

Oasis Academy John Williams Bristol

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135663
Local Authority	N/A
Inspection number	363001
Inspection dates	16–17 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Lorna Brackstone 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	536
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	38
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joe Dilger
Headteacher	Rebecca Clark (Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Petherton Road Hengrove, Bristol BS14 9BU
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors who visited 29 lessons or part sessions and observed 29 teachers. They also saw other teachers lead assemblies and take learning mentor groups. They held meetings with the Principal, her two deputies, members of the senior leadership team and middle management. Inspectors spoke to students in every year group. The lead inspector met the Director of Education for the academy's sponsor, the Chair of the Governing Body, and an external consultant. She also met a group of parents and carers. Inspectors observed the academy's work and scrutinised a range of documentation. This included: the academy's development plans, key tracking information on students' progress, reports by the Academy Improvement Partner and minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors analysed 101 inspection questionnaires completed by parents and carers and those of 70 students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the academy's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The way in which the legacy of underachievement is being tackled.
- The role of the middle leaders in driving improvement.
- Improvements in the behaviour and regular attendance of the students.

Information about the school

This academy is sponsored by Oasis Community Learning and was named after the founding Academy Principal. Oasis Academy John Williams Bristol opened with a specialism for visual and performing arts in September 2008, following the closure of a predecessor school. The academy moved into its new buildings in September 2010 and this coincided with the opening of a sixth form with 39 students on roll. The sixth form specialises in dance.

This is a small academy, but student numbers are increasing. Over half of the students have special educational needs and/or disabilities, most of whom have moderate learning problems and /or behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. The vast majority of students are White British and very few do not speak English as their first language. The percentage of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The academy was subject to a monitoring visit by Ofsted in January 2010 when it was judged to be making good progress towards raising standards. A significant annual deficit has resulted in a staffing restructure to be put into place in May 2011.

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

2

Main findings

Oasis Academy John Williams Bristol is satisfactory. It provides its students with a satisfactory quality of education. It is improving at a fast rate and has a good capacity to sustain the momentum of change. This is because the Principal, her deputies and other senior leaders share an inspirational drive and ambition for the academy. Self evaluation systems are highly effective. Although standards are low, results are rapidly improving and current students are on course to maintain this upward trend and achieve broadly average standards. This strong and determined senior leadership has relentlessly focused on improving the quality of teaching and in most lessons students make good progress in their learning. Nevertheless, achievement over time is currently no more than satisfactory because students and teachers are working hard to overcome a legacy of underachievement. In addition to this, the high proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities did not always have the most relevant support in the past. The academy has accurately identified that the next step in driving up standards further and increasing student achievement is to increase the involvement of the newly restructured middle management in monitoring and evaluating provision.

The students' appreciation and enjoyment of life within the academy is reflected well in the way they appreciate and take care of the new buildings and the pride with which they wear their uniforms. The measures taken to safeguard all students are exceptional because quality assurance is excellent and risk assessments are of the highest quality and enable the youngsters to feel safe and well cared for. Most students behave sensibly in class and they feel that misdemeanours are dealt with fairly and consistently. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour are declining but there are still an average number of exclusions. Following the recent overhaul of the curriculum, it has been adapted well to meet the needs of all students, including those who are vulnerable. Students demonstrate greater engagement and this has contributed well to the considerable improvement in attendance. As a specialist academy for visual and performing arts, it has successfully engaged the local community in its dance work. Engaging with dancers who perform at a national level has encouraged students to be reflective in their thinking and develop higher aspirations for the future. For example, a Year 11 dance routine gave much thought to the implications of the Holocaust in world affairs today. All lessons are driven by the relentless focus on improving basic reading skills. The academy knows that the next step is to improve numeracy skills to equip students better for the wider world.

Most parents and carers are happy with the quality of education provided by the academy. As one parent summed up, 'I cannot praise the academy and staff enough. My child has not only progressed academically but her self-confidence is so much higher - she loves the academy and the teachers. I would advise anyone to send a child here.'

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Up to 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 10 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve numeracy skills by:
 - developing personalised programmes for individuals
 - ensuring that numeracy is a key focus across the academy.
- Embed the role of middle managers by:
 - increasing their role in the use and analysis of key performance data
 - developing their skills to rigorously monitor, evaluate and drive improvements
 - sharing and developing good practice in teaching across the academy, particularly where students are encouraged to make independent choices in their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students join the academy with knowledge, skills and understanding that are low compared with their age group nationally. In Years 7 and 9, the introduction of a support programme for improving reading skills has resulted in literacy standards steadily rising. This is having a positive impact on students' improved access to learning across the curriculum and building their self-esteem. However, numeracy skills remain low and impede overall progress. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is low, but improving rapidly with rates of student progress exceeding nationally expected levels. Attainment in art and design is significantly above the national average and reflects the strengths in the specialism of the academy. Those students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because teachers are held accountable for all the students they teach and, consequently, provide personalised approaches in lessons to ensure specific needs are met. Individuals who may be vulnerable and those who are not achieving as well as their peers are carefully identified and given additional support. For example, a small minority of girls do not perform as well as boys. In response to this, the academy is successfully trialling English classes exclusively for a small group of disaffected girls so that they can gain confidence and develop their skills in lessons that are targeted to engage and motivate them.

Most students understand the importance of a balanced diet and talk with enthusiasm about the opportunities the academy provides for physical education, particularly in dance activities and the fitness gym. They make a good contribution to academy life through the various channels which enable them to express views - such as through the Board of Directors, the work of the peer mediators and the student 'barometer' groups. Students' contribution to the wider community shines through their fund-raising work, the sixth formers who 'buddy up' with the local primary schools to hear readers and regular attendance at the weekly pensioners' lunch club. These contributions have done much to dispel the negative perceptions of the local community towards the young people in the Hengrove area which have been a significant feature of this part of the city in the past.

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Although key skills are low, working together well in lessons suitably prepares students for future work-place skills. For example, a Year 10 English group confidently presented short scenes which illustrated the difference between the use of formal and informal language.

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	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	2

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?

By taking into consideration the students' reading ages and carefully planning paired activities where the youngsters can support each other, lessons are tailored well to meet individual needs. The best lessons ensure that the students have grasped the concepts covered in previous work and the purpose of the next session is made clear. These sessions move at a rapid pace and actively involve the students in their learning. For example, working together in small groups on an assessment task which was based on chemical changes, Year 9 students urged their partners to 'run quickly' to gain access to the next part of their work. The availability of a computer for every student in musical composition lessons and the use of magnifiers on interactive whiteboards to demonstrate teaching techniques are examples of the way that the excellent technology resources are used to enhance learning. Teaching has less impact when the lesson has a greater focus on teacher talk rather than student learning and, consequently, they take a more passive role in the session. Assessing work together in peer groups, reviewing targets set in subjects, and considering marking schemes and grade expectations are used well to ensure that the students understand what to do to improve. In the best examples,

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teachers use open-ended questioning and when they mark work teachers identify 'WWW' (what went well) and 'EBI' (even better if). This helps the students to be clear about the next steps in their learning. However, this in-depth feedback is not yet consistent across all subjects.

The strong focus in Years 7 to 9 on improving the exceptionally low literacy levels is contributing well to the students' all-round development but the academy is clear that weaknesses in numeracy require a similar focus. A modified science curriculum is ensuring that a greater number of students secure a suitable qualification in this subject and the visual arts specialism has a strong influence across all year groups and subject areas. Over two thirds of youngsters participate in the varied programme of enrichment activities, which are organised to meet the interests and needs of all students.

Care, support and guidance are very well targeted to meet the needs of all students. Vulnerable students are particularly well supported because specialist expertise is sought from a wide range of agencies and enables them to participate fully in the life of the academy. The year group and mentoring systems contribute strongly to ensure that teachers know their students very well. Clear communications with parents and carers allow both rewards and concerns to be shared quickly. A career focus week and individual interviews help the students to make informed choices about their futures.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The Principal's exceptional vision to ensure that all students at the academy achieve the best possible personal and academic outcomes is consistently shared with, and communicated by, her senior staff. As a senior team, they set extremely challenging and ambitious targets which are well informed through comprehensive monitoring of the academy's provision and performance. Detailed analyses of the performance and circumstances of different individuals or groups of learners contribute well to strategic planning and self-evaluation processes. This has ensured that equality of opportunity is good for all students and outcomes are improving strongly. For example, the views of minority ethnic boys who were not engaging in extra-curricular activities were sought and programmes were organised to specifically interest them. The process of distributing to and strengthening middle leadership and management is evolving steadily as the restructuring of staff embeds. Despite the forthcoming redundancies, staff morale is high.

At a national level of governance, the sponsors hold the academy to account extremely well. This executive board are very insightful and rigorously challenge the Principal. There are robust systems in place to ensure that statutory duties are fulfilled. The local level of

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governance engages with the academy community regularly. Members are supportive of its work and ensure that the students are kept safe because they have a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding. However, systems to challenge the performance of the academy at this local level are less well developed.

The coffee meetings every fortnight and the regular completion of questionnaires provide good opportunities for parents and carers to express opinions and concerns about the academy. Parents and carers are kept well informed about their children's progress and invitations to workshops, such as 'understanding teenagers', help them to cope with everyday problems encountered at home. Opportunities for parents and carers to join in dance sessions and attend public performances enrich their everyday lives. The academy engages with a comprehensive range of partnerships that contribute effectively to the students' learning and well-being. For example, good management systems are shared through the links with the other sponsor schools. The health 'drop in' sessions, regular interface with the community police, links with a local university and engagement with anti-racist and homophobic groups contribute well to improving student outcomes.

The academy values diversity and thoroughly evaluates its contribution to the religious, ethnic and socio-economic context of its community. By providing a base for an urban dance group, facilitating a cafe church on a Sunday and running a holiday club for the wider Bristol area, the academy demonstrates its commitment to the local community. Visits to Uganda to redecorate schools and celebrate birthdays with Ugandan orphans, and involvement in a project to stop child labour promote community cohesion well at an international level.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Sixth form

At this very early stage of its development, the overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. Students know that, given their low levels of qualifications on entry, they would not have been accepted for sixth form study elsewhere. However, they very much value the opportunity they have been given to follow a curriculum adapted to meet their needs where they can pursue their interest in dance, health and social care or sport, while improving their basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Students are making at least satisfactory progress against their prior attainment on entry into the sixth form and a minority are making good progress. Their personal development is good. They are proud of the way they have gained confidence and raised aspirations resulting in many students considering a future application to university. They enjoy teaching dance to younger students and perform with style and 'street cred' during assemblies and at 'break out' times in the atrium. These activities have an extremely positive influence on disaffected students who look up to the sixth form as role models. Links with a community dance group with national acclaim support links with the wider community. Attendance is average. Most students complete their courses successfully because they enjoy extremely positive relationships with their tutors and receive good levels of care, support and guidance. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and, frequently, good or better in dance. Good use is made of tracking systems to ensure that sixth form lessons are adapted to the needs of each learner. The academy's leaders and managers share a clear vision for the sixth form and have a secure understanding of its strengths and areas for development. The management of the specialist resources contributes well to students' outcomes.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers responding to the questionnaire were generally happy about the role the academy played in their children's education with most agreeing with the statement that, 'Overall I am happy with my child's experience at this school.' Nearly all parents and carers felt that their children were making enough progress at the academy and agreed that they were kept safe. A very small minority of parents and carers did not consider that the academy dealt with unacceptable behaviour appropriately and a similar proportion did not feel that they were helped to support their children's needs. The inspection team pursued parental and carers' concerns about the lack of communication between home and academy. While inspectors found that parents and carers were well informed, the senior leaders were keen to take these comments seriously and plan to refine their systems further.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oasis Academy Bristol 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 101 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 536 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	34	54	53	7	7	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	40	40	54	53	3	3	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	37	37	52	51	5	5	5	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	32	59	58	5	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	25	62	61	6	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	25	59	58	13	13	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	19	69	68	6	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)	24	24	59	58	7	7	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	22	66	65	5	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	28	52	51	15	15	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	15	63	62	9	9	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	20	20	65	64	3	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	38	51	50	2	2	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



18 February 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Oasis Academy John Williams, Bristol BS14 9BU

It was a great pleasure to return to your academy to lead the recent Ofsted inspection. Many of you spoke to me or one of the other inspectors and we wish to thank you for your welcome and courtesy towards us. We appreciated the way in which you shared your views with us and told us about life at the academy. You will, of course, want to know what we found and here is a brief summary.

Your academy has moved on a long way since I visited last year and is set to improve even further. Currently, it is satisfactory overall. You are all making good progress with your work and although standards remain low, they are improving at a fast pace. The extra help given to Years 7, 8 and 9 with their reading is making a big difference, so we have asked the academy to improve numeracy skills to the same extent. The curriculum is well suited to your interests and abilities and the care, support and guidance you receive is good. Most important, you enjoy academy life and as one student summed up, 'It is all lush!'

Teaching has improved and we know that you learn best in lessons that involve you directly and help you to develop independent thinking. Your teachers mark your books in a way that helps you to understand how to improve your work and you listen carefully on the advice they give for getting the best grades. Although we saw mostly outstanding behaviour in lessons, we agreed with those of you we met that not everyone's behaviour is good all the time. We urge you to continue to work on this because it will make the academy an even better place.

We were extremely impressed with your Principal and all her senior team who share the same passion about making sure you get the best possible education. There have been recent staff restructuring and we have asked the senior team to make sure that the new middle management team take a full lead in ensuring that you get the best deal.

I look forward to hearing great things about Oasis Academy John Williams in the future.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone

Her Majesty's Inspector

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