

Inspection of Ocker Hill Academy

Gospel Oak Road, Tipton, West Midlands DY4 0DS

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 April 2024

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Joseph Farmer. This school is part of the Ocker Hill trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. Adam Holyhead is the chair of the board of trustees.

What is it like to attend this school?

All members of the Ocker Hill community are proud of their school. Happy and enthusiastic pupils thrive because of the exceptional care they receive. Dedicated and kind leaders set high expectations for pupils and staff and they all work together to make this school a special place to be.

Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. Classrooms are calm places where everyone understands the established routines. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and most understand that doing well at school can only be realised through their own hard work and commitment. Many pupils do well because of this work ethic.

Everybody matters at Ocker Hill. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make significant progress and are an important part of what makes this school a special place. Pupils are inclusive and see differences as something to be celebrated.

The wider development of pupils is exceptional and leaders see the purpose of providing wider opportunities as a way to develop pupils' talents and interests. This is achieved in a variety of ways. Extra-curricular clubs such as musical theatre and a residential visit to a performing arts centre are events that the children look forward to and enjoy.

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

The wider curriculum is developing, with subject leaders taking increasing ownership for new approaches and the monitoring of their subjects. The school uses assessment extremely well to ensure that new learning builds skilfully on what pupils already know. Staff support pupils well to remember the important subject-specific knowledge that they need for future learning. As a result, most pupils achieve well across the curriculum. However, further work is needed to develop the mathematics curriculum. Pupils learn the basic number facts well and are confident when rehearsing written calculation methods. However, a lack of opportunities to develop verbal and written reasoning, prevents pupils deepening their understanding of mathematical concepts.

Pupils with SEND receive high-quality support at every stage of their development. The school works exceptionally well with outside agencies to ensure that barriers to learning are both identified and supported. Those pupils with the most complex needs, make impressive progress from their starting points. Many return to mainstream classrooms and develop the necessary independent learning skills to be successful at the next stage of their education.

Many pupils demonstrate a wider enjoyment of reading and have an increasing number of books from which to choose. Most pupils read at home regularly. Visits from authors and 'recommended reads' shared with them in school assemblies, positively influence pupils' reading choices. Work is underway to review the school's

approach to the teaching of phonics. However, the most vulnerable readers do not currently receive the precise support they require to read accurately and fluently.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. Disruption to learning is rare, and clearly defined behaviour systems are understood by staff and pupils. There is a focus on recognising pupils for their positive behaviour, which also includes rewarding them for attending school regularly. Many do, and the school employ external services to support the most vulnerable pupils attend school more frequently.

The wider development of pupils is why so many are motivated to learn and want to do well. Pupils know that the wide range of clubs that they are offered are there to support them to develop a love of learning, and many do. Visits to different places of worship enable pupils to develop tolerance and mutual respect. There is an exceptional commitment to ensuring that pupils at this school are prepared for life in modern Britain and are inclusive, kind and caring people.

Pupil voice matters. Being a representative of the school council means that pupils get the opportunity to make key decisions about their school. They raise money for carefully selected charities, sing at a local nursing home and donate food to those who need their help. Being kind is important at Ocker Hill.

Leaders seek to make sure that those who work at this school understand the 'Ocker Hill' way. They know that productive learning environments require all staff to understand the principles of effective teaching and learning. They develop this further through ongoing training and support. Staff are proud to work at this school and know that leaders do all they can to support them to manage the demands of their work. Trustees share leaders' high ambition. There is a focus on driving school improvement and they use advisors to provide an external view of school performance. Trustees seek to see for themselves the impact of the curriculum and set targets to further develop the quality of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The delivery and impact of the teaching of phonics to the weakest readers is not sufficiently well embedded. As a result, some of the most vulnerable readers continue to have gaps in their phonic knowledge and this affects their ability to read fluently. The school should ensure that the phonics programme is delivered effectively by all staff, especially to support pupils who are struggling to learn to read.

- Not all pupils are consistently provided the opportunity to deepen their understanding in mathematics. This means that some pupils are not routinely applying the facts and calculation methods they learn to problem-solving and this has an impact on their understanding. The school should ensure that there are regular opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning skills in mathematics.

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	140140
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10322859
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	251
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Adam Hollyhead
Headteacher	Joseph Farmer
Website	http://www.ockerhillacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this school

- This school is a stand-alone academy.
- This school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 met with a range of leaders, including those responsible for the curriculum, teaching and learning, behaviour, attendance, personal development and safeguarding.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, French and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector also heard a selection of pupils read from Year 3.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- The lead inspector spoke with the chair of the school's board of trustees and another board member.
- The lead inspector also spoke to two commissioned school improvement advisors.
- Inspectors considered the survey responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments from parents.
- Inspectors considered the responses to staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Tony Bradshaw, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Vicki Shuter	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Maybank	Ofsted Inspector

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