

Oasis Academy Aspinal

Broadacre Road, Manchester, Greater Manchester, M18 7NY

Inspection dates

3–4 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Requires improvement 3
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils	Requires improvement	3
Early years provision	Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was below average at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 because pupils have made inadequate progress in the past.
- Achievement is better than it was, but still requires improvement because there are remaining inconsistencies in the rates at which pupils make progress, especially in lower Key Stage 2.
- Teaching requires improvement because teachers do not always have the highest possible expectations of pupils.
- Tasks and activities are not always set at the right level to ensure that pupils of all abilities, including the least and the most able, make good progress and attain well.
- Phonics is not taught consistently well and pupils have too few opportunities to practise and refine their phonic skills and knowledge.
- Early years staff are yet to fully and accurately assess children's learning, and not all have an accurate enough picture of exactly how well children are achieving.

The school has the following strengths

- Over the last year, the academy has been radically transformed into a completely new organisation because of good leadership and management. Senior leaders are fully supported in their endeavours by all staff. Together they have completely changed the physical appearance of the academy, making it a place where teachers want to work, and pupils want to learn.
- Senior leaders, the academy council, and staff from the Oasis Academy Trust have all played important roles in improving the quality of teaching and raising standards for pupils.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well. They feel safe and like finding out new things with their friends. They are very proud of their new academy. Pupils enjoy coming to school, as evidenced by their much improved attendance.
- The quality of teaching across the academy is rapidly improving. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils and usually plan stimulating and interesting activities that pupils find exciting and engaging.
- Many pupils have made accelerated progress in reading, writing and mathematics over the last year. Standards are rising rapidly as a result.
- Parents are very complimentary about the academy, and are appreciative of the opportunities that they have to give their views through the new Parent Teacher Association. All parents who completed Parent View are correctly of the opinion that their children are safe and cared for well.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was part of a focused inspection of academies in Oasis Community Learning (Multi-academy educational trust).
- Inspectors observed a range of lessons in all year groups, as well as the teaching of small groups of pupils, and sessions aimed at helping pupils to learn to read. Some lessons were jointly observed with the Principal.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with pupils from across the academy. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised during lessons and separately with senior leaders.
- Inspectors considered 16 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the academy's own surveys of parents' and pupils' views. Additional evidence was gathered on parents' views from a number of sources, including through discussions. Responses to a questionnaire completed by 14 members of staff were considered.
- A meeting took place with the director of academy improvement and a telephone conversation was held with the National Director of Oasis Community Learning. Meetings were also held with two councillors, including the Chair of the Academy Council, academy leaders, and staff responsible for English, mathematics, special educational needs and the early years.
- A range of the academy's documents were examined. These included the academy's review of its own performance, various records of the academy's checks on the quality of teaching, improvement plans, the academy trust's evaluations of the academy's work, data on pupils' progress, records of pupils' attendance, behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Lenford White, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Frances Farnorth

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This academy is a smaller than average sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported by the pupil premium funding, is over twice the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average, the proportion speaking English as an additional language is below average.
- Children in the early years provision attend Nursery and Reception classes on a full-time basis.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Oasis Academy Aspinal converted to an academy in September 2013. When its predecessor school, Aspinal Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be satisfactory.
- An associate principal is responsible for the day-to-day running of the academy. The associate principal is supported by an executive principal who has responsibility for three Oasis academies. The executive principal joined Aspinal in February 2014 and the associate principal joined in May 2014.
- At this time, the governing body was replaced by an academy council. Most members of the council are new to the academy, including the Chair of the Academy Council.
- Some of the functions of a school governing body, such as the recruitment, selection and promotion of staff and decisions about spending are made by the regional and national directors of Oasis Community Learning rather than academy council members.
- After a review of teaching and learning in October 2014, the academy was completely refurbished. In January 2015 the outdoor learning and playing area in the early years was fitted with new covered areas and playing surfaces, and with various educational resources and play apparatus.
- A breakfast club operates from the site; this is managed by the academy council.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better and in so doing raise pupils' achievement across the school, including in lower Key Stage 2, by:
 - ensuring all teachers always have the highest possible expectations as to what pupils are capable of achieving
 - making sure that tasks and activities in class are always set at just the right level to ensure that pupils of all abilities, including the least and the most able, make good progress and attain well
 - making sure that phonics is taught consistently well and that pupils have as many opportunities as possible to practise and refine their phonics skills and knowledge.
- Improve the leadership and management of the early years by ensuring that children's learning is continually assessed, and making sure that all staff have an accurate picture of exactly how well children are achieving.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The associate and executive principals have very high aspirations and ambitions for the academy. Over the last year the academy council and the Oasis improvement director have supported senior leaders in transforming the academy. They have ensured that all staff endorse their vision of a successful learning hub at the heart of the community and play their part in making this a reality. Although it was not possible for senior leaders to fully reverse the trend that led to pupils' inadequate achievement at the end of Year 6 in 2014, standards have rapidly improved over the last year, as has the quality of teaching.
- Middle leaders, including those responsible for English and mathematics have benefited from extensive continuous professional development and have observed good practice in a number of schools, including those in the Oasis Community Learning. This has helped to improve their effectiveness. They play a full role in improving the quality of teaching and learning, and have made a good contribution to ensuring that the quality of teachers' marking is of a high standard.
- Systems for monitoring the performance of teachers have been significantly improved, and are now exceptionally well developed. All teachers have very clear targets, linked to raising standards for pupils and improving teachers' practice. Senior leaders and middle managers regularly check on the quality of teaching and keep detailed information on how well teachers are performing.
- The pupil premium funding is managed effectively by senior leaders. This helps to ensure the progress of those pupils who are eligible for support is swiftly improving, and they are able to participate in all aspects of academy life, including in sports, after-school clubs and school visits.
- All subject leaders and coordinators ensure that pupils have continuous access to a curriculum which they find exciting and engaging, and one which is helping to improve their standards of achievement. Pupils in Year 3 are particularly keen on their Stone Age workshop and much enjoyed a visit from a 'Roman soldier'. Year 6 enjoy visits to air raid shelters and Reception class children benefit from visits to zoos, farms and learning about 'people who help us' such as nurses and fire fighters.
- The academy's work to promote pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills across the curriculum is developing well alongside its new curriculum. All teachers are encouraged to show in their planning, and demonstrate in teaching, the importance of good grammar, punctuation, and spelling and problem-solving skills in effective learning.
- The academy's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils work exceptionally well together to learn new things and find out about the world around them. They have a good understanding of different faiths, including Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam and benefit from a wide range of school trips to galleries, museums and theatres. This helps to foster good relations and to discourage discrimination.
- Pupils have a good understanding of British values. They are fully conversant with the work of great world leaders, the rule of law and democracy and enjoy having their say in how the academy is run. Consequently they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Senior leaders and the academy council ensure that the primary school sport fund is well spent. It makes an important contribution towards developing the health and well-being of pupils through, for example, 'mini' and 'mega moves' (after-school dance classes). It also enables staff to develop skills in teaching physical education and sporting activities because they have valuable opportunities to work alongside professional coaches.
- The school's work to promote equality of opportunity and challenge discrimination is increasingly effective and is helping to ensure that standards attained by pupils with special educational needs, for example, are improving across Key Stage 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school works very closely with the director of the academies improvement service who has conducted two recent reviews of teaching and learning. Senior leaders have been quick to take up the recommendations from these reviews which have helped to, for example, improve outdoor learning and play areas in the early years, as well as the quality of the academy's middle leadership team.
- The school takes care to ensure that it has effective arrangements for safeguarding pupils and children in the early years. All staff are fully aware of their responsibilities to ensure that pupils are safe and well looked after. This helps to ensure that all statutory requirements for safeguarding are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Although council members are new to their roles, they are well informed. They come into the academy regularly and receive regular reports from senior leaders. This helps to make certain that they are rapidly developing in their roles and that they have first-hand information about the work of the school. The council members are successfully challenging the academy including by analysing data and

ensuring the academy meets all its statutory responsibilities.

- Staff have to reach challenging targets before they are considered for promotion. Members know that effective systems are in place to monitor how well teachers are performing, and they keep a careful eye on the improvements to the quality of teaching in the school.
- Council members know the pupil premium is making a difference to eligible pupils and that it is, for example, helping to ensure that a high proportion of disadvantaged pupils are on target to attain level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils say that many things have changed in the academy over the last year. They like their new bright and lively classrooms, they are confident to talk to any adult about any concerns they may have, and enjoy finding out about new things.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, as evidenced by their greatly improved attendance. They are welcoming to visitors, courteous, proud of their achievements, and treat each other respectfully.
- Their behaviour in class is never less than good, they listen to their teachers carefully and are eager to engage in discussions and share their ideas. This makes a good contribution to their much improved progress.
- Pupils behave very sensibly around the school. This includes when moving around corridors, during lunch and at break times. Children in the early years are particularly appreciative of their new outdoor learning and playing areas, they are sensible and like to share resources and take turns.
- Pupils are of the opinion that behaviour is good most of the time, and say that if anyone 'falls out' that it is usually due to minor disagreements which are soon sorted out because everyone wants to get on with each other and work hard.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils are adamant that bullying rarely if ever takes place in school. They know that for anyone who breaks the rules, or treats another person unfairly, that there will be 'serious consequences'. Parents and staff are of the opinion that behaviour is usually good and that bullying is rare. Inspection evidence, including a close scrutiny of the school's behaviour logs reveals that poor behaviour is infrequent, and any rare issues are always dealt with to the satisfaction of parents and pupils.
- Pupils have a good understanding of cyber bullying and say that it is when 'people send nasty texts or messages on social media'. They know never to visit websites if they are not suitable for their age and to always talk to an adult if they are not sure about clicking on a link, or a 'pop-up'.
- Regular assemblies linked to, for example, Black History Week and anti-bullying week help pupils to understand that bullying and discriminatory behaviour is wrong. Pupils say that the principal has made it clear that all forms of discrimination are wrong, and they know that 'racism is not acceptable'.
- Assemblies and classes led by visitors from the police, rail and fire services help pupils to understand safe and unsafe situations and how to avoid dangers.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because overtime it has not been good enough to ensure that pupils make good progress and achieve well. However, this is a rapidly improving academy, and the academy's own data show that pupils are making much improved progress in most year groups. This is because the quality of teaching is improving.
- Pupils learn in bright classrooms with displays of their art and written work and various charts and tables. These are used well to support them with their calculation and problem solving skills, as well as their grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Pupils are used to working together, sharing their ideas, and coming to the front of the class to talk about what they are learning. They are sometimes given different activities depending on their abilities and always know what they will be learning. This was the case in Year 5 where pupils made good progress as they were asked to use different division methods to solve a series of number problems and in Year 1 where pupils engaged in a series of different well-planned activities linked to finding out information on nocturnal animals. However, pupils do not always make such good progress, particularly in lower Key

Stage 2, when teachers set work that some pupils find too easy, and others find too difficult. Occasionally, the progress of the most able pupils slows because teachers do not have the highest possible expectations of what they are capable of achieving.

- Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to read in class. Most pupils are well read and able to confidently talk about the stories that they are reading. However, the less able readers, especially in Key Stage 1, often find books difficult to access because their ability to link letters and the sounds they make (phonics) are not yet sufficiently well developed. This is because phonics is not taught consistently well and pupils do not have enough time to practise and refine their phonics skills and knowledge.
- Teachers' marking is of good quality. This includes in English, mathematics and topic books and in pupils' 'home learning' books. Teachers usually indicate to pupils how they can improve their learning. Pupils regularly respond to teachers' comments and improve their work as a result. The consistency in practise, coupled with pupils' good knowledge of their targets, helps to ensure that most make accelerated progress and enjoy their learning.
- Teachers encourage pupils to take an active interest in researching, and collecting information about topics of interest. This was exemplified in Year 6, where pupils found it difficult to contain their excitement when sharing with their classmates the fruits of their learning. Good questioning provided an opportunity for pupils to share their detailed knowledge of the differences between plant and animal cells and the importance of micro-organisms, such as fungi, in helping with medical developments, such as the discovery of penicillin.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to plan different activities for pupils and to provide support, usually to small groups of pupils, when it is needed. One-to-one support is especially effective for pupils with special educational needs, and for those still in the early stages of acquiring English.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing, mathematics, grammar, punctuation and spelling by the time they left the academy at the end of Year 6 in 2014 was too low and their progress had been slow. While overall standards attained by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 were average, the proportion of pupils who were identified as secure in their phonics skills by the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 was well below average.
- The academy has set very aspirational targets for pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 this year. During the last academic year, pupils' progress had already started to improve but there was not time for those that reached the end of Year 6 in 2014 to fill all the historical gaps in their knowledge and skills. Pupils in most year groups are currently making accelerated progress. Nevertheless, there are still remaining inconsistencies in the rate at which pupils progress, particularly in Years 3 and 4.
- Pupils make much improved progress in mathematics in most year groups. Pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve in mathematics and they have many opportunities to practise their calculation and problem-solving skills across the curriculum.
- Where past progress in writing has not been good enough, pupils have been well supported and are now making much more rapid progress across most year groups. Inspection evidence reveals many examples of excellent extended writing, particularly in Year 6.
- The teaching of the links between sounds and letters is improving. Pupils across the school enjoy reading a wide range of books in different styles and from various authors. Those who read for inspectors said that they had many opportunities to use the library, and to participate in reading activities in class. However, the less able pupils do not have enough strategies to support them in identifying and reading new words because for them phonics is not yet taught consistently well.
- Pupils speaking English as an additional language receive excellent support and make good progress. The achievement of all pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups is closely monitored. Regular pupils' progress meetings enable teachers to identify any pupils in danger of falling behind. They can then provide them with the necessary support to ensure that they catch up with their peers quickly and achieve well.
- Pupils with disabilities or special educational needs are now making good progress across all year-groups. This is because the academy works well in partnership with parents and a wide range of specialists, and ensures that these pupils' needs are well catered for by skilled teachers and teaching assistants.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 was lower than that of non-disadvantaged peers in school by about a term in mathematics, two terms in reading and half a term in writing. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment was about two years behind their non-disadvantaged peers nationally in mathematics and reading, and about a year and a half behind in writing. School data show

that gaps in achievement between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils are closing. For example in Year 6, these pupils are now making the same good progress as their non-disadvantaged peers in all subjects because their progress is closely tracked and they are very well supported in their learning.

- The academy's work to develop the skills of the most able pupils is improving. Pupils in Year 6 that are targeted for the highest possible level 6 work in reading, writing and mathematics are enthusiastic and keen to learn. Their work in books shows that they are capable of reaching the high standards and the after-school and lunch-time clubs they attend are helping them to make rapid progress.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Caring teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together to ensure that all children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities and the most able, benefit from improving teaching and much improved facilities. However, there are variations between the quality of provision in the Nursery and in the Reception classes, which result in children's progress and the quality of teaching requiring improvement.
- Children enter the Nursery class with weak skills in most areas of learning, including speaking and listening. However, they make good progress through nursery and enter the Reception class with much improved skills in all areas of learning. Children's progress through the Reception Year is improving, although a below average proportion entered Year 1 in 2014 with a good level of development and therefore the skills and abilities necessary for the next stage of their development.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are supported and managed by an experienced teacher in Year 1 who is helping to ensure that information about children's learning is used more effectively to plan challenging activities. However leadership and management require improvement because staff do not do enough to continually assess children's learning when they are in the Reception class and, therefore, do not always have a precise picture of each child's progress.
- Staff work well together to make learning interesting and to make sure children are safe. This was exemplified in the Nursery class where children engaged in a range of baking, painting, counting and writing activities linked to the story of the Gingerbread Man, and in the Reception class where children engaged in a range of activities relating to the story of The Three Billy Goats Gruff.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get on exceptionally well together and their behaviour is good. They move around their well-furnished classrooms very sensibly and follow instructions well. They settle into routines quickly, and engage in activities, such as putting on hats, coats and gloves with the minimum of fuss.
- Children are very appreciative of their new outdoor learning and playing areas which has made a major contribution to their improved progress. Adults use this outdoor space well to support children in developing their skills in counting, team working, and to develop their sense of excitement and interest in the world around them.
- Attractive records are kept of children's involvement in activities but these learning journeys are not used effectively to record children's progress. These records are regularly shared with parents, who are happy that their children are learning in a safe and stimulating environment.

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	140052
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	450334

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Charlotte Sarson
Principal	Mick Beresford (Associate Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	0161 223 0053
Fax number	0161 231 0658
Email address	admin@oasisaspinal.org

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