is used highly effectively by leaders, including subject leaders and the school's pastoral staff, to identify whether pupils need additional support or challenge. Remedial action is taken to ensure that pupils falling behind, or missing work due to absence or exclusion, are given additional support to help them catch up. Some of this work is linked closely to the school's 'enrichment activities' when additional support is given in a range of subjects.
- The curriculum has a good impact on pupils' outcomes. There is a wide range of subjects. Good support and guidance are given to pupils of all abilities to access their subjects and be successful. Pupils are challenged effectively and the proportion of pupils accessing the English Baccalaureate subjects is increasing. The curriculum is reviewed regularly and adapted to strengthen pupils' progress. There is a good range of sporting opportunities and enrichment activities for pupils.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is developing effectively for pupils. There are opportunities to learn about different faiths and cultures, through various subjects, form time, assemblies and visits. The school promotes tolerance, respect, democracy and liberty to help pupils understand what is required to be a good citizen.
- Most pupils have responded well to the efforts leaders and managers have made to strengthen behaviour and personal development in the school. However, school systems and leadership have not impacted well enough on a small minority of pupils to ensure that they attend well and behave as required. These pupils are missing out on the good opportunities available for personal development and welfare.
- Leaders and managers check the behaviour and safety of pupils carefully. There are excellent links between the school and the providers of off-site provision to ensure pupils' safety and to check on their achievements.

- Pupil premium funding is used effectively. There is strong support for pupils' academic achievement which has been improving over time. The funding is also used to strengthen attendance for these pupils, although leadership still have work to do to ensure that disadvantaged pupils attend well.
- The use of Year 7 catch-up funding (government funding for those entering secondary school with below-average standards in English and mathematics) is checked by leaders and managers to ensure that pupils are making strong progress. Pupils have additional reading, writing and numeracy sessions that help them to catch up well.
- The Outwood Grange Academies Trust has offered very effective support to the school to ensure that outcomes are now good and the quality of teaching is good. The trust checks closely on the work of the school. Along with governors, it has recently strengthened the school's capacity for further improvement. They have appointed an executive principal to provide additional strength to leadership in the school and a new leader for attendance and behaviour.

Governance of the school

- Governors are very skilled and have a clear vision for the school.
 - Several governors are members of the trust board as well as being members of the local school council. They have educational expertise, financial expertise and business expertise. This helps them to understand clearly the performance of the school and outcomes for pupils.
 - Governors are clear about the use of finances in the institution. They know how the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding are impacting on pupils' outcomes.
 - Governors are clear that attendance needs to be improved. They are challenging the school leaders to improve. However, the information they are using is based on local information and not the more challenging national information for attendance.
 - Governors visit the school regularly and know where the quality of teaching is best and where it needs to strengthen. Governors have audited their skills and attend appropriate training opportunities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are appropriately trained and are vigilant. Meticulous checks are made to ensure that adults are suitable to work with pupils.
- Leaders work effectively with external agencies and parents to ensure that pupils are safe. The school ensures that agencies respond in a 'timely manner' should any matters need attention. Checks are made on those pupils who are regularly absent from the school to ensure that they are safe.
- Governors check the quality of the school's work in safeguarding pupils and know that it is secure.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Overall, good teaching across the school is helping pupils learn well and gain good knowledge, skills and understanding in a wide range of subjects.

- Expectations are high. Work set is pitched well to the varying needs and abilities of pupils. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to set challenging work for pupils. Pupils persist with their work even when the work is very challenging.
- Good questioning helps pupils to deepen their understanding. Pupils are keen to respond and give extended answers that are used to test out the understanding of others in the class. Occasionally, questioning is not skilful and does not fully engage all groups of pupils, particularly the least able, to make them think deeply about their learning.
- An analysis of pupils' work showed that presentation of work is generally good. However, now and again, pupils' work is not presented to the standard required by the school's policy and it is not addressed fully to strengthen progress. The rate at which pupils are developing their knowledge, skills and understanding is good, as teachers plan very effective work for the pupils.
- Teachers adhere to the school's policy for marking and feedback, which is supporting good learning. Pupils are keen to respond to the good advice they are given and this contributes well to their good progress. Occasionally, teachers do not ensure that pupils are allocated time to respond and strengthen their work well enough to make good progress.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills across a range of subjects. However, in key stage 3, pupils have too few opportunities to write at length across a range of subjects to strengthen their skills further. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical skills in form time and in other subjects such as science.
- Pupils' work in class is checked swiftly and additional support or challenge is given to ensure good progress. Teaching assistants support learning very skilfully by asking incisive questions and using their good knowledge to get pupils to think carefully about how to resolve any problems they might have.
- An analysis of pupils' work showed that strong teaching in English, mathematics and science is helping pupils make strong progress. However, it also showed some inconsistent teaching in geography, history and, in key stage 3, French. Leaders are working to strengthen these areas across the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- There are too many pupils absent and regularly absent from the school, particularly disadvantaged pupils. Attendance is well below average and persistent absenteeism is too high. Further work has to be done to ensure that pupils attend well and value the education that is on offer at the school.
- Pupils are keen to earn the 'pledges' the school gives to pupils for being involved in enrichment activities, community activity, charity work and work that contributes to the community. This is a good scheme that engages pupils well in their personal development.

- Pupils said they are safe and enjoy being at the school. They are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe as there are good links with the local police and other agencies who speak to pupils about the risks they might face. Pupils are very knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- The school provides very effective careers guidance and advice right from the start of Year 7 through to Year 11. Pupils have opportunities to work with industrialists in apprenticeships and work experience when appropriate. There are good links with local universities to promote continuing in education at the highest level. There are exceptionally few pupils who do not continue in education or employment with training.
- An exceptionally small number of pupils attend off-site provision for one day each week to provide them with opportunities in 'the world of work'. Providers indicate that pupils behave well and are keen to learn.
- There are very few incidents of bullying, racism or homophobia and it was clear that pupils were tolerant and respected diversity. Pupils are clear that bullying is not tolerated and staff take swift action should it occur.
- There are good systems in place for pupils who have concerns or issues they might wish to discuss. There is a culture within the school of ensuring that pupils are safe. Pupils are clear that they are well cared for both pastorally and academically. Good systems support the most vulnerable pupils with effective links to external agencies.
- Almost all of the parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend this school to other parents. Although a few mentioned aspects about strengthening communication, others are highly positive about the education their children are receiving and their safety.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- This is an inclusive school that genuinely wants the best outcomes for its pupils. It has clear, high expectations of behaviour. Some pupils have not responded well enough to the school's expectations and sanctions. This has resulted in high rates of exclusions that are not reducing quickly. Consequently, behaviour requires improvement.
- Around the school, inspectors noted that those pupils in the school behaved well throughout the day. Pupils enjoyed working together in class to share ideas with others and were keen to learn. Very occasionally, a few pupils lose concentration when the pace is not strong.
- Pupils told inspectors that behaviour is generally good although a number of pupils can interrupt their learning. However, they say teachers manage this well. Pupils are smart in their uniform.
- The school environment is well cared for and the wide range of high-quality art work around the school is well looked after.
- Pupils told inspectors they are proud of their school. They said that their teachers are always available to give them the support they need with their work or any problems they have.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders' determined efforts have ensured that good teaching across the school is leading to good outcomes for pupils.
- In 2015, from starting points that were generally below average, pupils made above average progress and achieved especially well in English, science and art.
- Outcomes are improving for pupils because leaders target areas for improvement systematically and take appropriate actions. For example, for those leaving the school at the end of Year 11 in 2015, leaders noticed that the proportion of the most able pupils attaining the very highest grades was below average, even though they made better than average progress. Leaders ensured that teachers raised their expectations and set more challenging work for pupils, especially the most able. Outcomes in 2016 show that many more pupils attained the very highest grades across a wide range of subjects, from similar starting points to those leaving in 2015.
- Current information for those leaving Year 11 in 2016, although not finalised yet, shows that overall progress for pupils is above average. School information shows the proportion of pupils attaining GCSE grades A* to C improved in a wide range of subjects in 2016.
- The school selects pupils for early entry to GCSE examinations at the end of Year 10. Pupils achieve well in most subjects. School leaders are reviewing early entry in the few subjects in which pupils do not achieve well.
- An analysis of current pupils' work showed that strong progress is being made by pupils across the school in English, science and mathematics as well as in a range of other subjects. Displays of pupils' art work showed that pupils are making strong progress and standards are high.
- Inspectors noted that pupils' work in history, geography, religious studies and French in key stage 3 was not of the same high quality as in many other subjects. Leaders have set about strengthening work in history and geography, and there are promising signs of improvement especially in geography, even at this early stage.
- The progress made by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong and their overall progress is good. Good leadership clearly identifies the needs of these pupils and takes appropriate action to ensure that they are well supported. Teaching assistants offer strong support and teachers clearly adapt their practice to support these pupils well.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are making good progress overall. Inspectors found that differences in attainment between these pupils and other pupils nationally are diminishing across the school because of the very effective additional support teachers and teaching assistants give to these pupils. During the past year, there has been particularly strong improvement in the progress these pupils are making in mathematics. An analysis of pupils' work across a range of subjects shows that absence inhibits disadvantaged pupils from making even better progress.

- Pupils eligible for the Year 7 catch-up funding progress quickly with their skills in English and mathematics. They are given highly effective support as their needs are identified very clearly. Meticulous records of pupils' progress identify 'next steps' for improvement. Staff use these 'next steps' very well to ensure strong progress for these pupils.
- There are too few pupils attending alternative provision for meaningful comparisons to be made between their outcomes and those of others in the school.
- Reading is promoted very well throughout the school with opportunities to read in form time and across a range of subjects. Pupils benefit well from computer reading programs that allow them to check how much they understand about what they are reading. The number of pupils borrowing books from the school's well-stocked library has increased strongly. It is clear that pupils enjoy reading for pleasure.

School details

Unique reference number	140415
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10019701

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	942
Appropriate authority	Outwood Grange Academies Trust Board
Chair	Andrew Kent
Principal	Richard Brooke
Chief executive of the trust	Martyn Oliver
Telephone number	01142 358 120
Website	www.city.outwood.com
Email address	enquiries@city.outwood.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The academy was renamed Outwood Academy City on 1 January 2014 when it was sponsored by the Outwood Grange Academies Trust. When its predecessor school, The City School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to require special measures. The principal took up his post on 23 June 2014.
- The academy is an average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is above average.
- Most pupils are White British. There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.

- The proportion of pupils who have support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- Four alternative providers are used by the school for an exceptionally small number of pupils. They are Heeley City farm, Recycle, NACRO catering and GTA mechanics.
- The chief executive of the Outwood Grange Academies Trust, the regional chief executive of the trust and the executive principal are national leaders of education who provide support for the school.
- The school holds a quality award in careers education, information, advice and guidance.
- The school appointed an executive principal on 1 September 2016 to strengthen leadership. It has also appointed several new middle leaders and staff very recently.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning in parts of lessons, with four sessions jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Throughout the two days of the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils about learning and safety, both individually and in groups. Inspectors also spoke to providers of alternative provision.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading. They reviewed pupils' work in lessons and analysed samples of work in pupils' books.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of the local academy council and another governor.
- Inspectors also held meetings with senior leaders, other staff and members of the academy trust.
- Inspectors looked at the school's review of its own performance, its development and improvement plan, a number of key school policies and the minutes of the governing body meetings. They considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors analysed 57 responses to Parent View.

Inspection team

Jim McGrath, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Horn	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Lanovy-Taylor	Ofsted Inspector
David Pridding	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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