

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Oswaldtwistle School

Union Road, Oswaldtwistle, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 3DA

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 November 2024

Outcome

Oswaldtwistle School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit from the attention and nurture the school provides. Often, pupils' lives are transformed when they join this school, with adults doing their best to put pupils back on track with their education. Staff get to know pupils very well. Pupils appreciate the way that the school encourages them to be themselves. They feel listened to. In many ways, the school is very successful.

Pupils settle into school well. The school's expectations for behaviour are high. Pupils receive support to enable them to understand the school's rules and routines. They respond well to them. Typically, the school is a calm environment. Pupils move around the school building sensibly. When pupils need further support or guidance, they receive it from well-trained staff.

The school is resolute in increasing pupils' ambitions for themselves. The comprehensive careers programme supports pupils to understand what their next step is beyond the school. A wealth of speakers and careers visits broaden pupils' knowledge of the options available to them. A carefully chosen range of activities, trips and visitors provide pupils with opportunities to build confidence, to find new coping strategies and to learn about risk. This includes pupils going on an overnight residential trip.

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

The school has set an ambitious curriculum for pupils. Many pupils join the school having missed significant periods of education and lacking the incentive to learn. The school's curriculum is designed to re-engage pupils with learning and to ensure that pupils fill in any gaps in their knowledge. This is to help pupils, where they can, to return to their

mainstream school. Staff assess pupils' needs systematically. They use the information that they collect to create the correct curriculum pathway for pupils. The school sets relevant targets for pupils. Where relevant, these relate directly to pupils' education, health and care plans.

The curriculum sets out clearly the knowledge that pupils need to learn. There is a focus on developing pupils' knowledge in English, mathematics and science. However, this is enriched by a broader range of subjects and vocational courses where appropriate. The curriculum is delivered consistently, often by subject experts. Staff use their subject expertise, alongside their knowledge of pupils, to design activities to support the implementation of the intended curriculum. In many ways, pupils' achievement is high.

However, in writing and some other curriculum areas, pupils do not have opportunities to review and edit their work. From time to time, this means that pupils do not spot some of the errors that they have made. This means that some pupils continue to repeat common mistakes.

The school supports pupils to overcome a poor perception of reading. Pupils enjoy the texts that they study. Where needed, pupils receive interventions from well-trained staff. With this support, pupils typically become more confident, fluent readers.

The school has clear systems to identify pupils with SEND. Staff receive training to help them identify any extra needs that pupils may have. Staff are skilled at meeting these needs in the classroom. This helps pupils to access the curriculum on offer. On occasion, staff do not use the agreed strategies to support pupils' needs to the greatest effect. Where this happens, some pupils find it more difficult to understand what they should be learning.

There is a strong programme to enrich pupils' wider development. Pupils learn about different risks in their local area and beyond. This includes risks such as drugs misuse. They receive appropriate relationships, sex and health education and discuss issues relating to a wide variety of topics. Pupils learn about different ways to support their mental health and well-being. Recently, pupils have been given pupil leadership responsibilities. This helps them to support the school. For example, they act as positive role models to newer pupils about how they should behave or whom they should go to for support.

The members of the management committee watch closely what goes on in school. They have the correct systems in place to gain an understanding of what the school does well and where further improvements are needed. The school provides high-quality training opportunities to improve staff's knowledge of curriculum and behaviour. This helps staff to support pupils with their behaviour. Staff are also appreciative of the school's support for their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- From time to time, pupils are not given opportunities to review their work. This includes their writing in English. This means that they do not have opportunities to spot some of the errors that they have made, which affects the quality of their written work. The school should ensure that pupils have time to review their work to allow them to address any recurring errors.
- At times, staff do not use the most effective strategies in the classroom to support some pupils, including pupils with SEND. This makes it more difficult for pupils to learn the required content. The school should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to select the most effective strategies to support pupils with their learning.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in January 2019.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	134127
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10321405
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Shaw
Headteacher	Sandra McKenna
Website	www.oswaldtwistle.org
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- A new chair of the governing body has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The number of pupils on roll has increased significantly since September 2024.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors visited lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They also listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They met with school leaders to discuss pupils' rates of attendance.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body, and spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes and as pupils moved around the school building. They scrutinised leaders' records of pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at the school.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils. Inspectors met with groups of staff to discuss their views on their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Stuart Perkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paul Edmondson

Ofsted Inspector

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