

Inspection of Oastlers School

Flockton Road, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD4 7RH

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 January 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Oastlers School is a place where pupils thrive. Leaders aim for pupils to be 'safe, secure and successful'. Leaders have the highest expectations for pupils. They have developed a curriculum that provides all pupils with a stimulating range of learning opportunities. These enable pupils to progress exceptionally well.

Pupils experience high-quality provision that is well resourced. They are supported by well-trained and supportive staff. Staff understand pupils' personal and social needs well. All pupils benefit from an educational offer that is carefully designed to meet their individual special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Across sites, relationships between staff and pupils are very secure. Pupils value highly the support that they receive. Staff greet pupils positively at the start of the school day. They eat breakfast together and talk through any concerns that they may have. This ensures pupils are calm and ready to learn. Pupils are welcoming to visitors. They are polite. Pupils say that both school sites are 'amazing places' and inspectors agree.

Pupils feel very safe in school. They treat each other with respect. School sites are calm and orderly. Pupils say that bullying does not happen in school. They know staff would deal with it effectively if it were to occur.

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

Teachers share leaders' determination for pupils to do well. From low starting points and facing significant challenges, pupils make substantial progress through the curriculum. The curriculum is strong. Teachers are knowledgeable. They have a secure understanding of their subjects and the pupils they teach. Relationships between staff and pupils are built upon respect. This ensures that pupils engage with learning well. Pupils' work is of a high standard. Teachers identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding quickly. Pupils are given well-targeted and highly effective support. Reading is taught consistently well. Pupils use their phonic knowledge securely to help them to read. Most pupils learn to read fluently.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are exceptional. They learn to behave well and develop high levels of respect for others. This includes people that are different to them. All pupils show high levels of self-control. They consistently have positive attitudes to their education. Incidents of crisis behaviour are rare. If pupils need help to calm down, staff intervene swiftly and supportively. Most pupils' attendance improves when they join the school. Many pupils have previously experienced high levels of absence. Some have not attended school for long periods of time. Leaders promote regular attendance well. They have invested in staff and developed systems to ensure that pupils attend regularly. This has a very positive impact on pupils' learning and progress.

Leaders have developed a high-quality sixth-form curriculum. It is designed to meet the needs of students who need more time to achieve qualifications. The curriculum is very well thought out. Each student is prepared for their next steps securely. English and mathematics lessons feature prominently. The curriculum leads to further qualifications, sometimes to level 3. Students are skilfully supported. They are developed as individuals through a rich and varied wider curriculum. This includes work experience. Students are keen to engage with learning and their behaviour is exemplary. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally well supported. Students support younger pupils and lead prayers in assembly, for example. This has a positive impact on their personal development.

Personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils rapidly develop their ability to be independent. Their ability to be independent is supported by a strong personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. Leaders have planned a strong careers programme. Pupils meet industry professionals and local businesses to learn about work. Pupils show mature attitudes to personal development. This includes sensitive matters around relationships and sex education. Pupils have a secure understanding of different faiths and cultures. They visit places of worship and speak to people who follow different religions. Teaching British values is thoughtfully addressed in regular assemblies and during class discussions. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. Provision is very well resourced. Pupils can access therapy dogs and a counsellor in the 'sanctuary' provision at each school site.

Leaders leave no stone unturned to ensure pupils achieve well. Their ambition for pupils is shared with a strong governing body. Governors know the school very well. They have a deep understanding of all aspects of the school's work. They are relentless in exploring ways to improve the quality of education experienced by pupils. Staff speak highly of leaders' efforts to support their workload. Leaders ensure that staff have regular time for assessment and administrative tasks. Staff value the development that they receive to continually improve their practice.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure safeguarding is prioritised. They have developed highly effective safeguarding systems. These ensure that pupils get the help that they need promptly. Record-keeping is detailed. Concerns over pupils' welfare are followed up thoroughly. There is a strong culture of vigilance and staff are highly attentive to safeguarding issues. Staff receive extensive safeguarding training and updates during weekly staff meetings. Relevant safeguarding information is shared in daily briefings. Staff are aware of the risks that pupils may face in the community.

Pupils feel safe in school. They learn about risks to their safety, including when using technology. Pupils know staff will support them effectively if needed.

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	138099
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10241289
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	133
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	10
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sue Mawson
Headteacher	Lyndsey Brown
Website	www.oastlers.com
Date of previous inspection	3 and 4 December 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Oastlers School is a special school for pupils aged between 11 and 19 years. It is based across two sites.
- The school makes provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school uses one registered alternative education provision.
- The school measures itself against the Gatsby benchmarks to ensure pupils receive high-quality careers advice.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils receive information about the full range of education and training options available to them, including information 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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and a member of the school's governing body. They scrutinised the minutes of governing body meetings. In addition, an inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority by telephone.
- In advance of the inspection, inspectors and school leaders agreed to change the pre-chosen deep dives selected in the previous inspection report.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, design and technology, physical education and PSHE. 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. The provision for teaching reading was also scrutinised.
- The lead inspector met with the school's designated safeguarding lead. The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding records, relevant policies and other safeguarding documentation. The inspector reviewed the processes leaders use to identify and help pupils who need support. In addition, the inspector scrutinised the school's records of checks carried out on adults who work at the school.
- Inspectors visited lessons across the school sites, including activities at the start and end of day. An inspector also observed activities at breaktimes.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally, including pupils who receive support to improve their behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- An inspector spoke to the parents of two pupils attending the school by telephone.
- The inspection team spoke to staff about their workload and pupils' behaviour in the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils, staff and parents. This included any free-text responses.

Inspection team

David Mills, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Marian Thomas

Ofsted Inspector

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