

# Inspection of Oakfield Academy

Oakfield Road, Frome, Somerset, BA11 4JF

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Inspection dates:

28 and 29 September 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Oakfield Academy is a friendly and welcoming school. Pupils say the school is 'like a family'. Pupils and staff are proud to be members of the school community.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel safe and well looked after. Pupils say that if bullying occurs staff take it seriously and deal with it well.

Leaders make sure that pupils have a broad curriculum. Pupils say that they enjoy learning. However, in some subjects pupils do not learn important content. Work is not always matched to what they know or what they can do. This means pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils are polite and most pupils behave well around the school. However, sometimes pupils' learning is disrupted. When this happens, staff do not always deal with it effectively.

Pupils say the school's values are important to them. They are enthusiastic about working towards rewards and wear their 'infinity badges' with pride. Pupils enjoy learning about different cultures and beliefs. They understand and accept differences. Pupils are keen to be active members of the school community, as sports leaders, members of the school council or prefects.

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

The headteacher, with support from trustees and the senior team, has created a nurturing environment where pupils and staff enjoy coming to school.

Leaders have developed a curriculum that reflects the school's values. Some subject leaders have a secure understanding of the curriculum. They have begun to put well-sequenced curriculum plans in place that help pupils to learn well. However, this is not the case in several subject areas where leaders do not have a sound understanding of what makes a strong curriculum. This means they have not considered what pupils need to know or the best order to learn important content. As a result, pupils have a less secure foundation to take the next steps in their learning.

Leaders have built regular assessment into the curriculum to check how well pupils are learning. However, teachers are not routinely using assessment to check if curriculum content is well matched to pupils' knowledge or if activities are appropriate to what pupils can do. This means that some pupils feel overloaded with information and struggle to begin their work. Other pupils find the work easy and complete it quickly. This does not help pupils to tackle more-complex work and achieve as well as they could.

Pupils want to get on with their learning and many pupils conduct themselves well. However, there are pockets of low-level disruption. Sometimes pupils do not follow instructions and they distract others. This usually occurs when the curriculum is not planned carefully enough to meet pupils' needs.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and her team have created a supportive pastoral environment for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils say they have a trusted adult and a safe space to go to when needed. However, in some lessons pupils are not able to start or complete work because the curriculum has not been adapted well to meet their needs.

Leaders have strong links with secondary schools and local universities. This, alongside careers advice, provides pupils with useful guidance around next steps and future opportunities. Leaders have adapted the school's personal development curriculum to respond to current issues and to support pupils' well-being, following the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils can recall their learning about equalities, healthy relationships, well-being and online risks.

Trustees share the headteacher's vision and they know the school well. They provide support and challenge, which has recently helped leaders to reflect on areas that need further improvement. Leaders provide structured support for early career teachers that helps them to develop their teaching. Staff, including early career teachers, appreciate the time provided for professional development.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils know how to stay safe, including online. They say there is always someone to talk to if they have any concerns. Staff receive regular training and safeguarding updates. They know pupils well and take timely and appropriate action when required.

Leaders secure the right support for vulnerable pupils and make good use of external agencies. Trustees have strong knowledge of safeguarding and use this well to support and challenge leaders.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Pupils with SEND do not do as well as they could. This is because the curriculum does not always meet their needs. Leaders need to ensure that staff are trained to better identify and support pupils with SEND. In addition, subject leaders need to ensure the curriculum is well-sequenced, so that pupils with SEND are able to confidently complete work.

- Low-level disruption to learning occurs. At times, staff do not deal with this well. Leaders need to ensure staff understand the causes of poor behaviour. Staff require support to apply the behaviour policy consistently and effectively.
- Subject leaders have variable knowledge and understanding of what makes a strong curriculum in their subject area. This means the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn is not always clear or well-sequenced. Pupils are not able to deepen their knowledge. Leaders need to develop curriculum expertise in the school so that pupils achieve as well as they could.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136970
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199661
<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9 to 13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	663
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Kate Hellard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Emma Wilkes
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.oakfieldacademy.co.uk">www.oakfieldacademy.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2–3 March 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Oakfield Academy is a larger-than-average-size middle school.
- The proportion of pupils at the school who are disadvantaged is below the national average. The proportion of pupils at the school who have SEND is above the national average.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this 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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, and trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, history, mathematics and music. 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 met with the designated safeguarding lead, examined school records and discussed safeguarding cases.
- Inspectors met with the SENCo and assistant SENCo. They also spoke to pupils with SEND.

### **Inspection team**

Tracey Reynolds, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracy Harris	Ofsted Inspector
Teresa Hill	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Favager-Dalton	Her Majesty's Inspector

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