

Inspection of Olive Ap Academy – Cambridge

Ascham Road, Cambridge CB4 2BD

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 July 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils settle quickly in the school's small 'family' community. They build good relationships with their teachers and are confident that school is a safe place. While bullying sometimes happens, they know that staff will sort any problems out quickly. There is always someone they can talk to if they are worried.

Many pupils join the school feeling that their previous educational experiences have been failures. Over time, pupils trust in the support offered by staff and become more motivated to learn. They feel they are listened to and supported, and so typically enjoy the learning programmes designed to meet their individual needs.

Pupils take part in a range of academic, vocational and outdoor studies. Opportunities to gain awards, including GCSEs, supported by relevant careers information, prepares pupils to take the next steps to further education, employment and/or training at the end of Year 11.

Most pupils improve their attendance. They are helped by staff and other professionals to make positive choices. As a result, they develop strategies to self-regulate their behaviour. Pupils learn important life skills, such as how to keep safe, to form healthy relationships, to manage finances and to cook simple meals.

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

Following a significant period of leadership changes, the trust has acted to stabilise leadership capacity. The curriculum has been reviewed and refreshed. An experienced executive headteacher works closely with the head of school. Together with other trust leaders, they are ensuring that the revised curriculum is implemented effectively. Systems, including those used to record and evaluate pupils' behaviour and attendance, are much sharper. Consequently, the information leaders use to evaluate their performance is more precise.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils' academic achievement, as well as for their personal, social and emotional well-being. Pupils access a flexible curriculum offer, which includes GCSEs and other awards matched to their needs.

Teachers have thought about the most important subject content to be taught and when. New learning is planned to build on what pupils already know. In a few subject areas, the curriculum is still developing. Where this is the case, assessment is not precise enough in identifying what pupils know and can do, or where some need extra support to catch up.

Encouraging pupils to read is a priority. Teachers check pupils' reading skills when they join the school so that interventions can be planned, including support with phonics if needed.

Staff make sure they know pupils well and that learning plans are reviewed regularly. Updates to plans include the views of teachers, pupils, parents and health professionals. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) uses this information to provide up-to-date guidance in working with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils improve their behaviour over time. Relationships are positive. The behaviour policy is applied appropriately by adults in the school. Staff understand the triggers that might lead to potentially challenging behaviours and how to defuse them. While most pupils improve their attendance, a few do not attend as regularly as they should. This limits their ability to achieve well.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is well planned and implemented. Planning takes account of the local and national safeguarding content, with links to other subjects, such as the texts pupils are reading in English. Staff are positive role models. Careers education supports pupils to plan their next steps at the end of Year 11. While currently limited, wider opportunities for work experience will be introduced next year. Pupils are prepared appropriately to take the next steps beyond school. Most gain college places matched to their interests or move on to employment and/or training when they leave.

The trust and the academy advisory board (AAB) work closely together to ensure that the quality of education continues to improve. The AAB is a skilled and experienced team. It offers an appropriate balance of challenge and support for leaders. Staff appreciate the range of professional development available. They are proud of their school and of pupils' success.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders at all levels are mindful of the vulnerabilities of the pupils that the school serves. Staff are well trained, so they report any concerns promptly. Important information is shared in daily team briefings. Extensive collaboration with external agencies, including representatives from local authority services, health professionals, the police and commissioning schools, ensures that wraparound support is routinely focused on pupils' safeguarding needs. Pupils are taught how to manage risks in different settings. This helps them to make more-informed choices for the future. All the required pre-employment checks on new staff are completed promptly. Safeguarding records are well maintained.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although the quality of education is good overall, the implementation of curriculum changes in a few areas is still developing. Assessment is not always effective in identifying the detail of what pupils need to do to improve. Leaders

should ensure that they expedite the final stages of planned curriculum development so that pupils are well supported and achieve equally well in all subjects.

- While most pupils make significant improvements in their attendance, a few do not attend as regularly as they should. This limits their ability to achieve well. Leaders should continue to work closely with individuals, parents and professionals to ensure all pupils attend regularly, so they make the best use of the fresh start the provision offers.

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.

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	142378
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10227397
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Secondary
Age range of pupils	13 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Philip Whall
Headteacher	Ryan Kelsall (Executive Headteacher)
Website	apcambridge.oliveacademies.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 September 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined Olive Ap Academy Trust in May 2021, having previously been part of The TBAP Academy Trust from when it opened in October 2015.
- The school typically admits pupils from Year 9 to the end of Year 11. However, it has recently introduced a short programme of 'respite' provision to support Year 8 pupils to transition back into mainstream education.
- Almost all pupils remain on the commissioning school's roll, but they are also dual registered with the provider.
- Most pupils have experienced significant periods of disruption to their formal education prior to joining the school.
- A very small number of pupils attend off-site alternative provision with other providers.
- The executive headteacher also has oversight of the provision in two other trust schools, Olive AP Academy Nene Valley and Olive AP Academy Suffolk.
- The current head of academy has been in post since 2018.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with trust leaders, the school's senior leadership team, curriculum leaders, the school's special educational needs coordinator, designated safeguarding leads, teachers and other school staff.
- The lead inspector also met with members of the academy advisory board, senior leaders from commissioning schools and representatives from the local authority responsible for inclusion and transition. She spoke on the telephone with another provider, which offers bespoke alternative provision for the school.
- Inspectors spoke informally with pupils and met with small groups to hear about their school experiences.
- Inspectors carried out in-depth reviews (deep dives) in the following subjects: English, PSHE, vocational learning and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons and spoke with teachers and pupils about their work.
- A range of documentation was looked at, including leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plans, pupils' behaviour and attendance information, the single central record of pre-employment checks on new staff, safeguarding records and the associated policies.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text comments from parents. Inspectors also took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Christine Dick, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Cindy Impey

Her Majesty's Inspector

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