

Oasis Academy Brightstowe

Penpole Lane, Shirehampton, Bristol, BS11 0EB

Inspection dates 14–15 January 2015

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders have raised expectations throughout the academy and adapted the curriculum to meet the needs of the students. This is now enabling students to achieve well in all year groups and across a wide range subjects.
- Leaders' evaluations of the academy's effectiveness are accurate. These provide the basis for well-considered strategies to attend to the academy's weaknesses. For example, support and guidance provided for inexperienced staff has had a positive impact well on teaching.
- Students' progress in English, history and geography is at least good and sometimes outstanding. Progress in mathematics and science has improved and is now good.
- The academy trust plays a strong leadership role. It is well-informed and makes regular checks on their work. This enables it to provide effective challenge and support to its leaders.
- The academy's work to keep all students safe is good.
- Students' attitudes to learning are overwhelmingly positive. They take a pride in their work and behave well both in lessons and during social times.
- Students respond well to teachers' enthusiasm, high expectations and established routines. Strong relationships have a positive impact on learning.
- In general, teachers provide work which challenges and engages all students. In some instances, tasks are planned imaginatively.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in modern foreign languages remains low, especially at Key Stage 4.
- The progress of the most able students has not received enough attention and is only now beginning to improve quickly enough.
- Teachers do not always check on students' learning in class well enough. This means they are not able to refocus the learning when necessary.
- Students are not always challenged enough to think for themselves and to deepen their understanding.
- Students do not always know how to improve their work. This is because the agreed academy systems for providing guidance are not always used to best effect.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 34 lessons taught by 32 different teachers. Six of these were jointly observed with senior leaders. Inspectors visited Year 7 lessons to look at the literacy skills of the students. Two assemblies were observed and inspectors visited sessions when the students met in form time. The conduct of students during break, lunchtimes and form time were also observed.
- An inspector visited 'The Orb', the academy's off-site centre for older students who are finding it difficult to learn in the main academy. Lessons were observed and discussions held with staff and students.
- Discussions were held with the Principal, other leaders, class teachers and the Regional Academies Director representing the Oasis Trust which is the academy's sponsors.
- Inspectors met with three groups of students, including two selected at random, and spoke with many others informally, particularly in class. Inspectors listened to students reading.
- In lessons, inspectors looked in depth at students' books and other work. They made a separate scrutiny of Year 11 books and academy examination papers.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, both on paper and online. These included: development plans and their evaluations; records of how leaders check on teaching; minutes of the local academy council; reports on visits by representatives of the trust to the academy; case studies; policies; safeguarding records; records of students' attainment and progress; and academy publicity and newsletters.
- Inspectors took into account the 100 responses made this academic year to the online Parent View questionnaire. They also considered the 54 responses to the questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Martin Spoor, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Marie Horton | Additional Inspector |
| Deborah Wring | Additional Inspector |
| Jeremy Frank | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- Oasis Academy Brightstowe is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. Student numbers are rising.
- The Oasis Trust sponsors Oasis Academy Brightstowe. Locally it is part of the trust's North Bristol hub, which also includes two primary schools. The Principal is also Executive Principal of one of these schools.
- The academy has established an off-site centre known as 'The Orb' that provides full-time education for 16 older students who are struggling to learn in the main academy. The academy uses no other alternative provision.
- Most Year 7 lessons are taught in a discrete learning base.
- More than five sixths of students are of White British heritage, with the others coming from several different ethnic groups. About one in 13 of the students speak English as an additional language.
- Nearly two fifths of students are disabled or have special educational needs. This proportion is well above average.
- Half of the students are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium, which is additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care. This proportion is well above the national average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the achievement of students in the academy through:
 - consolidating the improved progress of the most able students by setting sufficiently challenging work in lessons which in due course leads to the highest grades
 - raising students' attainment in modern foreign languages by addressing the gaps in their learning.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that all teachers check on the progress of all students in the class and adapt the learning when necessary
 - encouraging students' to put more thought into their work so that they deepen their knowledge and understanding of the skills they are learning
 - making sure all teachers and students use the academy's written guidance to support improvements in students work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders evaluate the work of the academy rigorously and reliably. Careful analysis of student achievement, regular checks on teaching and an agreed understanding of what good teaching is ensures that inexperienced and temporary teachers are supported in developing their effectiveness. This guidance is central to the academy, has secured the confidence of the staff and underpins the improvements to the quality of teaching.
- Subject leaders share the commitment of senior staff and are contributing significantly to improvements in teaching. Their plans to improve students' achievement ensure that the curriculum builds on what students already know. In particular, they know that activities in Key Stage 3 need to provide a more secure foundation for examination courses. This has enabled the most able students to begin to make faster progress.
- Representatives of the trust visit the academy regularly. By carrying out learning walks, student progress is checked and they are able to keep in touch with life at the academy. This provides them with a base from which they can challenge leaders effectively. The trust provides strong support for middle leaders. For example, it has established a regional network of subject leaders which provides guidance. This has contributed well to the development of students' learning at the academy.
- The leadership and management of 'The Orb' alternative provision are outstanding. Students with very particular needs, or who may be experiencing difficult circumstances, receive specialist teaching in a calm, supportive environment. External specialists also provide high quality guidance for these students which supports their personal development. Communication with the main academy is exemplary and some students succeed in rejoining mainstream classes.
- Pupil premium funding contributes towards the alternative provision and enables a broad range of academic and pastoral support to be provided. Expenditure has been particularly successful in improving the literacy and attitudes to reading of Year 7 students, and in maintaining the well-being and academic progress of some very vulnerable Key Stage 4 students.
- Leaders have successfully broadened the curriculum by offering a wider range of GCSE courses. This has provided students with a greater range of academic opportunities after the age of 16. Attainment on some new courses was initially low, but improvements to teachers' planning throughout the academy have led to a rapid rise in standards.
- The academy complements its formal curriculum with a wide range of clubs, including some unusual sporting opportunities such as rowing. After-school extension and booster classes are popular. The academy promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development strongly through lessons, particularly in religious education and during form time. Assemblies explicitly address British values and cultural diversity.
- The academy provides effective advice and guidance about the next steps in students' education and careers. It organises visits from representatives of different professions and trades to raise students' aspirations. However, some students who spoke with inspectors did not understand how to use the advice to plan their own futures. Curriculum improvements and students' growing self-confidence mean that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders' create excellent relationships between students, invest in the education of their most vulnerable groups, and take a strong stand against any form of discrimination. This combination effectively promotes equality of opportunity for all.
- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements. Staff keep detailed records and are able to draw on the sustained involvement of other agencies to help vulnerable students. They work effectively with parents to establish strong relationships. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the academy.

- Targets are set for teachers that depend on students' progress in all their classes. The results are used to make decisions about pay rises and promotion. Staff, including teachers at an early stage of their careers, report that training is proving very helpful in developing their skills.

■ The governance of the school:

- The trust provides good governance. It ensures effective support and challenge as well as good management of finance, premises and human resources. All safeguarding responsibilities are met.
- The trust monitors the work of the academy rigorously. This enables members of the trust to know about students' progress, the impact of the expenditure of the pupil premium, and the quality of teaching. It draws on appropriate professional expertise to visit the academy and check directly on leaders' judgements. Trust committees make sure that good teachers are being rewarded and any underperformance is being tackled. They ensure that decisions on the pay of senior leaders and other staff are securely based on students' progress. The trust is coordinating a common response to assessment following the removal of national curriculum levels.
- The Local Academy Council provides a genuine opportunity for the local community to scrutinise and contribute to the work of the academy.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students approach their learning with commitment and enthusiasm, bring the right equipment to class and take pride in the presentation of their written work. They understand and conform with the academy's clear rules for classroom conduct, which are applied consistently. They collaborate well and help each other. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, students showed imagination and sensitivity in supporting a girl with English as an additional language who had only very recently arrived at the academy.
- During the inspection, students were universally polite and helpful. They mirror the courtesy and respect that staff show to them. Their conduct at social times is orderly and responsible, even in the small dining room. They respect the academy's facilities and they drop very little litter.
- The academy keeps careful records of incidents of bad behaviour. These show that there have been very few incidents of a racist nature, and none of homophobia, and students corroborate this. The rate of fixed term exclusion is falling slowly, and is now broadly average. There have been two permanent exclusions this academic year.
- A wide range of strategies is used to improve the attitudes and behaviour of students working at 'The Orb'. In many instances, these are very successful with some students realising how their past attitudes impeded their learning and that of others. Consequently, they are now anxious to progress.
- Students report that a very small number of lessons are disrupted and in minor ways. Inspectors observed that where tasks fail to engage students fully, some students chatter out of turn or talk across the teacher.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Child protection procedures are robust. Staff are aware of the various risks to student safety, including forms of exploitation, and take decisive action when needed. Leaders check that visitors pose no risk to students. The academy involves external specialists proactively to support students when appropriate and this is a strong feature of the provision at 'The Orb'. Some highly vulnerable students benefit extensively from well-coordinated advice and the opportunity to re-engage with education.
- Students say that they feel very safe in the academy and know where to turn for support. The overwhelming majority of their parents agree. Older students report that bullying is very rare, but a few younger ones are concerned that when it does occur it is not always resolved quickly. Students are well informed about different types of risk, including those posed by the internet.

- The academy is acutely aware of the impact of absence on student achievement and pursues non-attendance relentlessly. Attendance has improved marginally over recent years and remains average.

The quality of teaching is good

- Relationships between teachers and their classes are clearly good. Teachers have established very effective routines so that very little learning time is wasted. Classrooms have a positive atmosphere and teachers' enthusiasm goes a long way to secure students' engagement.
- Teachers plan work carefully so that it builds on what students can already do. During the inspection, activities were almost always challenging for students of differing abilities, and, where students were able to choose from a range of tasks, they did so wisely. As a result, in the large majority of lessons, students made at least good progress. Imaginative tasks succeeded in 'hooking' students from the outset. For example, in a Year 8 history lesson, when the religious life of Tudor England was presented as a rollercoaster ride.
- In the past, work set for the most able students was not always well planned over time to allow them to attain the highest grades. However, inspectors observed lessons and scrutinised work which demonstrated that planning is now enabling students to think more deeply and secure more rapid progress.
- Literacy is promoted well in many lessons, for example, through the use of key words and the teaching of strategies for structuring extended writing. There is due attention to spelling and punctuation in students' books. In many instances, these techniques are contributing to the rapid development in students' writing skills. Students were sometimes given the opportunity to develop their spoken answers at length and proved confident and articulate speakers. Calculation skills are variable, but teachers placed an appropriate emphasis on developing mathematical understanding.
- Carefully structured support and good communication ensure that disabled students and those with special educational needs learn well. Work builds on their prior learning, starting in Year 7 where teachers with primary expertise help students to adapt smoothly to secondary education.
- Almost all the books seen by inspectors had been marked regularly. Most met the academy's expectation that staff offer individual guidance on how students can improve their work, to which students then respond. However, this was not consistently the case and a small minority of classes the guidance was too general or ignored by students. Some students said that they would value more detailed feedback, both orally and in their books.
- In the lessons where some students made slower progress, teachers did not do enough to check how quickly students were learning and what proportion of the class had grasped the new ideas. As a result teachers did not judge reliably how to modify students' learning so as to improve progress.
- On several occasions, questioning was very effective in probing and developing students' understanding. At other times, however, teachers did not challenge students to explain or to consider the topic in sufficient depth. Consequently, students' understanding was not always fully tested and they were not made to think as hard as they might.
- Teaching assistants and classroom volunteers understand the purpose of the activities, and work skilfully with individuals or small groups of students, asking pertinent questions and providing ways to enable them to grasp ideas. Homework, often set for differing abilities within the class, makes an effective contribution to learning.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students start in the academy with attainment which is below average. They leave with attainment across the range of subjects which is broadly average overall. The 2014 GCSE results show that attainment in English was above average and broadly average in mathematics, science and humanities subjects.

- In 2014, the proportion of students who made expected progress and the proportion who exceeded expected progress in English were above the national average. In mathematics the proportion who made expected progress was in line with the national average and the proportion who exceeded expected progress was below average.
- Progress in humanities subjects has improved considerably since the last inspection. In the large majority of classes seen during the inspection, the work in students' books showed that their progress over time was good or better. It was strongest in English, history and geography. Students' work indicates that standards in mathematics and science have risen and are now good.
- In 2014, disadvantaged students left the academy on average just under half a grade behind other students in both English and mathematics. Compared with all students nationally, they attained just over a quarter of a grade lower in English, and just under a grade lower in mathematics. These figures represent a closing of the attainment gap in English. In mathematics, the gap closed in one measure, and opened slightly in another. Data supplied by the academy and confirmed by inspectors indicate that for students currently in the academy, the gap is now closing in mathematics also.
- In 2014, the progress of the relatively small number of most able students was broadly average but lagged behind that of other students in the academy. The academy attributes this to teaching plans which in the past have not provided reliable access to the highest grades. New plans are now in place to address this long-standing issue. Data supplied by the academy, recent Year 11 test results and observations of the most able students in lessons suggest that progress is now increasing rapidly. This includes mathematics, and the most able students' progress is now at least in line with that of other students.
- In the past, the academy has entered all its students early for GCSEs in English and mathematics, with the intention of providing students with greater self-belief. All Year 11 students including the most able who spoke with inspectors felt that they had benefited from the opportunity. They have continued to study both subjects, as part of balanced courses of study. Inspectors found that these students were doing well and that early entry had not restricted their progress. The academy has decided to discontinue this practice, as students' commitment to their own success is now more durable.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress, especially in English, because well-qualified staff plan carefully to build on what they are already able to do. Year 7 'catch-up' funding has been spent largely on specialist literacy teaching, and this has been effective in improving the attainment of students with the very lowest levels of prior attainment.
- Students' progress at 'The Orb' alternative provision is good, because the academy ensures that they are able to continue with their GCSE courses in English, English Literature, mathematics, statistics and science. Inspectors observed students working confidently on comparing characters in literature texts.
- The relatively small number of students speaking English as an additional language achieve well, and those who enter the academy with low levels of prior attainment catch up rapidly with their peers.
- In 2014, attainment at GCSE level in modern foreign languages was below average, and standards remain low, especially at Key Stage 4. There are gaps in students' skills and knowledge, and they lack confidence in their own abilities. However, evidence shows that rates of progress are now rising, especially at Key Stage 3.

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

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| Unique reference number | 135671 |
| Local authority | Bristol |
| Inspection number | 449200 |

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

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| 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 | 656 |
| Appropriate authority | Oasis Community Learning |
| Chair | Rebecca Clark |
| Principal | Matthew Butler |
| Date of previous school inspection | 18 May 2011 |
| Telephone number | 0117 3167330 |
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