

Oakwood High School

Address: Moorgate Road, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S60 2UH

Unique reference number (URN): 140459

Inspection report: 27 January 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Generally, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well. They are ready for their next steps. Pupils typically achieve in line with national averages at GCSE. They perform particularly well in English. Disadvantaged pupils progress steadily through the curriculum and make suitable progress. Pupils achieve the qualifications and broader skills they need to move successfully on to their next stages of education, employment or training.

Teaching helps pupils to build their knowledge progressively in subjects across the curriculum. Typically, pupils recall what they have learned previously. For example, in mathematics and science, pupils are increasingly able to use what they know to help them to understand new concepts. Pupils who are still developing the early skills of reading, writing and mathematics have effective support and develop their knowledge steadily.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Pupils feel that they belong here and enjoy coming to school. Leaders place a high priority on regular attendance. Pupils' attendance is high and continues to improve. This includes the attendance of vulnerable pupils. Tracking systems and support for pupils and families are highly effective. As a result, very few pupils do not attend school often.

Behaviour is calm, orderly and respectful. Leaders model a restorative 'care, prepare, repair' approach. Leaders have created a school that is welcoming. There is a focus on building relationships and mutual respect between staff and pupils. This is effective.

In classrooms, staff consistently apply behaviour policies. Pupils focus on the task in hand, but sometimes lack urgency and a deep desire to learn. As a result, sometimes pupils do not learn as well as they should. Leaders are aware of this and are developing whole-school approaches.

Pupils feel safe. Leaders track any incidents of bullying or harmful behaviour rigorously. The majority of pupils and parents feel that any issues are dealt with quickly and effectively. For those pupils who need additional support, time spent in 'Oakwood House' is effective. It helps pupils to stay composed and to focus on learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching across the school. They know where improvements are needed and have a track record of ensuring that any changes made are effective. Teachers use a range of teaching strategies well. They help pupils to recall key knowledge and give clear explanations. Teachers use a variety of strategies to check pupils' knowledge and understanding regularly. In the main, teachers question pupils effectively in class.

The curriculum is ambitious. Leaders regularly review content and pupils' progression in different subjects. Developments to the curriculums in mathematics, art and science are having a positive impact on pupils' understanding. Leaders ensure that staff have the right subject knowledge to teach the curriculum.

Leaders know which pupils need help with the basics, such as spelling and reading. Pupils value the 'learning resource centre'. This is a hive of activity where pupils can get extra help and focus on catching up. Teachers know pupils well. Typically, they adapt teaching appropriately to meet individuals' needs. This is particularly the case for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that pupils belong and can thrive here. Leaders identify the specific needs of vulnerable pupils swiftly and accurately. They work effectively with primary schools and external agencies to support pupils when they arrive. Leaders check closely on how well pupils are doing, both socially and academically, during their time at Oakwood.

The school's special educational needs and/or disabilities team provides clear strategic leadership. Staff understand that inclusion is everyone's responsibility. Support in class and any specific extra help in place are generally well matched to pupils' needs. Staff receive regular training about how to support pupils. The support given in the 'additional resource centre' is effective. Pupils, parents and carers appreciate this. The school evaluates the effectiveness of any support given. Leaders use this information to make adjustments to support when needed.

Leaders work closely with families, social care colleagues and other professionals to ensure that pupils do well. Staff work together to remove any barriers to learning. Alternative provision is used appropriately and in the best interests of pupils. The school uses its additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively. These pupils do well.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders believe that when pupils belong and thrive that they will achieve well. They have established a culture where staff and pupils feel cared for and supported to succeed. Pupils achieve well. Leaders make sure that vulnerable pupils get the support they need. They know their pupils and the local community very well. They have created a calm, welcoming school where children from many different backgrounds get along. The school reflects its community and is valued by local families.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. They take timely and well-considered action to address any areas for development. Trust leaders and staff help school staff to effectively identify next steps and support improvements. Those responsible for governance meet their statutory duties effectively. Recent changes in governance have been carefully planned, with strategic oversight from the chief executive officer. This helps the school to remain focused on the correct priorities.

All staff have access to an effective evidence-informed professional learning programme. Leaders use information from their monitoring to choose annual themes for training. Leaders are mindful of workload and wellbeing. They foster an open and supportive culture. The staff council is helping to identify areas where workload can be further addressed.

There is a strong commitment to inclusion. Leaders make sure that disadvantaged pupils and those who face extra challenges get the support they need. Inclusive practice is central to the decisions leaders make.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school's personal development programme makes a positive contribution to pupils' development. The school is harmonious, calm and welcoming. Pupils from different backgrounds, faiths and ethnicities get on well together.

Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) has a high priority at school. The curriculum is comprehensive and delivered by specialist teachers in the main. Through PSHCE, tutor time and assemblies, pupils learn to respect others' views. Relationships and sex education is age appropriate and well understood. Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of healthy and unhealthy relationships. They value the support available for mental health on offer at school.

Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their beliefs and experiences during debates at tutor time in mixed-age groups. Pupils show a keen understanding of right and wrong. They articulate the school's values confidently. Pupils show respect for diversity and say that it is fine to be different at school. They can identify world faiths and describe key beliefs. The programme for personal development helps pupils to develop their understanding of healthy lifestyle choices and associated risks, both online and offline.

There are extensive extra-curricular opportunities spanning arts and culture, community engagement, life skills, outdoor learning and sport. Football, rugby and hockey teams are well established. Last year's performance of Snow White was led by pupils and included actors, set designers and those preparing costumes. Vulnerable pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are encouraged to participate in such activities. Leaders know that their participation could be further tracked and encouraged.

Leaders help pupils to build their self-confidence. They encourage pupils to articulate their views. Many pupils take on roles of responsibility. 'Student leaders' make meaningful contributions to school life. They have, for example, helped the school's leaders to consult with pupils about changes in uniform.

Careers education is age appropriate and effective. Older pupils are supported in making their choices for when they leave Oakwood. Pupils in Year 10 are well prepared for work experience. Very few pupils leave school without firm plans for the future. Effective pastoral systems are in place. Pupils speak positively about the support available.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Oakwood High School is a harmonious and happy community. Staff and pupils here feel a keen sense of belonging. Leaders cultivate a warm and welcoming environment where everyone feels included. Pupils come here from all walks of life. Everyone gets along well. Pupils are respectful to one another and to adults. Pupils have leaders and teachers that care deeply for them.

Pupils work well in class, enjoy their learning and develop their knowledge in subjects across the curriculum. They achieve in line with national expectations at GCSE. Pupils benefit from an ambitious curriculum that is generally well taught. Where there are any inconsistencies in teaching, leaders ensure that improvements are rapid and sustained. Pupils are taught to reflect on their learning, respect each other and be resourceful. They develop resilience and take responsibility for others and their own actions.

Pupils say that they feel safe. Behaviour in class is focused. Around the building, behaviour is generally calm. Pupils have access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils grasp these opportunities. Leaders make sure that all pupils have access to these, including those who are disadvantaged. Leaders identify any additional needs pupils have and help pupils to overcome barriers to success. The school's 'additional resource centre' and 'Oakwood House' support this endeavour.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend very regularly. Leaders ensure that pupils are well prepared for their next steps. Pupils understand what it is to be a good citizen. They develop well socially and academically. They leave with qualifications and plans that set them up well for the future.

Next steps

- Leaders should embed improvements to the curriculum and teaching so pupils deepen their knowledge and build on their achievement.
- Leaders should support staff to improve some pupils' engagement and commitment to learning.

About this inspection

This school is part of Inspire Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), David Naisbitt, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Anne Hinds.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher, the head of school, leaders from the school and from the trust, members of teaching and non-teaching staff and several groups of pupils during the inspection. An inspector spoke with the CEO and members of the local governing board.

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.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of 3 alternative provisions, including 2 that are unregistered.

Head of school: Phillip Storey

Lead inspector:

Michael Wardle, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Steve Lewis, Ofsted Inspector

Aejaz Laher, Ofsted Inspector

Stuart Voyce, Ofsted Inspector

Julian Appleyard, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 27 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,063

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,050

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

29.73%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

1.32%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

18.34%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	37.2%	45.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	38.0%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	45.5%	45.3%	Close to average

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	47.4	45.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	45.7	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	47.6	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.12	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.08	-0.03	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	21.6%	25.6%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	19.1%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	40.4%	25.2%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	37.0	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	36.3	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	41.5	35.0	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.64	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.48	-0.57	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	21.6%	52.8%	-31.3 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	19.1%	53.1%	-34.0 pp
2022/23 (final)	40.4%	52.4%	-12.0 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	37.0	50.3	-13.3
2023/24 (final)	36.3	50.0	-13.7
2022/23 (final)	41.5	50.3	-8.8

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.64	0.16	-0.81
2022/23 (final)	-0.48	0.17	-0.64

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	89%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	91%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	93%	94%	Average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	7.5%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	8.5%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	9.1%	9.0%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	20.3%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	25.8%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	30.3%	26.5%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional ●

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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