

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Oak Hill School

Church Hill Road, East Barnet, London EN4 8XE

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 March 2025

Outcome

Oak Hill School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Kevin Grant. This school is part of AP Barnet Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Nick Christou. There is also an executive headteacher, Joanne Kelly, who is responsible for this school and one other school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Relentlessly, the school focuses on creating a safe, supportive environment. This is because the school is aware of the challenges that pupils may experience in their everyday lives. The school makes sure everyone has someone to talk to if they are worried about anything. Pupils have trusting, nurturing and professional relationships with school staff. Pupils are safe and feel safe.

Pupils are happy here. At breaktimes, pupils often play football matches and games alongside school staff. Pupils value, and make the most of, areas in the school they can use for some quiet reflection time if they need it. These include the indoor and outdoor sensory spaces.

The school places high importance on pupils' safety. It makes its expectations about acceptable behaviour and conduct clear. Typically, pupils behave responsibly and respectfully. If concerns about behaviour arise, the school takes appropriate and effective action to safeguard pupils.

The school understands the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They are ambitious for pupils to achieve well. The school has strong knowledge and expertise. Consequently, pupils receive effective help and support. Pupils

gain a range of academic and vocational qualifications. Frequently, they achieve and surpass the outcomes sought in their education health and care plans (EHC plans).

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

The school places high importance on reading. It checks pupils' reading knowledge when they join. The school checks pupils' reading fluency and their understanding of letters, sounds and words systematically. If they need it, pupils receive phonics teaching from expertly trained teaching staff. Consequently, pupils swiftly become confident and fluent readers.

The school takes great care to get to know pupils when they join. It analyses the requirements of pupils' EHC plans and their social, emotional and mental health needs. The school consults parents, pupils and a range of experts, including therapists and psychologists. It uses this information to personalise adaptations and adjustments to teaching and resources so that pupils learn the curriculum. Trustees and school leaders engage purposefully with staff to help them manage their workload and develop their expertise to support pupils effectively. Trustees support and challenge the school well.

The school is highly ambitious for pupils. It organises its appropriate and broad curriculum to enable pupils to achieve a range of academic and vocational qualifications. The school prepares pupils well for the next steps in their education. Appropriately, the school breaks down essential knowledge and skills into small steps so that they build cumulatively over time. Teaching regularly revisits important content. Staff check that pupils know and remember the important knowledge they need for their future learning. The school spots any gaps in learning and misconceptions that may arise effectively. However, sometimes, the school does not adjust subsequent teaching swiftly and precisely enough to address knowledge gaps. The school is aware of this and is taking appropriate action to address this. This includes support and training for teaching staff. However, the school has not fully implemented and embedded the changes. Therefore, occasionally, pupils' errors persist for too long currently.

The school does all it can to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and on time. The school monitors pupils' attendance meticulously. If absence becomes a concern, the school takes swift, appropriate action. The school is fully aware of the issues that may have an impact on pupils' attendance. School leaders work diligently with a range of external stakeholders and with parents and carers to minimise absences. For example, they liaise with local authorities regarding pupils' transport and directly work with families to safeguard pupils' welfare.

The school helps pupils to recognise their feelings and teaches them to use strategies if they struggle. Leaders and staff know pupils well. They are aware of situations that may lead to disruption and what motivates pupils. As a result, lessons are typically calm and orderly.

The school's provision for pupils' personal development is extensive and well thought through. The popular enrichment programme of activities provides regular opportunities

for pupils to explore their talents and interests. Activities include kayaking, football and computing. The school teaches important messages about how to stay safe, including online.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, the school does not adjust teaching swiftly and precisely enough to address pupils' misconceptions. Consequently, occasionally, pupils' errors persist for longer than they need to. The school must ensure that staff have the expertise to adjust their teaching to address misconceptions and gaps in knowledge precisely and swiftly.

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 December 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	144784
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10377454
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nick Christou
Headteacher	Kevin Grant (Headteacher) Joanne Kelly (Executive headteacher)
Website	www.apoakhill.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 December 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with SEND. All pupils have an EHC plan for social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Most pupils have additional needs. These include autism spectrum disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.
- The school is registered to accommodate pupils aged 10 to 19. However, currently, pupils on the school roll are aged 11 to 16.
- Many pupils on roll do not live in Barnet. They travel to the school from a large range of London local authorities.
- 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 school does not use alternative provision.

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 met with the executive headteacher, the headteacher and other senior leaders and with the representatives of trustees.
- An inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 visited the playground and dining hall to view behaviour outside of formal learning time.
- Inspectors reviewed parent, pupil and staff responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Andrea Bedeau, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tom Canning

Ofsted Inspector

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