

The Oldham Academy North

Broadway, Royton, Oldham, OL2 5BF

Inspection dates 10–11 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students make good progress from their low starting points and they achieve well. The proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE grades at C or above, including English and mathematics, has continued to improve over time.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. In the best lessons teachers use skilful questioning and well-targeted activities to fully engage students and challenge their thinking and ideas.
- Behaviour around the academy and in lessons is good. Positive relationships between adults and students are evident. Teachers are skilful in their management of students' behaviour, resulting in a secure climate for learning across the academy.
- The academy provides a safe and supportive environment for students. Effective pastoral arrangements ensure that students are able to do well and have the opportunity to engage in all aspects of academy life.
- The Principal, ably supported by senior leaders and key middle leaders, has been pivotal in securing improvements over time. Rigorous monitoring and focused professional development have been central to the academy's improvement agenda. The governing body effectively challenges all aspects of the academy's work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet sufficient outstanding teaching in every subject area to ensure that students are able to make rapid and sustained progress across the curriculum.
- Not all middle leaders play a full part in monitoring teaching and students' achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 35 lessons, including two joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors sampled students' work in lessons.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, senior and middle leaders, teaching staff and support staff, groups of students, two governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and the sponsor's adviser.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including the academy's data on students' achievement, records of lesson observations, information on behaviour and attendance, the minutes of governing body meetings and performance management information.
- Inspectors examined Ofsted questionnaires completed by academy personnel, the results of the academy's surveys for parents and the 147 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Angela Headon, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Philip Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector

Fiona Burke-Jackson

Additional Inspector

Timothy Gartside

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Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is above average, while the proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided for students in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and children from service families) is well above average.
- Almost all students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Almost all students speak English as an additional language.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- There is no alternative off-site provision. The academy's primary specialism is visual arts.
- The academy moved to a new building in April 2013. The academy's sponsor is E-ACT.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in all subject areas, in order to further improve achievement across the curriculum, by:
 - increasing the opportunity for students to develop collaborative and independent learning skills
 - routinely sharing the best practice in the academy.
- Develop further the skills of all middle leaders so that they are able to play a full part in monitoring the quality of teaching and students' achievement in their area of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the academy with low levels of attainment. They make good progress and, as a result, the proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE passes at grade C or above, including English and mathematics, has continued to improve over time. The academy's data for 2013 indicate that this trend is likely to continue, with results moving closer to the national average.
- Similarly, GCSE attainment in English and mathematics has continued to rise, with a further increase expected in 2013. Leaders recognise, however, that although there is an improving picture indicated in the expected 2013 results, students' progress and attainment in some subject areas, notably languages and humanities, have yet to match that of the best in the academy.
- Extra provision funded by the pupil premium includes, for example, an increase in curriculum time, the introduction of smaller class sizes in core subject areas and focused one-to-one and small-group support for identified students. Students supported by the funding have continued to make good progress over time. As a result, assessment information for 2013 indicates that, for key performance measures, the attainment of these students is likely to be in line with that of their peers.
- Similarly, the progress of boys shows an improving picture over time with a much higher proportion expected to attain five or more A* to C GCSE grades in 2013 than in previous years.
- The quality of support for disabled students and those with special educational needs, including individual targeted programmes and tailored curriculum provision, allows these students to make similar progress to their peers.
- The academy ensures that those students who take the mathematics GCSE examination early have the opportunity to attain at the highest level.
- The academy's procedures for tracking the attainment and progress of its students are rigorous. Leaders and teachers work hard to ensure that any variation in students' performance or any potential underachievement is tackled quickly.

The quality of teaching is good

- The relentless drive by academy leaders to improve teaching has resulted in provision that is good overall, with an increasing proportion that is outstanding. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching across the academy.
- Teachers work hard to ensure that students are given every opportunity in lessons to do well. They have high expectations and ensure that learning activities are well planned to meet the needs of different ability groups. They display good subject knowledge and the use of skilful questioning is a strong feature in most lessons.
- Equally, students are encouraged to develop their literacy skills in lessons. The academy has worked to ensure that speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are promoted in all subject areas across the curriculum.
- In those lessons where students make outstanding gains in their learning, teachers consistently provide high levels of challenge throughout the lesson. A focus on independent learning and collaborative work, enabling students to extend their thinking and ideas, are key features. Academy leaders are fully aware of what is required to ensure that more teaching across all subject areas is at this highest level.
- Marking in students' workbooks and folders is regular with many examples of detailed feedback, linked to expected targets, that helps students to improve further. Students value the comments and also the encouragement and verbal feedback they receive in lessons from both teachers and teaching assistants.

- There is much in place to ensure that teachers and support staff are able to develop and improve their practice further. Regular, weekly professional development opportunities, coaching activities and focused provision for teachers, including the 'improving teacher programme', for example, ensure that staff are able to work with their colleagues from a range of subject areas and benefit from their expertise and best practice. Teachers value these opportunities. Leaders recognise that, currently, the best teaching in subject areas is not yet routinely shared across the academy.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- In discussion students report that they enjoy academy life and this is reflected in their typically good behaviour in lessons and around the academy site. They have positive attitudes to learning and show respect for each other and the adults who work at or visit the academy.
- In lessons good relationships between students and adults are evident. Students are clear about the standards of behaviour expected and indicate that there is, overall, a consistent approach taken by teachers across the academy in managing any unacceptable behaviour.
- Rewards, including the five-star scheme and attendance prizes, and sanctions, including the use of an internal exclusion unit for serious behaviour incidents, are well understood by students. Staff are highly visible around the academy.
- Students feel safe in and around the academy. They are aware of how to stay safe and they know about risk and different types of bullying. They also know how to use the academy's 'sharp' system for reporting any concerns. The academy's records support students' views on behaviour with a decline in behaviour incidents and overall exclusion figures evident.
- Effective pastoral arrangements, notably through the house system and close liaison with external agencies, as appropriate, are complemented fully by thorough procedures to safeguard and care for those students with the highest level of personal and social need. This holistic provision ensures that students have the opportunity to achieve well and experience all the academy has to offer.
- The academy has worked hard to improve attendance. Close monitoring and a range of procedures to both support and challenge students and their families, particularly those with a poor track record of attendance, have resulted in an overall increase in attendance over time. As a result, attendance is currently above the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal's effective and determined leadership has been pivotal in moving the academy forward. She has been ably supported by senior leaders and key middle leaders in this endeavour.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the academy's performance. There are clear lines of accountability and the academy's action improvement plan and the faculty development plans are securely focused on key priorities. In turn, performance management arrangements ensure that teachers and leaders are held to account for students' performance.
- Despite recently moving to a new site and also significant changes in staffing over time, leaders have continued to take the required actions to secure improvements in provision and achievement. Recent examples include the commissioning of consultant support in languages and a curriculum review in humanities to tackle identified weaker performance in these areas.
- Rigorous procedures to regularly check the quality of teaching and students' achievement are in place. Regular, half-termly checks by senior leaders, working with middle leaders, ensure that any student at risk of underachievement or any weaker practice in teaching is swiftly addressed. Senior leaders recognise, however, that there is now scope to develop further the skills of middle leaders across the academy.
- The curriculum, including enrichment activities, promotes students' achievement and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. It is constantly reviewed to ensure that it

is meeting the needs, interests and aspirations of the students. This has resulted in a move to a more academic range of subjects and tailored vocational provision, as appropriate, for Key Stage 4 students. This, together with the use of an integrated curriculum for Year 7 students and the continual drive to improve all aspects of literacy across the curriculum, allows every student the opportunity to succeed, with almost all entering employment, education or training after leaving the academy.

- The sponsor has provided a range of support services to the academy, including for human resource issues, governance, finance and specific support to improve students' achievement and the quality of teaching. The sponsor's adviser has continued to ensure that the work of the academy is regularly reviewed. Academy leaders value the support and challenge provided. The academy has also established productive partnership links with, for example, primary schools, further and higher education institutions and the local authority.
- Evidence from academy surveys and Parent View indicates that parents hold a mixed range of views on the academy's work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body understands the strengths of the academy and where further challenge is required. Governors have a range of expertise and the required knowledge and skills to hold leaders to account. They have secure information on pupil premium funding and use appraisal procedures to review the performance of academy personnel in relation to pay progression. The academy's safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	136115
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	399805

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

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	771
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Walsh
Principal	Colette Burgess
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0161 6522428
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Email address	enquiry@theoldhamacademynorth.com

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