

Inspection of Ossett Academy and Sixth Form College

Storrs Hill Road, Ossett, West Yorkshire WF5 0DG

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 November 2022

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils learn well at Ossett Academy and Sixth Form College. They attend regularly. They feel safe at school. They are taught by knowledgeable teachers.

Pupils remember much of what they have been taught. They achieve well in most subjects in formal examinations at the end of key stages 4 and 5. When they leave school, they move on to appropriate destinations. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged.

Leaders have high expectations. The behaviour of most pupils in lessons is positive. Bullying is infrequent, and incidents of derogatory language are rare. Leaders use sanctions, including detentions, in response to minor incidents. However, the number of detentions set for these incidents is high. This is causing frustration for pupils and their families. Leaders are fully aware of these frustrations and have plans to address this issue.

Pupils have access to lots of after-school clubs, and other opportunities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Leaders share information about pupils' successes at school with the community. Some parents and carers face unnecessary delays in getting answers to the questions they raise when they contact the school.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious. In key stage 3, pupils study all subjects in the national curriculum. In key stage 4, almost all pupils have an opportunity to study the selection of challenging subjects that collectively make up the English Baccalaureate. The curriculum on offer in the sixth form is well designed to meet the needs of students. The breadth of the curriculum benefits all pupils, including those with SEND.

Subject leaders have appropriate teaching plans in place. These set out the skills and knowledge that pupils should learn across all year groups. Teachers use these plans to help prepare for their lessons. Lessons are well taught, and teachers use assessment well to understand what pupils can and cannot remember. They use this information to ensure that any gaps in knowledge are addressed.

Behaviour in lessons is usually calm. When incidents of poor behaviour occur, they are quickly dealt with to allow learning to continue. Staff and pupils told inspectors that the respectful atmosphere in and out of lessons during the inspection was typical of day-to-day life at the school. This environment, coupled with a well-delivered curriculum, helps pupils to achieve well.

Where pupils do not meet leaders' expectations for behaviour, they receive sanctions, including detentions. The use of detentions, over time, has not decreased. Leaders' plans to reduce the number of detentions has been impacted, in part, by the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Revisiting this plan is

important. Many pupils and parents are frustrated by the frequency with which detentions are used to address minor incidents. Some feel that these detentions are no longer effective in helping pupils to make better choices about their behaviour. Leaders have started to explore this with pupils through focus group discussions. Leaders know that they need to do more to gather the views of all pupils.

Pupils who require additional support to read confidently get appropriate help. Although this support has only recently been introduced, it is already starting to benefit pupils.

Leaders have introduced an internal referral process for staff to use when they identify pupils who may have SEND. Using this information, leaders create individual support plans for pupils. These outline helpful strategies to be used in lessons. Over recent years, there have been several changes in the leadership of SEND. Recently, there has also been a notable increase in the number of pupils at the school with education, health and care (EHC) plans. Leaders are currently finding it difficult to recruit support staff to the SEND department. This combination of factors has led to delays for some pupils being supported in lessons. Although leaders have sought to mitigate these delays, some parents are understandably frustrated by them.

Pupils discuss and debate important topics from the world in their daily form time. This is one part of a wider personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Pupils in all year groups receive appropriate careers information and guidance.

The school's sixth form is well run. The range of subjects offered is broad and diverse. Students are well taught and enjoy their time in the sixth form. They have access to their own facilities in a dedicated building. They work hard in lessons and achieve well in their examinations. As students prepare to leave school at the end of Year 13, they are supported to move on to a range of high-quality destinations.

There is mutual respect between staff and the principal. Trustees and governors bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to support and challenge the school. Teachers are proud to work at the school. They have many opportunities to access high-quality training. Subject leaders help staff to manage their workload.

Leaders regularly communicate with parents, such as through weekly newsletters. They also send out regular text messages to praise pupils for doing well. However, when parents communicate with school, they sometimes face delays in getting responses to the matters they raise. This is most notably the case for parents of pupils with SEND.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe at school. They know about the risks they face in life. They are taught how to protect themselves from these. For example, when a small number of

misogynistic comments were brought to the attention of leaders, steps were taken to adapt the school's PSHE education curriculum to address this issue.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have redesigned the entrance and exit of the school site. They have also staggered the start and end times of the school day. This has improved the safety of pupils at these times.

When safeguarding incidents occur, leaders take appropriate action to protect pupils, engaging with local agencies when necessary. Leaders also make appropriate checks on new members of staff who are appointed to work at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- While overall standards of behaviour are positive, the behaviour policy that leaders have implemented is overly reliant on the use of sanctions such as detentions. This has led to some frustration among stakeholders, including pupils who routinely behave well. Leaders should enact their plans to review the use of detentions, while ensuring that all pupils have opportunities to share their individual reflections on life at school, including the behaviour system.
- Leaders do not do enough to gather the views of parents. In addition, some parents face delays in getting answers to queries when they contact the school. These matters have led to exasperation for some parents, especially parents of pupils with SEND. Leaders should provide regular opportunities to understand the views of parents, and ensure that they are prompt in acting on any queries they receive.
- Although the needs of pupils with SEND are identified effectively, there have recently been delays in ensuring that pupils get the help they need. This is impacting on the classroom experiences for some pupils with SEND. Leaders must ensure that strategies to meet the identified needs of pupils with SEND are routinely implemented in all lessons.

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	136462
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10248490
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,747
Of which in the sixth form	236
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Leam
Principal	Samantha Broome
Website	https://ossett.accordmat.org
Date of previous inspection	30 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Accord Multi Academy Trust (Accord MAT).
- The school uses four alternative providers of education. All of these are registered providers and subject to inspection by Ofsted. In addition, a small number of pupils are educated at California Drive, a provision based at, and managed by, another school in Accord MAT. This school is also subject to Ofsted inspection.
- Through its careers programme, 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 graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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.
- The inspectors met with the principal and several other senior leaders. Inspectors met with leaders from the trust, including the chief executive officer. Two representatives from the board of trustees, including the chairperson, and four member of the local governing body, were also spoken with.
- To evaluate the quality of education, deep dives were carried out in English, mathematics, art and design, history and physical education. These involved meeting subject leaders, reviewing curriculum plans, visiting lessons, speaking to teachers, talking to pupils about their learning and looking at samples of their work.
- The school's PSHE education curriculum was also reviewed. Inspectors considered the school's provision to support pupils to read.
- An inspector met with leaders of SEND on several occasions. The inspector reviewed SEND paperwork, including several EHC plans. An inspector also visited additional lessons to review the classroom provision for pupils with SEND. Many pupils with SEND were spoken to.
- As part of the evaluation of the effectiveness of safeguarding, the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and other records were reviewed. The checks made when appointing new staff were scrutinised.
- The views of parents, staff and pupils who responded to Ofsted's surveys were also fully considered.

Inspection team

James Duncan, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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John Linkins	His Majesty's Inspector
Katie Spurr	His Majesty's Inspector

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