



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

Standard Assessment Report

Oakwood Academy

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Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Oakwood Academy for their ongoing commitment to Investors in People as a process for review and feedback.

Thanks go to Amanda Nicholson, Executive Head for organising the context meeting, coordinating the gathering of relevant information for the desktop review and making all the arrangements for my visit.

Not least, I would like to thank all the staff for their warm welcome and openness during the onsite; staff were friendly, honest and enthusiastic about the process.

Introduction and Context

Oakwood Academy is a school for children and young people with a range of moderate and/or complex learning difficulties and have a high percentage of children with autism.

Oakwood Academy became an academy in June 2012, adding a sixth form in Sept 2013 and becoming a Multi Academy Trust in 2017.

The sixth form has rapidly grown in size opening initially with 13 students which had grown to 70 students by September 2018. A priority for the organisation is to increase this to a total of 100 students in the future. The sixth form is now sited off school located at Media City in Salford, which is where many of the students attend work experience, 12 staff work out of this site supporting the students. Opening a Primary department 2 years ago has enabled the school to expand its offering further with 19 younger pupils attending. Oakwood Academy has a 15 place Enhanced Resource Provision for pupils whose needs are so complex and severe they require additional support. This provision is for pupils who are usually on the autistic spectrum or who need an autism friendly approach to learning aged 9 to 16 years of age. This location is currently being refurbished with a planned opening for April 2019.

There are currently approximately 184 pupils attending Oakwood Academy plus the students from the sixth form and enhanced provision.

Oakwood Academy were inspected by OFSTED in July 2013 and November 2017 and achieved an outstanding rating on both inspections.

Oakwood Academy has worked with Investors in People since 2000, this will be their seventh assessment and their first against the version 6 standard. A key focus for Oakwood Academy during this assessment is to temperature check staff feeling about changes that have occurred. The organisation continues to work with Investors in People as they believe it is important to have an external source check remain engaged and motivated during periods of rapid change.

Organisations that meet the world-recognised Investors in People Standard reflect the very best in people management excellence. Underpinning the Standard is the Investors in People Framework. Based on 25 years of leading practice, the latest research and workplace trends, the Investors in People Framework is organised around nine key indicators of high performance each with three underpinning themes.

To achieve accreditation, organisations are assessed against these themes and indicators. Assessment is carried out using desk-top review, interviews, meetings and observations. The assessment outcome of Insert organisation name by CTRL+A --> F9 is summarised below. The accreditation awarded represents the current level achieved and the Investors in People Standard can be used to facilitate ongoing development of people management practices.

Assessment Summary

Assessment Outcome

Oakwood Academy



Assessment Findings

This is the seventh assessment for Oakwood Academy against the Investors in People Standard, with the organisation first being assessed in 2000; this will be the organisation's first assessment against Generation 6 of the Investors in People Standard.

A meeting was held on March 11th 2019 to establish the context in which the organisation is operating, and to identify the ambition, plans for the future and challenges facing the organisation.

Following the context meeting with the Executive Head, Amanda Nicholson, a plan was produced to conduct the onsite assessment on April 25th and 26th where 19 members of staff were interviewed.

The assessor would like to take the opportunity to congratulate Oakwood Academy on continuing to achieve the Investors in People Award.

People generally had a good understanding of the vision and mission of Oakwood Academy and were able to describe it in a number of different ways. It would be a recommendation to consider a review of the mission and vision statements to ensure that they remain representative of the continuing and expanding provision on offer.

Leaders interviewed had a clear understanding of what is expected of them to lead, manage and develop people.

The majority of people were able to describe the core values and / or the British values, however it would be recommended that consideration be given to reviewing these two sets of values to ensure alignment and consistency amongst staff and in addition consider where the '3 I's' fit into the values. These were also referred to by some of the interviewees.

People felt that they had access to all the information and resources required, however it was felt by some of the interviewees, that additional information on children and students would provide a deeper understanding around behaviours displayed in the classroom.

People feel consulted on decisions which have an impact on them and feel trusted and supported to make decisions in line with their level of responsibility.

People know what is expected of them in each of their roles and understand how their objectives fit with the wider schools' objectives. People have a clear understanding of the performance process and this is carried out regularly and thoroughly. Regular feedback is received both day to day and during the performance review meetings.

Reward and recognition were considered to be appropriate and supports the organisations objectives. People were able to provide examples of reward and recognition and were generally appreciative of what has been received and provided.

Roles and accountabilities across Oakwood Academy are clear with duplication of effort avoided. People understand the decisions they can and cannot make and there is a culture of all roles working together to achieve the organisations objectives.

Development conversations take place during performance and CPD meetings. In addition, learning walks and lesson observations take place which feed into these conversations.

Investment in people is evaluated utilising an evaluation form post learning & training, it would be recommended that consideration be given as to how further evaluation can be carried out to determine how learning outcomes are improving results.

People felt that they could come forward with ideas and improvements.

People had a good understanding of the future priorities of Oakwood Academy, the relocation and expansion of the 6th form as well as the new Silver Street provision opening were provided as examples.

People described Oakwood Academy as a good place to work. Below is a selection of comments to support this;

"Really enjoying it, it is different and rewarding. The Children are rewarding and it is a nice place to work".

"The people are and children are nice. We are a team".

"Favourite job so far".

"The ethos of the school is about the children being the main priority".

"When I walk in every morning people are smiley. There are different roles and positions in the school and but there is no negative hierarchy and everyone is equal to each other".

"I like my job and love the kids. I get on really well with all the students. I have never not been supported here when I've raised issues".

"Love the children and love the job".

"Feel listened to by the Senior Leadership Team and my manager. They are accommodating and flexible if unable to make appts outside school times".

"It is a close knit team and everyone gets on. I feel valued".

Recommendations

Investors in People Indicator	Recommended Action	Potential Benefits	Timescale
01 Leading and inspiring People	Consider how all meetings (whole school, SLT, Dept) can include an agenda item to discuss progress against targets and future priorities.	Shared vision and ownership of targets and the SDP across all roles.	12 Months
01 Leading and inspiring people	Consider a review of the Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Moral Purpose (Code of Conduct). Consider inclusion of the mission statement onto the website.	Regular review of key visionary documents ensures consistency and enables a clear and consistent message to staff. In addition, it is an opportunity to evaluate if they remain representative of the provision available. Shared vision to staff, students, families and visitors and further embedding to staff.	12 Months
02 Living the organisation's values and behaviours	Consider a review of the British values, Oakwood core values and the 3I's. Which of these values represent Oakwood Academy and what sets them apart from other schools / academies? Consider how the values of the can be embedded to shape the way the school operates in the future and is at the heart of all it does. For example, embedding into policies, job descriptions, appraisals, CPD discussions and the recruitment process. Consider inclusion of values onto the website.	Consistent and shared vision of values to staff, students, families and visitors. Inclusion on the website provides a statement as to what staff, students, families and visitors can expect from Oakwood Academy.	12 Months
03 Empowering and involving people	Consider a review of how information regarding children & students is communicated daily to ensure all staff remain updated.	Regular and detailed information ensures staff continue to feel included and valued.	12 Month

Next Steps

The above findings and recommendations will be discussed at a Feedback Meeting to be confirmed. At this meeting, the following areas will be covered:

- Outcome of this Assessment
- Areas of strength and development and options for improvement
- Scheduled date and format for the 12-Month Review

The key dates for the next stages of Oakwood Academy's Investors in People journey are set out below:

Accreditation date	12-Month Review	24-Month Review	Accreditation Expiry
26/04/2019	26/04/2020	26/04/2021	26/04/2022

Annex 1 - Assessment Approach



Onsite assessment

19 employees from across the organisation were interviewed.



Observations

General observation of the school environment and interaction between leaders and staff.

Desk top analysis



- Vision / Mission Statement / Aims
 - School Development & Evaluation Plan
 - Values of Oakwood
 - Code of Conduct
 - Job Description examples
 - Performance Management process / policy
 - Performance Management Paperwork
 - CPD / Training Process & Paperwork
 - Recruitment Policy
 - Reward & Recognition Policy
 - Wellbeing Policy
-

Annex 2 – Evidence Summary

Indicator	Theme	Evidence Summary	Developed
1. Leading and inspiring people	Creating transparency and trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior leaders explained that the vision for Oakwood Academy is to provide the highest standards for vulnerable children under the heading of 'Believe & Achieve'. A mission statement is in place, 'Promoting learning excellence – inclusion beyond the barriers' which is included within the staff handbook. People were able to describe the vision for the organisation in a number of different ways. They confirmed that the vision is spoken about during induction. Whilst people did not refer to the vision specifically, it was clear during conversations that people understood the vision of the organisation. 	■
	Motivating people to deliver the organisation's objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People had an understanding of the organisation's objectives. People spoke of making sure children become self sufficient with life skills, improving the children's quality of life, providing a quality education & a focus on the 3 I's (Impact, Independence & Inspire). 	■
	Developing leadership capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders interviewed had an understanding of what was expected of them to lead, manage and develop their people effectively. They spoke of managing performance and providing feedback through performance management, setting targets for staff, developing & coaching people, supporting CPD & supporting people in their role's day to day. 	■
2. Living the organisation's values and behaviours	Operating in line with the values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oakwood Academy has a set of core values which are open, honest, social responsibility and caring for others. These are included within the school's prospectus. Senior leaders explained that Oakwood Academy actively promote the Core British Values which are based on five values; democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs. There is a statement of values in place which outlines the Core British Values including an explanation and expectation as to how each value will be met. 	■

	Adopting the values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of people & leaders interviewed had an understanding of the values and were able to describe values and expected behaviours. 	■
	Living the values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People spoke of the importance of the children being happy and treated equally, providing a fun & positive learning environment, being supportive, maintaining confidentiality and being respectful to each other and children. 	■
3. Empowering and involving people	Empowering people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders explained that people are provided with the information and knowledge necessary for their roles via staff meetings, these are held Mondays and Wednesdays where the school development plan is reviewed and discussed. A further briefing takes place Friday afternoon for all staff. The School Development Plan is sent out to all staff, pinned on walls and available in the staff-room. Performance management takes place x3 per academic year where people can flag any queries and ask for further information and resources. People interviewed confirmed that resources are readily available and accessible from shared folders and drives. People feel comfortable asking for additional resource and information should they require it. The majority of people felt that information was readily available and communication was clear. People provided examples of meetings taking place regularly as a whole school and department specific. 	■
	Participating and collaborating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders interviewed described feeling consulted about decisions which have an impact on them. Senior Leadership meetings take place weekly and members of this team are encouraged to add items to the agenda. Staff briefings take place weekly where information is shared with the whole school. An example was provided of implementing a new marking policy which was trialled with teachers across different subjects. Teachers then fed back, 'tweaks' made and the new policy and process rolled out across all staff. The majority of people interviewed described feeling consulted about decisions which have an impact on them. Examples were provided of consultation about the 6th form moving to a new location and the newly opened Silver Street facility. 	■
	Making decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior leaders explained that people are trusted and supported to make decisions in line with their level of responsibility. Advice is provided on desired outcomes with people trusted to carry out their role in the appropriate way. 	■

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">All people interviewed explained they feel trusted and supported to make decisions. People described feeling respected due to the length of time in role, never feeling undermined and a further example was provided of a newly qualified teacher being given responsibility of a project and making decisions in relation to this.	
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Met Not Met

Indicator	Theme	Evidence Summary	Developed
4. Managing performance	Setting objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders and people interviewed were able to describe what is expected of them in their roles demonstrating a clear understanding. Leaders and people understand how their individual objectives fit with the organisation's objectives. 	■
	Encouraging high performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior leaders explained that performance meetings, observations and learning walks are planned at the start of each academic year in consultation with staff. Each meeting has a clear focus and is recorded with each member of staff receiving a copy. Performance management meetings take place x3 per academic year. Performance information is fed back to the Senior Leadership Team which is then reported to the Trust Board. An appraisal policy is in place for all staff. Leaders and people confirmed the above process and that performance management meetings are planned. People were able to describe the process clearly and felt that the meetings provided an opportunity for review and discussion. 	■
	Measuring and assessing performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders explained people's performance is measured and assessed during performance management meetings. Targets, observations and learning walks are discussed along with any other areas required. Feedback is provided regularly. People confirmed that performance management meetings take place regularly and are an opportunity to review targets, discuss development and receive feedback. 	■
5. Recognising and rewarding high performance	Designing an approach to recognition and reward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders confirmed the way it recognises and rewards people providing examples. Financial bonuses provided by the Trust board to recognise efforts, time to work from home on projects, special leave and time off for personal situations, thankyou postcards and general feedback. 	■
	Adopting a culture of recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People interviewed were generally appreciative of the way they are rewarded and recognised. People spoke of receiving thankyou postcards, which is an initiative used across school for people to express their thanks and appreciation to another 	■

		member of staff. They also provided examples of receiving verbal feedback, thank you emails, receiving a financial bonus, contribution towards a Christmas party and a celebration event held following a successful outcome from OFSTED.	
	Recognising and rewarding people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People confirmed the approach to reward and recognition is consistent and feel valued by the organisation. 	■
6. Structuring work	Designing roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed Job descriptions are in place for each role. • People were clear on accountability and responsibilities within each of their roles and demonstrated a sound understanding of responsibilities and accountabilities across roles. People were comfortable in approaching a more senior member of staff for further information and clarification. 	■
	Creating autonomy in roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People were clear on the decisions they can and cannot make. People spoke of being trusted to make decisions and knowing who to speak to should they need further information. Other examples included knowing when a detention could be given, whether a child should go to the 'smart room', putting a note in a child's homework book. Any higher safeguarding or risk management issues people would discuss with a class teacher or more senior member of staff. 	■
	Enabling collaborative working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders and people interviewed were clear how roles work together to achieve outcomes for the children. Descriptions were provided of teams working together in classrooms, across curriculums and within projects. 	■

■ Met □ Not Met

Indicator	Theme	Evidence Summary	Developed
7. Building capability	Understanding people's potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior leaders explained that development conversations take place during performance management and CDP meetings which are linked to the school development plan. Observations and learning walks provide further opportunity to provide feedback and aid development. Targets are set around curriculum, whole school and CPD which provides further opportunity for development discussions. Leaders and people confirmed that development conversations take place during induction and during the development conversations that take place during performance meetings. 	■
	Supporting learning and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders explained development advice and guidance is well communicated through the organisation through the performance management meetings and during whole staff meetings where training take place. People confirmed that they receive information, advice and guidance to help them develop. They described being provided with advice about moving into other roles and advice about courses that may aid progression. 	■
	Deploying the right people at the right time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders explained recruitment and selection is fair, efficient and effective fitting with the organisation's objectives. Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT) are often recruited which has supported their status as a teaching school. Advertisements are placed on Salford Councils website. Candidates are shortlisted and invited to interview. Dependent on role, candidates undertake a Maths and English test, complete an observation with children, carry out lesson teaching and undertake a formal interview and / or interview day. People undertaking recruitment have undertaken 'Safer Recruitment' training. People newly recruited to the organisation confirmed and described the above process. 	■
8. Delivering continuous improvement	Improving through internal and external sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders explained that training is discussed and evaluated. Evaluation forms are completed which are discussed during performance management meetings. People were able to explain the different training they had undertaken and how this had benefitted them in their day to day roles. 	■

	Creating a culture of continuous improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders explained there is a strong emphasis on improving capability and developing skills & competency, which is explored during performance management meetings. • People described understanding how they can improve their performance by learning each day through their experiences with the children, continuing to update and improve their knowledge through training, being open to new learning & opportunities, shadowing others and meeting performance management targets which link directly to the school development plan. 	■
	Encouraging innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders explained that people are encouraged to come forward with new ideas via the use of an open-door policy. During staff meetings people are asked to make suggestions and ideas. • The majority of people interviewed felt that they were encouraged to come up with new ideas and feel comfortable making suggestions to line managers, teachers in the classroom and during meetings. • A minority of people explained that they did not necessarily feel encouraged, however did not feel discouraged from coming forward should they have an idea. 	■
9. Creating sustainable success	Focusing on the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior leaders explained that there are a number of future priorities for Oakwood Academy. A long-term plan is in place for premises in Salford Quays which is the new location for the 6th Form. It is hoped that numbers will grow in the 6th Form from 70 to 100 students. An enhanced provision has recently opened at Silver Street which is for children who require a more specialist offering. Focus will be on ensuring the success of this. A tender has been placed with the Local Authority regarding a free school, which would be an 80-place offering for children at secondary level with autism. The academy is approved as an academy sponsor and could therefore be asked to sponsor a secondary school, they would need to make sure that they have the capacity to do this from a teaching perspective. • Information regarding future priorities is provided at staff meetings and briefings and discussed at the senior leadership team meetings. • Leaders and people had a good understanding on the current future priorities for Oakwood Academy and were able to describe the priorities mentioned above. 	■

	Embracing change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders and people confirmed that change is communicated via emails, meetings and briefings. 	■
	Understanding the external context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders within the community of Oakwood Academy were described as the children themselves, parents, local authority, schools in the surrounding areas, the community itself, governors, trust board, social services and Friends of Oakwood. 	■
■ Met	 Not Met		

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