School report

Inspection of Oak Wood School

Sutton Court Road, Hillingdon, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB10 9HT

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Sixth-form provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Oak Wood School are polite, friendly and confident. They are part of a diverse community and get along well with each other. The school's ethos is for pupils to dream, learn and grow. Staff here inspire pupils and develop their knowledge, understanding and character.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. Pupils respond well to this. They work hard in lessons and are keen to learn. Teachers help them to improve their work and pupils show a determination to succeed. Pupils know their teachers want the best for them.

Pupils behave well. They show respect and kindness to others. Bullying is rare and when it does happen, leaders deal with it effectively. In lessons, pupils listen to their teachers and focus on their work. This is a calm and orderly school. Pupils are both safe and happy.

Leaders want to broaden pupils' experiences. They have introduced a 'promises' programme for pupils. Every pupil has the opportunity to go to the theatre, museums and art galleries and attend live sporting events. Pupils have access to a wide range of clubs and activities in school. Oak Wood is a school where pupils can develop their talents and interests.

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

Leaders and governors share a vision of providing pupils with a high-quality education. They promote a culture of mutual respect and kindness. Staff and pupils say leaders have transformed the school. Leaders give high priority to teachers' professional development. They ensure that teachers develop their expertise as subject specialists. Leaders are mindful of staff's workload and well-being. Staff feel valued and well supported

The curriculum is ambitious. This includes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It is well designed so that pupils learn the most essential knowledge in a logical order. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to revisit what they have learned before. Pupils study a wide range of subjects in Years 7 to 9. This prepares them well for their studies in Years 10 and 11. Leaders have made recent changes to staffing and GCSE options guidance. This means that a large proportion of pupils will now be entered for the English Baccalaureate. Leaders are developing a broad and balanced sixth-form curriculum that builds on pupils' learning at GCSE. The number of applications for sixth-form places is increasing year on year.

Teachers use their subject knowledge well to explain new information and ideas. They start lessons with activities that help pupils remember what they have learned before. A few pupils are slow to engage with these activities, and some teachers move on to the next stage of learning too quickly. This means some pupils do not recall the knowledge that teachers intend them to. Teachers provide pupils with clear advice on

how to improve their work. Pupils respond to this well and many pupils produce work of high quality. In the sixth form, students develop a deep knowledge and understanding. For example, chemistry students have detailed knowledge of buffer solutions. They are able to apply the relevant equation to measure pH change.

Leaders expect pupils with SEND to achieve well. They identify the needs of these pupils accurately and provide teachers with training and guidance to meet these pupils' needs. Pupils with autism spectrum disorder receive additional, specialist support. This helps them to achieve well. Pupils at an early stage of reading receive help to develop their reading skills. Leaders have established a reading programme for these pupils, taught by trained staff. Pupils develop accuracy and fluency in their reading. All pupils have regular opportunities to read in school, for example in library lessons for Years 7 and 8.

Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. Low-level disruption is quite rare. When it does occur, teachers deal with it effectively. Pupils know they can talk to a member of staff if they experience inappropriate behaviour towards them. But some pupils say that they do not always choose to do so. Leaders give high priority to pupils' attendance. They work hard to improve the attendance of those pupils who are often absent. While levels of persistent absence remain high, some individual pupils' attendance has improved.

Leaders provide well for pupils' wider personal development. Pupils learn about a variety of issues. These include human rights, diversity, healthy relationships and mental health. There are a wide range of activities to enrich pupils' education. These include visits to places of cultural significance. Pupils receive appropriate careers advice and guidance from Year 7 to the sixth form. Teachers prepare pupils well for the next stage of education, training or employment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. The safeguarding team meets every week to review practices and check on pupils at risk. Staff receive regular training and updates. They report any concerns swiftly and appropriately. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, including online. Parents and carers receive information about local safeguarding risks. Leaders work well with the local authority to secure the help pupils need. They engage with other external agencies to provide counselling support for pupils. Leaders show rigour and determination in their work to ensure that pupils are safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not check effectively that pupils have recalled knowledge they have learned before. This means that some pupils fail to link new learning to

what they already know or fail to embed content that was taught in previous terms. Leaders should ensure that teachers think carefully about how best they can consolidate pupils' prior learning.

- Levels of persistent absence remain high. This means that the continuity of some pupils' learning is adversely affected. Leaders should refine their approach to addressing persistent absence to ensure that they intervene as soon as possible.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can complain to Ofsted.

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	102449
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	10212343
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,104
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	83
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Joanna Nicola Wagstaffe
Headteacher	Daniel Cowling
Website	www.oakwoodschool.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 July 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher has been in post since April 2020. There has been a significant change in staffing since then.
- A new governing body was created on 1 January 2021, replacing an interim executive board. The chair of the governing body was previously the vice-chair of the interim executive board.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. There are 12 pupils who have autism spectrum disorder accessing this provision.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider, The Skills Hub, and one unregistered alternative provider, Springboard West.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors discussed any continued 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 leadership team, other school leaders and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, physical education, geography and art. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke with subject leaders for mathematics and computing and visited lessons, including sixth-form lessons, in a range of other subjects.
- Inspectors met with the school's designated safeguarding lead and safeguarding officer. They looked at safeguarding documentation and record-keeping, including the single central record. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke to additional groups of pupils in relation to behaviour and attitudes, attendance and personal development.
- Inspectors considered 16 responses to the pupil survey, 53 responses to the staff survey and 62 responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

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