

Oasis Academy Oldham

Hollins Road, Hollinwood, Oldham, OL8 4JZ

Inspection dates 7–8 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Too many students still do not achieve to their potential by the end of Key Stage 4. Achievement requires further improvement at GCSE level and particularly in English and mathematics.
- Over time teaching has not ensured that students make consistently good or better progress. In lessons, too many students, particularly the most able students, are not sufficiently challenged to do exceptionally well.
- Students' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are not consistently good. Low-level disruption in a minority of lessons limits learning and the progress that students make.
- Variability in the quality of marking and feedback prevents students in too many lessons making better progress. Homework is not set routinely and monitored effectively.

The school has the following strengths

- The Principal and senior leaders are transforming the culture of the academy to one of higher ambition and continued improvement. Since the last inspection there have been significant improvements in student achievement, teaching and overall student attitudes to learning.
- Teaching is improving. There is now a strong foundation of good or better teaching within the academy. There is good leadership of teaching and very effective staff development.
- Students are now making better progress at Key Stage 3 and particularly where teaching is consistently good. The reading recovery programme is having a positive impact in improving students' literacy skills in Years 7 and 8.
- The academy provides a safe, harmonious and inclusive environment for its students.
- The academy council and sponsors are clearly committed and focused on raising achievement and embedding improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 39 parts of lessons. They also undertook learning walks, visited an assembly and progress tutorials as well as activities at break and lunchtimes.
- Five groups of students met with inspectors. Discussions were held with academy staff, including senior leaders, heads of departments, and teachers. Discussions were also held with members of the academy council, and a representative of the sponsors.
- Inspectors reviewed the 140 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View), alongside the academy’s own records of parental and student feedback. They also considered the views expressed in 61 inspection questionnaires returned by academy staff.
- Inspectors read a range of documents including the academy’s self-evaluation, development and improvement plans, monitoring reports, behaviour logs and records in relation to safeguarding. Inspectors also looked at internal and external students’ progress and attainment data, student files and exercise books.
- At the time of the inspection nine full-time members of staff were on maternity leave.

Inspection team

Patrick Geraghty, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Kathleen Harris	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Haddock	Additional Inspector
James Kidd	Additional Inspector
Denis Oliver	Additional Inspector

Full report

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

Information about this school

- The academy opened in September 2010. It is sponsored by an educational trust, Oasis Community Learning.
- The academy is a larger than average secondary school with a smaller than average but increasing proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds. A small number of students, mainly of Czech, Slovakian and Romanian heritage, are in the early stages of speaking English as an additional language.
- Over half the students are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is high compared with most schools. The pupil premium is additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals or in local authority care.
- The proportion of students with disabilities or who have special educational needs supported at school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The Aspire Centre, sited at a local primary academy, caters for a very few students at risk of permanent exclusion.
- There have been several changes to senior leadership and teaching staff since the last inspection.
- In 2013, the academy met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that a greater proportion is at least good by:
 - improving lesson planning to enable all lessons to best meet the needs of all students, and ensuring that tasks are challenging and engage students
 - using questioning more effectively to challenge and engage students so that they have opportunities to develop their reasoning, spoken language and extend their thinking
 - ensuring that in all lessons low-level disruptive behaviour does not go unchallenged and does not impact on the learning of others.
- Continue to raise and accelerate achievement by:
 - further accelerating the pass rate for achieving five GCSE A* to C grades, including English and mathematics
 - continuing to close the gaps in achievement between different groups of students and especially those known to be eligible for free school meals
 - ensuring a stronger focus on the development of literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects.
- Further promote high student aspirations and a continued commitment to a culture of ambition and improvement by ensuring that:
 - marking is regular across all subjects and informs and supports students in their next steps in learning.
 - homework is regularly set, thoroughly monitored and forms a key element in the academy's

improving achievement strategy

- the most able students receive extension work and challenging assignments which enable them to have the opportunities to excel.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement. While GCSE results are rapidly improving they remain below the national averages and further and accelerated improvement is required.
- In 2012/13 there was a 17% increase in the numbers of students achieving five GCSE A* to C grades, including English and mathematics. Robust academy tracking systems indicate that this will improve further and significantly in the current year.
- Inspection evidence, including lesson observations, scrutiny of students' work in exercise books and a close examination of the academy's progress tracking systems show that students in the current Year 10 and 11 are on course to reach higher standards and make better progress in English and mathematics. However, the academy managers recognise that the most able students receive insufficient challenge to enable them to excel. Not enough students achieve the higher grades A* and A in GCSE examinations.
- The gap in achievement for those students known to be supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and other students in the school, is narrowing. The academy has established effective systems to target those students for additional support. Focused support in the classroom for disabled students and those with special educational needs results in these students making the same progress as other students.
- Academy tracking systems and inspection evidence also demonstrates that students at Key Stage 3 are now making good progress. Gaps between different groups have narrowed significantly.
- The academy places a crucial emphasis on improving students' literacy skills, using extra catch-up funding effectively. The introduction of a well-focused reading recovery programme at Key Stage 3 has impacted on much improved reading ages. A stronger reading and literacy culture is emerging. This change in culture was exemplified by one Year 7 student's comment that, 'If you've never read a book you've never lived.' However, there remains some inconsistency within and across subjects in the application of the academy's literacy and numeracy strategies.
- The academy places an increasingly strong focus on extra-curricular activities to support the students in their curriculum including sports, drama and music, support sessions to raise female students' aspirations, and a chefs' school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because there has not been enough good teaching and learning over time to ensure that all students make good or better progress. Since the last inspection there has been a rapid improvement in the quality of teaching. Inadequate teaching has been reduced to a minimum and there is much more good, or better, teaching. However, in a significant minority of lessons, teaching and learning still require improvement.
- In some lessons, students are encouraged to think hard and reflect upon their learning. Tasks are well planned and there are well-developed and often stimulating resources to support learning. Positive learning relationships are established between students which add to the excitement and consolidation of learning.
- In food technology, for example, students demonstrated excellent team skills whether in the organisation and implementation of hygiene rules and washing rotas or in the more creative endeavour of making garlic bread. They applied themselves to the task fully and worked in very well organised and cooperative groups: their endeavour and focus was palpable. Even more impressively, some used the terminology of the subject and applied this, as a literacy exercise, to human characteristics and personality, such as in the word 'zesty'.
- Where students' progress was slower, minor misbehaviour by some students impacted negatively on the learning of all. Students were not encouraged to express their ideas and present solutions. The questions asked by teachers were shallow and pair and group work was

poorly organised. Students had little time to reflect and deepen their learning. The most able students were not sufficiently challenged with extension work and demanding activities and so were not given the opportunity to excel.

- Marking in some subjects, such as English and history, is thorough and regular. However, in too many subjects marking was superficial, cursory and failed to give pointers to the next steps to improvement. There was little evidence of teachers' follow-up to assess improvement and chart students' progress. In too many subjects, homework is not set routinely and monitored effectively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Behaviour of students requires improvement. Since the last inspection behaviour has improved significantly. However, there persists, in a minority of lessons, low level disruptive behaviour which negatively impacts on the learning of students. Students know how to behave well but they simply choose not to do so with some teachers and within some lessons.
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students said that they feel safe within the academy. They have a developing understanding of safety concerning their own health and well-being because these aspects are covered in the curriculum and pastoral system. They are fully aware of how to use the internet safely and also of the possible dangers of social media websites.
- Students' behaviour around the academy site is generally orderly. In these circumstances students are polite and cooperative with each other and adults. The academy has effective systems to record incidences of bullying and racism. Racist incidents are rare. The employment and work of the school engagement officer and the academy's work with the local communities have impacted on the establishing of a largely harmonious environment. Where bullying occurs, students say it is dealt with and any issues are resolved.
- Attendance has demonstrated year-on-year improvement and is now broadly average. Persistent absences data has improved and the exclusion rate has been significantly reduced. The development of the 'Aspire Centre' has enabled a period of reflection and readjustment for students who would have been previously excluded. Tracking records indicate that their reintroduction into the main stream school is successful.
- The academy promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Increasingly, students are willing to take on a variety of responsibilities, such as student councillors and reading mentors for younger students. Students are also proactive in their support for a range of charity appeals. The physical well-being of students is promoted through the curriculum and numerous extra-curricular sports activities.
- The academy is a tidy environment and, on the whole the uniform dress codes are good and strictly applied.

The leadership and management

are good

- Leadership and management are good. Leaders have moved the academy rapidly forward from a series of inadequate judgments at the last inspection. Effective systems to promote improvement across all provision are now in place and are having an impact.
- The academy is well led by a dedicated and forward-thinking Principal. He is ably supported by a highly committed Associate Principal and senior leadership team. An accurate and frank self-evaluation of academy performance has led to well-focused strategies to promote better student behaviour, accelerated achievement and better teaching. As a result, students, parents and staff say all these aspects of academy life have improved.
- Leadership at faculty level and subject level is improving. Faculty leaders now take much greater responsibility for developing the areas for which they are responsible. The quality and impact of middle leadership is, however, still variable and training in data interrogation, for example, is

ongoing.

- Assessment and tracking of student progress and attainment are improving. There has been a real shift in emphasis to monitoring levels of progress.
- The management of teaching and learning is bringing about improvement to the quality of teaching. Excellent staff development, in partnership with Oasis Limeside Primary Academy, is moving the quality of teaching and learning rapidly forward.
- Performance management is increasingly robust. Performance management and professional development are used very well to support and challenge teachers whose work has been judged as weak.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced at Key Stage 4 with clear academic and vocational pathways. For example, the academy has established an excellent chef school with a high-end Manchester restaurant company which promotes links into employment and apprenticeship opportunities. A strong focus on literacy skills has improved reading ages and initiated the building of a more active reading culture.
- The academy has a strong inclusive culture and places a strong focus on the care and support of vulnerable students. Gaps in achievement between different groups of students are closing but improvement here needs further acceleration.
- The academy is very well supported by its sponsors. Sponsors, governors, senior leaders and staff are committed to sustained and embedded long-term improvement.
- Equality and diversity are promoted well across academy provision. Data is used well to monitor the performance of different groups and is now effectively used to reduce identified gaps in achievement.
- The academy meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding students, including for those accessing off-site provision.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the academy council have a keen awareness of the academy's strengths and areas for development. They support the academy to the full but also hold the leadership to account with rigour.
 - Members analyse and evaluate students' achievement data regularly and accurately and have a good understanding of trends in progress and attainment. They are fully aware of how pupil premium funding is spent and keep a close eye on the impact of this spending.
 - Council members visit classes to observe students' learning and they are fully aware of how the school is attempting to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

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	136027
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	426036

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Craig Dean
Headteacher	David Hayes
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2012
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