

Inspection of Olive Ap – Academy Suffolk

Chilton Way, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 1SZ

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Inadequate
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What is it like to attend this school?

Positive relationships based on trust are key to pupils' success. Adults take time to get to know them. Pupils benefit from a calm and orderly environment, which helps them re-engage into education. They feel happy, safe and secure as a result.

Being 'Olive' is important for pupils. It demonstrates how they reflect the school's values during their time at the provision. Pupils' confidence and self-belief. The 'Olive Way' represents the high expectations staff have of pupils. Pupils feel valued and learn that they can be successful. They show this through their good attitudes to learning and the high-quality work they produce.

Pupils say that behaviour in the school has improved. They work happily alongside one another in lessons. Lunchtimes are sociable occasions. During the inspection, for example, pupils chatted together and participated in organised team games in the sports hall. Pupils report that bullying is rare. They know who to talk to if they have any concerns. Pupils trust that adults will sort out any problems.

Pupils talk enthusiastically about their outdoor learning. They say it provides the opportunity to learn new skills. As a result, pupils are eager to explore different work-related experiences, such as carpentry and tourism.

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

Within a relatively short timescale, leaders have brought about rapid improvements in the quality of education. Working with trustees and the interim progress board, they have established a shared vision and purpose. This ensures that each pupil has a personalised pathway for their learning. Pupils have often spent time out of education previously. Leaders are highly effective in identifying pupils' needs, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Individual plans build on pupils' starting points, prioritising social and emotional needs. Consistent routines support pupils' behaviour effectively. Safe places in the school provide environments where pupils can go to help them to regulate their emotions. Consequently, pupils are better prepared to restart their learning.

Leaders' curriculum plans identify the essential knowledge pupils need to learn and remember. They focus on providing pupils with core skills in literacy and mathematics. Leaders' curriculum plans build pupils' knowledge in small steps. They provide pupils with opportunities to learn through real-life experiences. In mathematics, for example, pupils selected and purchased the ingredients for their cooking activity. Older pupils achieve national qualifications, such as functional skills. This ensures that they have the knowledge and skills needed for the next stage of their education.

Teachers make effective use of their secure subject knowledge in order to provide pupils with clear explanations. They check pupils' understanding as they work, often

by recapping information. Individual interventions address any misconceptions. Teachers' feedback comments relate to the school's values that promote the 'Olive way'. Pupils make good progress because of the consistent use of these approaches.

Leaders capture this information about what pupils know and can do through regular checks. However, they do not make full use of this information. They have not carried out an in-depth evaluation of the curriculum to help them to understand what pupils remember in the long term. Leaders do not have a full understanding of the refinements they need to make to their curriculum plans to ensure that pupils remember all their learning over time.

Leaders have prioritised reading. The reading curriculum is carefully planned and implemented effectively by well-trained staff. Every learning activity includes a reading task. Leaders select high-quality books that are ambitious and reflect a range of themes. Teachers ensure that they adapt texts to meet individual needs well. For example, pupils acted roles in Macbeth by reading scripts adapted from the play. A regular delivery of books to each class motivates pupils to read frequently. Leaders have strengthened their approach to support older pupils in the early stages of reading. A programme is in place to provide these pupils with the phonics knowledge they need to read successfully.

Leaders promote pupils' personal development effectively. The curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is well-planned. Pupils have opportunities to discuss a range of issues set in real-life contexts. Pupils take part in weekly outdoor activities working alongside external organisations. This helps to develop pupils' sense of responsibility. Pupils receive helpful careers advice. Experiences and visits teach pupils about the world of work and prepare them well for their next stages of education.

Staff welcome the collaborative approach promoted by leaders. They are consulted before leaders make key decisions about the school. This helps to ensure that their workload is manageable. Morale is high.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders understand the importance of safeguarding work across the school. Safeguarding permeates through every aspect of school life. Discussions about pupils' welfare are regular and central to the support the school offers to meet their needs. Staff receive comprehensive training and updates through briefings and bulletins. Staff report any concern, no matter how minor it may seem. Leaders follow up concerns promptly. They pursue all issues tenaciously in order to help pupils and families get the support they need. Leaders work together with other agencies, using a range of expertise, to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not made effective use of all the information they collate to fully evaluate the impact of their planned curriculum. This means that they do not have a strategic overview of how well plans are working and what pupils remember across subjects over time. Leaders should ensure that they complete detailed evaluations of the effectiveness of all subjects so that they know precisely what is working well and what needs to improve.

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](#)' 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	142820
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10259736
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy alternative provision sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	16
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Philip Whall
Headteacher	Alastair Burnett
Website	apsuffolk.oliveacademies.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 February 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a member of the Olive Ap Multi-Academy Trust.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed three assistant headteachers.
- Olive Ap provides education for pupils from seven to 16 years who have been referred to the school by the local authority. Pupils have been excluded or at risk of exclusion from mainstream schools. Many of them have missed long periods out of full-time education.
- All pupils have specific needs as a result of their learning experiences or personal circumstances. Most pupils have an education, health and care plan, or identified social and emotional needs.
- The school makes use of two alternative providers, Wood Monkeys and PLOT (philosophy, life skills, opportunities and tenacity).

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the executive headteacher, headteacher, other senior leaders, including the special educational needs coordinators and those responsible for careers education.
- Inspectors held discussions with the chief executive officer, the deputy chief executive officer and the director of academies from the trust. A telephone conversation was held with members of the interim progress board and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, PSHE and art. For each of these subjects, inspectors met with the curriculum leader, carried out visits to lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at some of their work.
- Inspectors looked at records and spoke to staff in relation to behaviour, bullying, attendance and safeguarding. Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by checking the school's approach to staff recruitment, scrutinising policy documents and meeting with the designated safeguarding leaders.
- The lead inspector spoke to a leader from an alternative provider used by the school.
- Inspectors met with members of staff and spoke to pupils formally and informally at different points in the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of 20 responses to the Ofsted online staff survey, as well as a few responses from Ofsted Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Steve Mellors, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Adam Cooke

His Majesty's Inspector

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