

The Oldham Academy North

Broadway, Royton, Oldham, Lancashire, OL2 5BF

Inspection dates 13–14 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The quality of teaching and assessment is too variable both in, and between, departments. Not all teachers plan students' learning thoroughly enough to engage them or meet their learning needs.
- Marking and assessment are not consistently good, leaving some students unclear as to how they can make better progress.
- Achievement in science and for those students who are disabled or have special educational needs is not yet good.
- Students who are disabled or have special educational needs do not always receive enough support for reading and writing in lessons.
- Boys are much more likely to be excluded from lessons or school than girls. A minority of boys exhibit poor attitudes to learning and do not always show respect for members of staff.
- Risk assessments are not always quality assured by members of the governing body or the sponsor.
- Safeguarding arrangements are in place for those students who are educated off-site but they need to be refined.
- Members of the governing body do not challenge senior leaders rigorously enough, particularly around achievement data.

The school has the following strengths

- There is much good and some outstanding practice in school.
- The large majority of students enjoy coming to school, feel safe and appreciate the teachers and pastoral staff who support them.
- Students achieve well in a number of subjects, including art and mathematics.
- There are real strengths in leadership, including the leadership and management of teaching, learning and behaviour.
- There are opportunities for students to deepen their learning through spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with half a day’s notice in response to a number of concerns raised by a parental complaint.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, governors, senior and middle leaders, teaching staff, over 70 students, four representatives from the local authority and two representatives from the sponsor.
- 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 students’ and parents’ questionnaires provided by the academy.
- Inspectors spoke to a small number of parents and grandparents who were collecting students from school. There were insufficient responses to Parent View this year to provide inspectors with any statistical analysis.
- Inspectors observed 27 lessons, including one joint observation. Inspectors also made a series of short visits to lessons.
- Inspectors scrutinised a large sample of work, including looking at books in lessons.

Inspection team

Sally Kenyon, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Royston Halford	Additional Inspector
Sally Lane	Additional Inspector
Osama Abdul Rahim	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school and is sponsored by E-ACT.
- The academy's primary specialism is visual arts.
- A few students are educated through off-site provision. Providers include Oldham College and the Wellbeing Centre.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is broadly 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 support through the pupil premium (additional funding provided for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is more than twice the national average.
- Almost all students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy moved to a new building in April 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and rates of progress, particularly for students who are disabled or have special educational needs, by:
 - ensuring that marking and assessment are high quality and students clearly understand how to improve their work
 - checking that all teachers plan thoroughly enough to give students the support they need with reading and writing.
- Raise achievement in science so that standards are above the national average.
- Improve behaviour and safety by:
 - improving attitudes to learning and reducing the number of fixed-term exclusions and internal exclusions, particularly for boys
 - ensuring that leaders, managers and the sponsor regularly quality assure risk assessments and safeguarding arrangements, particularly for those who are educated off-site.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that governors challenge senior leaders more rigorously
 - ensuring that all middle leaders meticulously check the work of their departments.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The proportion of students entering the school with low attainment is more than double the national average. There are only a few pupils who enter the school with abilities above those expected for their age.
- Last summer's results saw a sharp and unexpected decline in achievement primarily due to poor results in English. Leaders and managers have taken swift and robust action to address this, resulting in progress well above national averages.
- Early GCSE entry has been used this year in English. Progress in English has already exceeded national averages last year and many students have made better than expected progress.
- Achievement in mathematics has been one of the strengths of the school for a number of years. Good progress was observed in mathematics lessons during the inspection and forecasts for the summer, based on historically accurate data, show that this trend is set to continue.
- Achievement in science still lags behind the other core subjects. For a number of years, students have not made good enough progress. School leaders and managers have taken action to address the quality of teaching, resulting in the employment of some temporary teachers while staff who have left are replaced. Although progress observed in lessons is still variable, recent work in science books shows much better progress.
- Challenging targets are set across all subjects. At Key Stage 4, lots of intervention work takes place to try and address the legacy of underachievement inherited from the predecessor school.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress in some lessons, particularly when they are well supported by highly skilled teaching assistants. However, when teachers do not provide them with the support they need for reading and writing, their progress is restricted.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding is used well to accelerate reading skills. Some students who have English as an additional language make rapid progress in a matter of months.
- There is a very small gap between the attainment of students eligible for support through the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, and that of their peers in mathematics, equivalent to less than a quarter of a GCSE grade. In English, students eligible for support through the pupil premium on average do one GCSE grade better than their peers.
- Students who are the most able make better than expected progress in English and mathematics but their progress is variable elsewhere. The few students who attend off-site provision for part or all of their time make very mixed rates of progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies too much. Students were seen to be making good and sometimes outstanding progress by inspectors. However, evidence from students' books shows that progress varies widely across a range of subjects and over time. This variability is exacerbated by the number of temporary staff currently employed by the school. Often, but not always, students' attitudes to learning are not as strong with teachers they do not know.
- In a Year 8 history lesson, students did not make good progress because they had insufficient support for reading and writing. Scrutiny of their books showed limited progress over time and very poor writing skills for some. One boy was repeatedly told that his behaviour merited removal from the room. However, no effective sanction was applied by the teacher, which meant that the student continued to disrupt the learning of others.
- In a Year 10 French lesson, students held their own conversations and showed little respect for the teacher. Many of them did not understand the work as they did not have the necessary reading and writing skills. Furthermore, for some the work was too easy, yet they sat quietly and respectfully, making little progress.
- In a Year 7 physical education lesson, students made rapid progress due to meticulous planning.

They were learning the technique for a forward drive in cricket. Students had to use formal English when discussing the techniques, reinforcing good oracy. Students had no time to chat or lose focus as they were entirely engaged in the fun and challenging activities. Students showed a good knowledge of sport and techniques; they confidently held their own discussions about what weight of bat would be best to use.

- Students make strong progress over time in mathematics due to teachers' diligent planning and strong subject knowledge.
- Art rooms are beautifully adorned with pottery and paintings, giving an indication of the ongoing strength of provision in these areas. The library provides a similarly calm climate for learning and a number of students choose to read there during social times.
- There is such a difference between the nature of the provision for the three students who are educated off-site that it is not possible to comment upon the overall quality of teaching for them.

The behaviour and safety of pupils require improvement

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Records of behaviour over time show that a minority of lessons are interrupted by poor behaviour. Students spoken to by inspectors agreed that, while in the majority of their lessons students behave well, there are times when they do not.
- Not all staff have high enough expectations of students. They do not consistently use the clear system for behaviour management.
- Inspectors observed much good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning in many subjects including art, physical education and mathematics. However, in modern foreign languages, humanities and science, students were sometimes observed talking over teachers and refusing to follow instructions.
- Students look very smart in their academy uniforms and many students are polite, courteous and respectful. During social times, students split predominantly into groups of girls and boys. Students queue sensibly for their lunch and are well supervised by the team of staff on duty.
- School records show that leaders have raised expectations of behaviour and, consequently, the number of removals from lessons has increased. Pastoral staff are now collecting students for lunchtime detentions because they have been late to school, failed to hand in their coursework or because they have talked during a test.
- Strong systems are in place to record, track and analyse students removed from class and students who are excluded for a period of time. Senior leaders analyse this information and act upon any areas of concern.
- Attendance remains securely above the national average.
- Many students have a good understanding of the different types of bullying. However, a very small minority of students do not feel confident that the school will help them if they are bullied and they do not always feel safe in school.
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement. Risk assessments are not used as diligently as they should be; moreover, while clear arrangements are made for those students who are educated off-site, procedures for following up absence are not rigorous enough. Records of staff training are not always kept up to date.
- Students leave school in an orderly manner with little supervision. Parents and grandparents spoken with by inspectors feel students are safe at the school and were very happy with their school experience.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management are not yet good because standards have fallen since the previous inspection and the quality of teaching over time is not good enough. The single central record

meets requirements but arrangements for safeguarding need to be tightened up.

- While middle leaders are increasing in confidence and have better quality assurance in place, much of this work is recent and too much variability remains.
- Leaders and managers have responded swiftly and decisively to the unexpected dip in results last year. Weaknesses in science and English have been addressed while maintaining better progress in other subjects, such as mathematics. This demonstrates secure capacity for further improvement.
- The curriculum is under review to meet better the needs of all students and accommodate the many different mother tongues. Support for newly arrived students with little command of English is being strengthened by employing interpreters.
- The new leadership and management of teaching, learning and behaviour are strengths of the school. The associate principal is well placed to take the reins of the school when the Principal leaves in a few weeks. He is passionate about school improvement and, in particular, helping those students whose circumstances make them disadvantaged. Newly qualified teachers feel well supported.
- Weaknesses in the leadership and management of special educational needs have been rightly identified by senior leaders and governors. An audit of special educational needs provision has just been completed in response to the concerns and to assist senior leaders to take appropriate action.
- Performance management arrangements are thorough and effective. Teachers have academy-wide and departmental targets. Many staff did not receive an increase in salary last year because targets were not achieved.
- Artistic exploits are a strength of the school and, along with music and sport, contribute well to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Many governors are new to the governing body and bring fresh ideas and useful educational expertise.
 - The Chair of the Governing Body has a secure understanding of the quality of teaching and learning through his regular monitoring visits to the school.
 - In response to the decline in achievement last year, governors, in partnership with senior leaders, have ensured that 34 members of staff, including the entire leadership team, have not received pay progression.
 - Minutes of governing body meetings show that governors are asking the right questions about standards in science and for students who are disabled or have special educational needs. However, they do not challenge senior leaders rigorously enough about the data they receive.

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	444640

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	778
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	George Herbert
Principal	Colette Burgess
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2013
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