

Inspection of Oldfield School

Kelston Road, Bath, Somerset BA1 9AB

Inspection dates: 21–22 January 2020

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	Outstanding

The previous 'outstanding' judgement reflected the school's overall effectiveness in September 2012 under the relevant framework at that time.

The new judgement of 'good' reflects the current inspection framework as well as any changes at the school since the last inspection.

The school has not been inspected for seven years, which is longer than the five-year maximum interval between inspections. Changes in school effectiveness may have happened at any point in that period. The long time between inspections is because the law changed in 2011; it made outstanding schools exempt from routine inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Oldfield school has changed considerably since its previous inspection. Not only has the school grown in size, but it now admits both girls and boys. Leaders have managed this transition effectively. In many respects, they have established a new school, based on positive relationships and an ambition to be truly inclusive. Pupils reach standards that compare well with other schools.

The majority of pupils are courteous and respectful as they go about their day. Pupils recognise that behaviour has improved because staff have fair and consistent expectations of them. Pupils say that bullying is rare but if it does occur staff will deal with it swiftly.

Where teachers have high expectations, most pupils concentrate well in lessons. They are keen to discuss what they have learned with each other. However, at times some pupils lose focus and do not complete work to the best of their ability.

Leaders encourage pupils to be involved in the life of their school. The extensive work of the school council and the Year 11 prefect team illustrates this well. Pupils spoke of the many clubs and activities that they are involved in. Parents, too, recognise this as a strength of the school.

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

A larger proportion of pupils than is typical nationally study subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate in key stage 4. The newly appointed subject leader has quickly got to work to promote modern foreign languages and an appreciation of the culture of other countries. Year 7 pupils, for example, are looking forward to their forthcoming trip to Barcelona or Paris.

Subject leaders have good subject knowledge. They use this to think carefully about what pupils need to know. In some subjects, leaders have identified the things that pupils find difficult. In science, for example, pupils' ability to write about their practical investigations at GCSE has been improved by refining the curriculum in key stage 3.

In English, the subject leader has thoughtfully planned how pupils can best build up their subject knowledge. Pupils who fall behind their peers are supported well by a curriculum that better meets their needs. Pupils are encouraged to read a wide range of high-quality texts.

However, in some subjects, leaders have not fully planned the order in which pupils will learn important knowledge and skills. There is also inconsistency in how well teachers check that pupils remember what they have learned in the longer term.

The school welcomes pupils from all abilities and backgrounds. Typically, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the help that they need to support their social and emotional well-being.

The special educational needs coordinator is working with staff so that they meet the academic needs of pupils with SEND. However, the ability of teaching to meet these needs is variable. This is a view shared by a minority of parents who responded to the Parent View survey.

Leaders work proactively to promote regular attendance. Leaders do everything possible, but pupils' absence remains a stubborn issue, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.

While pupils' behaviour is good overall, there are some pupils who find behaving well difficult. Leaders think creatively about how the curriculum can meet pupils' needs and support them with their future plans. Leaders only use exclusion after other strategies have been employed.

Staff and students are proud of the growing sixth form. Teaching supports students to make good progress. Students are ambitious for themselves and feel that this ambition is shared by staff. As part of the enrichment programme, students debate the history of western thought, follow courses, such as media and conversational Spanish, or participate in sporting activities.

In key stages 3 and 4, pupils follow a well-planned programme to support their personal development. Pupils learn how to cook healthily in food technology, consider the dangers of gang culture in drama and discuss the importance of the rule of law in history. However, in key stage 5 the programme is in its early stages. Pupils say that the school is a community which respects and values different faiths and cultures.

Governors have supported leaders to overcome the school's unsettled history. They are well informed about the work of the school. However, they need to have a sharper oversight of the additional funding provided for disadvantaged pupils and for those pupils who need to catch up with their peers in literacy and numeracy.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support they receive from leaders. As one member of staff said, 'This is the kindest, friendliest school I have ever worked in.' This comment was typical of many.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are extremely diligent and record the referrals that are made to them carefully. Staff know the importance of recording even the smallest of incidents so that a detailed profile of pupils who are vulnerable can be built.

Leaders are knowledgeable about the support available from external agencies. They are skilled in ensuring that pupils receive the support that they need. They work with a range of partners, including the police, which means that they are aware of potential risks that pupils might encounter in their everyday lives, for example when using social media.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is variability in how well subject leaders have planned the order in which pupils learn important knowledge and skills. This means that pupils are not always able to make sense of their learning so that they are fully prepared for what will come next. Leaders need to ensure that all subjects sequence the curriculum in a way that will help pupils build their understanding over time.
- Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not check pupils' understanding sufficiently well. Consequently, some pupils have gaps in their skills or knowledge, including pupils with SEND. Leaders need to check how well teachers support pupils to understand and remember what they have learned.
- In the sixth form, the curriculum to develop students' understanding of the full range of important personal, social and moral issues is in its infancy. Therefore, there are gaps in students' awareness. Leaders need to plan the curriculum so that students acquire the important information that they need to prepare them well for their life beyond school.
- Overall absence and persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are above the national average. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils, in particular, do not achieve as well as their peers. Leaders need to continue to develop the curriculum and their use of the systems they have in place to improve the attendance of such pupils.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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	136483
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Inspection number	10133449
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1250
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	189
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stuart Weatherall
Headteacher	Steven Mackay
Website	www.oldfieldschool.com
Date of previous inspection	12 September 2012

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has grown in size. It is now a co-educational 11 to 18 school.
- The sixth form has also increased in number from 38 students completing post-16 study in 2018 to the current figure of 190 students following a range of A-level courses.
- The school uses alternative provision provided by: the hospital school, Bath College, South Gloucestershire College, the local authority alternative provider, 'Rocksteady' training and the Bath Rugby Foundation.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with representatives from the board of trustees. Inspectors also met with senior leaders, pastoral leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and a group of staff.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: English, design technology, geography, mathematics and modern foreign languages. Inspectors discussed the curriculum design with leaders, carried out lesson visits, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers from the lessons visited. A range of other subjects from across the curriculum were also considered.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding, checked the school's single central record and scrutinised policies relating to safeguarding and pupils' behaviour. An inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and reviewed a sample of case files.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Inspectors spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, to discuss their views about their school.
- Inspectors considered 178 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

Inspection team

Sarah McGinnis, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Will Morgan	Ofsted Inspector
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