

Oasis Academy Mediacityuk

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135661
Local Authority	Salford
Inspection number	361298
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Patrick Geraghty HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	512
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Nick Bent
Principal	Mr Patrick Ottley-O'Connor
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Prestwood Road Salford Manchester M6 8GG
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors spent the majority of their time visiting 22 lessons which represents approximately 60% of teaching staff available at the time of inspection. They held meetings with staff, groups of students, the Chair of the Academy Council and the director of education for the sponsor organisation. Documentation was scrutinised including: information related to the tracking of the academic and personal progress of students; detailed analysis of students' attainment and progress; academy self-evaluation; minutes from meetings of the academic council; and evidence to demonstrate how the academy supports students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Inspectors also examined evaluations undertaken by the academy to ensure that it meets statutory requirements with regard to safeguarding. In addition, 32 parental questionnaires were scrutinised along with questionnaires returned by a representative sample of staff and students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the academy's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Students' attainment and progress to determine the effectiveness of strategies used to improve outcomes.
- If teaching and learning are sufficiently challenging to promote better outcomes for students.
- The impact of curriculum development on increasing engagement and improving students' outcomes.
- The effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation by leaders and managers at all levels to drive improvement.
- The consistency achieved in the application of academy policies and targets across all levels of management.

Information about the school

Oasis Academy Mediacityuk was opened in September 2008. New buildings are currently planned for completion in September 2012 in the Salford Quays area, some two miles from the academy's present location. The academy is sponsored by Oasis Community Learning, which is part of the Oasis UK family of charities. The academy has had three Principals within the last year. Both deputy Principals resigned and left in April 2010. The academy has subject specialism in media and information and communication technology (ICT) and a secondary focus on business and enterprise to reflect the employment opportunities and creative focus of Salford Quays. The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Nearly all students are of White British heritage and the number of students who speak English as an additional language is low. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average, although the number with a statement to meet their special educational needs is below.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The new Principal and deputy Principal have quickly established a sense of purpose and direction. Self-evaluation is now realistic and accurate. Academy weaknesses have been correctly identified and strategies to enable improvement have been introduced rapidly. A restructured senior leadership team has been set clear objectives and has responded well to the challenge. A clear priority has been given to improve outcomes at Key Stage 4 more rapidly. Data are now robustly used to headline key improvements and drive an accountability culture at all levels. Outcomes have improved but, crucially, attainment for five GCSE A* to C including English and mathematics remains significantly below the national average. Strategies to drive improvements in this indicator are in place and tracking and monitoring evidence suggest a more rapid closing of the gap with the national average in 2011. Attainment has improved at Key Stage 3 but the lack of a comprehensive strategy to develop numeracy, literacy and oracy skills is hindering the academy's ambition to promote and achieve outstanding outcomes.

Teaching and learning are improving and inspection observations showed that students are making satisfactory progress with some making good. However, too much teaching remains satisfactory and lacking in challenge and pace. There are insufficient opportunities for the good and better teachers to disseminate their skills to have a positive impact on the development of improved teaching. The academy's sixth form is inadequate. Outcomes are significantly below national averages on the majority of courses. Many students are enrolled onto inappropriate courses where they struggle. The tracking and monitoring of students' progress is variable.

The leadership of the new Principal is highly effective, incisive, ambitious and visionary. However, there remain inconsistencies in outcomes, provision and in management that require further decisive action for improvement. The academy council is now focused on monitoring progress set against challenging targets. The academy provides satisfactory value for money. The academy's capacity to improve is satisfactory because, although the quality of senior management is strong and direction is clear, changes have not had sufficient time to improve outcomes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment across the academy by:
 - improving outcomes for GCSE five A* to C including English and mathematics so that they are above the national average by 2012
 - implementing a whole-academy literacy, numeracy and oracy strategy placing a strong focus on Key Stage 3.

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- Further increase the proportion of outstanding and good teaching by ensuring:
 - best practice in teaching is shared across all subject areas
 - that questioning is used effectively to challenge individual students according to their needs
 - a greater and consistent focus on independent learning skills
 - that marking in all subjects gives a clear indication to students of what they need to do to improve.
- Tackle remaining inconsistencies at senior and middle management level in the planning, monitoring, evaluation and action planning for improvement so that all aspects of provision are at least good. In doing this, ensure that the media specialism has a full impact on raising the quality of provision.
- Improve sixth form provision by:
 - raising attainment towards the national average across all courses
 - ensure that students are enrolled on suitable courses to match their needs, abilities and aspirations
 - embed consistency in the monitoring, tracking and intervention strategies that support students' progress.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

When students join the academy in Year 7 their attainment is below average. The current quality of work in students' books and engagement in lessons observed during the inspection was satisfactory. When students are given the opportunities to develop their learning skills they respond with enthusiasm and challenge and their progress is good or better. For example, in an outstanding English lesson, focusing on the imaginative use of language, one Year 7 student visualised the 'piercing eyes beyond the security camera, along the cable, in an unknown room, sinisterly observing the monitor'. This inspired the engagement of the whole class in an enthusiastic and joyful exploration of language. However, in too many classes students are insufficiently challenged in their learning and progress is only satisfactory. Students identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers. From 2008 to 2010, the proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades rose sharply and is now at 79%. The proportion of students attaining this measure with English and mathematics included increased in 2010 to 41% which the academy's leaders rightly evaluate as low. While there is a three-year rising trend in this indicator it is not insufficiently rapid. Evidence from the academy's tracking records and the current standards of work indicate that students are on track for a higher performance in examinations in 2011. Attainment at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory and improving, although it remains hindered by an insufficient focus on the development of literacy, numeracy and oracy skills in Years 7 and 8.

Behaviour is satisfactory and improving both in lessons and around the academy. Some low-level disruption in a minority of classes limits learning opportunities. Exclusions have

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been reduced substantially. Attendance has improved rapidly and is now broadly average. Students increasingly adopt healthy lifestyles and take advantage of a broad range of sports provision. Students feel that the academy is a safe place. Where incidents of bullying occur they are dealt with quickly and effectively. Students are aware of how to stay safe and their knowledge of internet safety is appropriate. An increasing number contribute to the wider communities through collections for charities and local community work. Over the last few years, the academy has reduced the numbers of those not in employment, education and training to significantly below the local average. Developing links have been established with the City of Salford College and University of Salford. However, links promoted by the specialism have only recently started to develop. Students' preparation for their future economic well-being is satisfactory.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

While there is a significant amount of teaching that is good, there remains too much of uneven quality. The better lessons are characterised by good planning with clear lesson objectives communicated to students. In these lessons, students are given numerous opportunities to air and explore their knowledge, to question, develop reflective skills and progress their understanding. Regular checks on learning reinforce knowledge. Teachers use praise and encouragement to promote high expectations. There is effective use of ICT to support learning. In satisfactory lessons, questioning is not used to develop oracy and

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probe understanding. Independent learning skills are insufficiently promoted and students are not challenged. In a small number of lessons poor behaviour was not well managed and sometimes was allowed to negatively impact on the learning opportunities of other students. Marking does not indicate ways to develop and improve work. Lesson plans identify different students' needs. However, it is not always evident in lessons how this is put into practice to meet the range of students' needs and abilities through classroom activities or varied resources. There is insufficient dissemination of good practice across subjects so that the most skilled teachers share their approaches and strategies to enable the level of teaching across the academy to be raised.

The curriculum has some good features. The development of the creative curriculum at Key Stage 3 has helped to engage students in their education, resulting in improved behaviour and attendance. However, planning to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and oracy skills through all subjects remains underdeveloped. Through effective links with other institutions, including Salford Academy and the City of Salford College, the academy has introduced vocational courses at Key Stage 4 thereby providing students with a range of academic and vocational 'pathways'. Dedicated provision for disaffected students has a positive impact on their attainment and progression opportunities. The curriculum is enriched by a range of activities including visiting artists and developing links with the BBC. Curriculum provision within the specialism areas is underdeveloped. The academy acknowledges that the profile of the media specialism needs to be raised both within the academy as well as in the local and wider community.

The care, guidance and support provided for students are satisfactory and improving. Transition from primary school is effective so that when students join the academy in Year 7 they feel that the support they receive is good. Tailored and effective support is provided for students and has had a positive impact on the most vulnerable students and those at risk of dropping out of education at 16. Good links with external agencies promote and support students' welfare, learning and progress. Great care is taken to promote students' social and emotional development. Strategies to promote improved attendance have been successful and this has risen in successive years from 86% to presently over 93%. Academic guidance is less well developed. Poor transition arrangements into the academy sixth form hinder appropriate course choice.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Incisive, imaginative and highly effective leadership by the newly appointed Principal and the deputy Principal has revitalised the academy's ambition and strengthened the

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establishment of a culture of rapid improvement and high aspirations. The leadership team is strengthened and feels fully accountable and engaged in the shared objectives of the academy's development. Decisive leadership has already begun to show impact through an improvement in behaviour, the implementation and adherence to the academy policy on uniform and in the robust use of data to drive improvement and establish accountability. Roles and responsibilities at all levels have been clarified and leaders and managers are being held to account more effectively. However, academy senior leaders recognise that more work needs to be done to raise attainment and achievement and to tackle the issues surrounding the impact of the academy's specialism in media. Self-evaluation is realistic and accurate. Senior leaders have a clear appreciation of those areas of provision where there remain some inconsistencies in quality. Lessons are now monitored regularly. Relevant staff training has been introduced to more effectively tackle the areas identified for improvement. Following a recent strategic review, the academy council now has a good awareness of the academy's strengths and is acutely aware of where improvement is required. The academy council is well led and is now acting as a critical friend in holding senior leaders accountable for performance.

The views expressed by parents are generally positive about how the academy is led. The academy has established some effective partnerships with other organisations and educational institutions to promote students' learning and support their well-being. However, not enough is done to develop partnerships relating to the specialism subjects. There is effective promotion of equality of opportunity through support programmes, the curriculum and an increasing range of additional activities. The academy has developing links with the local community including the establishment of popular and well-attended evening courses and events. Safeguarding is satisfactory: procedures meet requirements and are reviewed. The management of resources and the academy's value for money, set against outcomes, are satisfactory.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Sixth form

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is inadequate. This is a small sixth form offering GCE AS and A levels, resits in GCSE English and mathematics and some BTEC courses. Attainment for most courses is well below national averages. Achievement on health and social care courses are good. Teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory but often lacks necessary challenge. Good teaching was observed in art and in health and social care. Resources for AS and A level are underdeveloped. Students feel confident in their teachers and relationships are good. The leadership of the sixth form is inadequate. Systems to analyse and evaluate student enrolment and progress are insufficiently developed and lack consistency of application across courses. Many students are enrolled onto inappropriate courses and consequently, they struggle to succeed. There is no distinctive sixth form ethos. Academy management recognises these weaknesses and plans for significant reform and a clearer sense of purpose are advanced.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	4
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	4
The quality of provision in the sixth form	4
Leadership and management of the sixth form	4

Views of parents and carers

An analysis of responses to the questionnaire indicates that the majority of parents and carers are happy with their child's experience at school and that appropriate steps are taken to ensure that their child is well prepared for the future.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oasis Academy Mediacityuk to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 512 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	44	12	38	3	9	2	6
The school keeps my child safe	12	38	18	56	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	15	47	14	44	3	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	41	17	53	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	10	31	20	63	0	0	1	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	28	20	63	2	6	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	28	20	63	2	6	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	10	31	16	50	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	38	15	47	2	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	25	18	56	3	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	31	16	50	2	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	11	34	17	53	1	3	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	41	17	53	1	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Dear Students

Inspection of Oasis Academy Mediacityuk, Manchester, M6 8GG

Thank you for the warm and friendly welcome that you gave my colleagues and me when we inspected your academy recently. We would also like to commend you for your improving behaviour, and your increasing commitment to making the academy a pleasant place to work in. We would particularly like to thank those of you who spoke with us.

Our inspection found that yours is a satisfactory and improving academy. You are making satisfactory progress throughout your time at the academy. Your GCSE results are improving but pass rates in GCSE English and mathematics need to improve further. There is good teaching in the academy; however, we found too much that was satisfactory. In the good lessons, you respond well to the teachers' high expectations but many of you are not sufficiently challenged to do better in the satisfactory lessons. Your curriculum options are satisfactory and improving. The teachers and support staff care for you and give you much support.

The leaders in your academy worked with us to decide on some ways in which your provision could be better. We decided that to achieve this, the academy should:

- improve your results in GCSE examinations, particularly in English and mathematics, so that they match and exceed national averages
- improve the percentage of good and better teaching so that you are all challenged and achieve your best
- improve your skills in literacy, numeracy and spoken language, especially in Years 7 and 8
- improve the way in which the staff track and monitor your progress and provide support so that you all can make good and better progress
- improve the provision, planning of courses and examination results in the sixth form.

You can help your academy to improve further by ensuring everyone focuses on the pursuit of excellence for all of you and trying hard in your studies so that you can achieve your full potential in life. I wish you the very best for the future.

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