

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: The Orchards

Audley Avenue, Stretford, Greater Manchester M32 9TG

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 February 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The principal of this school is Helen O'Brien. This school is part of Bright Futures Educational 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), John Stephens CBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Daniel Rubin.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's vision of 'championing remarkable children' is truly at the heart of everything the school does. Pupils thrive in this supportive, compassionate environment. They arrive full of joy in the morning. This is in part because the school respects pupils' rights and listens to their views and opinions. The school encourages and supports pupils to be themselves.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. Staff are highly skilled in supporting pupils with their behaviour and emotions. Relationships between staff and pupils are key to the school's success. This allows staff to respond in highly effective ways when pupils need additional support. Over time, pupils become more successful in managing their own behaviour. This has a positive impact on their learning and attendance.

The school is determined for each pupil to receive a high-quality education. It is focused clearly on ensuring that pupils, through their individual curriculum, gain the knowledge, skills and character needed to become as independent as possible in their future lives. Pupils achieve excellently across a range of curriculum areas. They are prepared splendidly for the next stage in their education.

Pupils enjoy many experiences which promote their wider development. These include visiting the theatre, going to football matches and visiting local amenities.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has accurately evaluated and improved its curriculum offer. The curriculum reflects the different and more complex needs of pupils who now attend the school. Pupils follow a highly personalised curriculum. Their targets, based on their education, health and care (EHC) plans, are interwoven seamlessly with the school's overall curriculum. Staff securely and successfully deliver the curriculum to help pupils to learn.

Staff have an impressive, in-depth knowledge about the different ways in which pupils learn. They adapt the activities that pupils complete with precision, to ensure that pupils access the curriculum successfully. Underpinning this curriculum offer, the multi-academy trust and school ensure that staff have the expertise needed to deliver the curriculum in such an individualised, unique way for pupils. Ongoing training and learning for staff is a core value for the school, so that the education on offer for pupils continues to improve.

The school has a particular focus on developing pupils' communication skills. The well-thought-out curriculum is successful in ensuring that pupils gain these important skills. For some pupils, this involves using different aids which they are familiar with and use well. When ready, pupils access the phonics programme. This allows them to successfully gain reading skills. Well-targeted support is put into place for pupils when required. Checks on pupils' learning help to ensure that pupils move swiftly onto new learning. Pupils achieve exceptionally well from their starting points in this area of the curriculum.

Pupils concentrate well in lessons, ensuring that they complete the tasks set for them. When they move around the school, they are sensible. Clear routines are in place. This helps to give pupils a sense of security and to feel safe. The school's work to ensure high pupil attendance is noteworthy. It understands the intricate reasons as to why some pupils might not be able to attend regularly. The school works with pupils, parents and carers and wider services where needed. Ultimately, this ensures that pupils want to be in school. Consequently, pupils' attendance improves over their time at the school, often from low starting points.

The pastoral and therapy teams within the school play a key part in ensuring that pupils' individual needs are met. They support pupils' education through a range of strategies which effectively help to meet the specific targets in pupils' EHC plans.

Each aspect of pupils' wider development is carefully thought through. The school ensures that experiences add to pupils' lives and prepare them for adulthood. The school works with a local sports team to give pupils a range of sporting opportunities. This includes giving pupils the opportunity to take part in competitive sport. These opportunities help to develop pupils' talents and interests. Pupils are taught how to stay safe and build healthy, positive relationships with others. Pupils are given the opportunity to represent their school on the 'trust youth board' where they offer what they think should be improved in the school.

The multi-academy trust, local governing body and the school work effectively together. Clearly defined roles ensure that each member knows what their roles and responsibilities are. Trustees and governors hold the school rigorously to account for pupils' performance across all areas of their education. Staff are exceptionally positive about working at the school. They feel valued and listened to when discussing changes in school. For example, recent changes to administration tasks have made their workload easier to manage. This has allowed them to concentrate on providing the best learning opportunities for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in July 2019.

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	142782
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10348329
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special free school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	144
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Daniel Rubin
CEO of the trust	John Stephens CBE
Principal	Helen O'Brien
Website	www.theorchards.bright-futures.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 July 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Bright Futures Educational Trust.
- All pupils who attend the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Many of the pupils have an EHC plan. The school caters for pupils with a range of often complex needs, including those with severe learning difficulties, autism and/or with profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors visited lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They also listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They met with school leaders to discuss pupils' rates of attendance.
- Inspectors met the CEO and deputy CEO on behalf of the board of trustees. The lead inspector also met with the local governing body, including the chair of the local governing body. He spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime and as pupils moved around the school building. They scrutinised leaders' records of pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at the school.
- They spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Stuart Perkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lindy Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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