

Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey

Head Office, East Site, Minster Road, Minster-on-Sea, ME12 3JQ

Inspection dates 4–5 March 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Students' achievement requires improvement because it is too variable across subjects and between groups of students.
- The proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, does not regularly meet the government's expected minimum standards.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good. Some teachers do not always plan activities that meet the needs of all students.
- Teachers do not always use information about the ability of their students to plan learning that meets their needs and challenges them.
- Teachers do not always help students reflect and act upon guidance to improve their learning.
- Teachers do not always apply the behaviour policy consistently and, as a result, students' learning is disturbed by incidents of low level disruption.
- Students' writing needs development as it is not of a consistently high standard that supports effective communication.
- Attendance is improving slowly, but is below the national average.
- The sixth form provision requires improvement because achievement is not yet at national averages.
- The rates of retention in the Sixth form need to improve

The school has the following strengths

- The newly appointed executive principal and senior leadership team have quickly identified strengths and areas needed for improvement. Many new processes being put in place are addressing the weaknesses and leading to an improving picture.
- The achievement of disadvantaged students, those who are disabled or have special educational needs is improving rapidly.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength of the academy.
- Relationships between staff and students are good and this helps students feel safe. Students say behaviour has improved.
- Academy staff effectively monitor the provision for students who attend off-site provision.
- The academy council understand the actions needed to improve the academy still further.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was part of a focused inspection of academies in the Oasis multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors made 41 visits to classrooms to observe students' learning. Members of the senior leadership team accompanied them on 13 of these visits. Inspectors observed assemblies and tutor time. They also made a series of shorter visits to lessons to observe students' learning across the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with groups of students, members of the senior leadership team, and leaders in charge of subjects and other aspects of the academy's work. Inspectors met with teachers new to the school.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the academy council as well as the national director for school improvement and the regional director of Oasis multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors had a number of discussions with teaching staff. They examined a range of documents, including the academy's review of its own performance, its plans for improvement and students' progress information.
- Inspectors evaluated the academy's information about exclusions, attendance and behaviour. They considered evidence of how effectively the school staff monitor the progress of those of their students who are receiving their education in other settings.
- Inspectors looked at a range of students' work in lessons.
- The inspection team took into account 55 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, and considered questionnaires completed by 87 members of staff.

Inspection team

Jackie Jones, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Steven Smith	Additional Inspector
Gary Holden	Additional Inspector
Keith Pailthorpe	Additional Inspector
Jason Ashley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey is an 11 to 18 school. It is larger than the average-sized secondary school. The academy became part of the Oasis multi-academy trust in January 2014.
- The executive principal and the associate principals were appointed since the last inspection by the Oasis multi-academy trust.
- The vast majority of students are from White British backgrounds. A very small proportion of students speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, and those looked after by the local authority) is above the national average.
- There are 83 students for whom the academy receives Year 7 catch-up funding. This is funding for students who did not achieve Level 4 (the nationally expected level) at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is above the national average.
- iZone is an on-site unit, managed by the academy, which supports students who may otherwise be at risk of permanent exclusion. As part of this provision, 12 students attend Stevedores, which is away from the main school site, but managed by academy staff.
- The academy is being supported by the national director for school improvement and the regional academies' director from the Oasis multi-academy trust.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards in 2014, which set minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise students' achievement and the quality of teaching further by ensuring that:
 - the academy meets the government's floor standards for students' achievement in English and mathematics as soon as possible
 - all staff develop their use of class data to plan learning so that students, including the most able, meet their challenging targets
 - there is consistency in the use of the academy's assessment practice so that students are clear on how they can improve their learning and respond effectively
 - all staff use the academy behaviour policy consistently, so that incidents of low level disruption are reduced and students can focus on their learning
 - ensuring students' writing skills are developed fully across all subjects within the academy
 - further developing the role of middle leaders in raising achievement through the effective monitoring of the work of their subject areas.
- Improve attendance to at least the national average.
- Strengthen the curriculum provision for sixth form students, so further improving retention and outcomes.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The very strong leadership of the executive principal and his senior leadership team has been fundamental in bringing about rapid improvement since the last inspection. They quickly identified areas for improvement in the academy and rapidly put in place a raft of changes. These have had a very positive impact on the ethos and attitudes of staff and students who now believe they can be successful.
- The changes had not been in place long enough to have a positive impact on raising the 2014 GCSE results above floor targets. The academy's projections and current checks on progress, however, are much more positive in terms of their expected performance in national tests at the end of this academic year.
- The executive principal has very strong support from his staff. Students, as well as parents, recognise the significant improvements made by the leadership of the academy since the last inspection. Responses in Parent View showed a significant improvement in satisfaction with the performance of the academy.
- The academy's view about its own performance is robust and accurate. It informs a realistic plan to bring about improvement. Consequently, provision for all students is improving rapidly.
- The senior leaders' judgements on the quality of teaching are accurate. The leaders correctly assess and identify where students' learning must improve.
- Middle leaders, many of whom are new to their roles, understand what students need to learn and ensure the courses they follow are appropriate. They understand what is needed to monitor the work of their subject areas and are doing so with increasing effectiveness. This now needs to be consistently linked to raising achievement.
- Training for staff is based on an accurate analysis of need. All staff spoke highly of the quality of training provided by the school, which is driving the academy's improvement. They especially appreciated the way in which the executive principal had involved all staff in developing the vision and values of the academy after it became part of the Oasis multi-academy trust.
- The training for staff has led to an improvement in the quality of teaching. Students, as well as their parents, recognised this change.
- Systems for the management of staff performance are rigorous. Salary progression only occurs when merited by good performance. Academy leaders have taken robust action to challenge underperformance.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, with a wide range of academic and extra-curricular activities. The academy is preparing students well for life in modern Britain through assemblies as well as individual subjects. During the inspection, in a religious studies lesson based on the parable of the Good Samaritan, students discussed how easy it is to treat others as equal, as well as discussing if it mattered whether they believed in God.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength of the school. The work of the community hub is impressive in engaging students and the academy's community. For example, the work students undertake in running a dementia café and the redesign of the mural at Minster Abbey are examples of the strength of the academy's work.
- Students take on leadership roles very effectively. The head boy and girl, as well as academy prefects, act as mentors to younger students. Students are also taking on the role of anti-bullying ambassadors.
- Leaders effectively ensure that there is equality of opportunity and no discrimination. All students can participate in all the activities provided by the academy. The school uses additional funding for disadvantaged students to ensure they can participate fully in lessons. For example, funds are used to provide bus fares for those who find getting to school problematic. This ensures they can attend and make progress in their academic as well as social development. Funding is also used to support revision sessions and the purchase of equipment so that all students develop their learning in a wide range of knowledge and skills.
- The academy leaders effectively monitor the performance and well-being of students who receive part of their education at the school's own off-site facility.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements. Leaders make very good use of outside agencies to provide support for students.
- The advice given to students about their next stage of education, training or employment is good. As a result, the vast majority of students progress to education, training or employment when they leave the academy.
- The school is effectively developing their work with parents. Parents who responded to Parent View confirmed they were confident their concerns are dealt with well by the school.
- The trust is supporting the academy effectively in improving the provision for all students.

- The sixth form leadership team, working with the senior leaders of the academy, has quickly identified strengths and areas needed for improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The academy council is a strength. Councillors support and challenge the academy effectively.
 - Councillors are fully involved in reviewing students' performance and setting the academy's priorities through discussion of the views of the academy about how well it is doing, and its plans for improvement.
 - They are well equipped, along with the directors of the trust, to carry out their statutory duties, including ensuring safeguarding of students. This is done very well.
 - Councillors know how the academy spends additional funding to support disadvantaged students and those who have special educational needs.
 - Councillors are knowledgeable about the quality of teaching. They are keenly aware of what is being done to reward good performance and address any underperformance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In lessons there are too many incidents of low-level disruption, which slow the pace of learning. Students do not always work hard.
- Students confirm that behaviour has improved considerably since Oasis took over the academy. The implementation of the academy's behaviour policy is more effective. However, all staff need to use this consistently.
- Students appreciate the new rewards, which recognise personal achievement against six positive character traits. These include resilience, a caring nature, responsibility, as well as active citizenship. Students can also keep track of their academic achievement through clearly visible displays across the school.
- Students take pride in their school. They wear their uniform well. They are well equipped for all their lessons.
- Students respect their environment, as shown by very little litter and no evidence of graffiti.
- Students are polite and courteous to visitors. They are very willing to engage in conversation.
- The academy closely monitors the behaviour of those students attending their own off-site facility. As a result, students continue to make good progress.
- Staff and parents commented favourably on students' behaviour and the consistency with which it is now handled.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection, but it is still below national averages. The academy staff closely monitor their students who receive some of their education at the academy's off-site facility.
- Students say they feel safe in school, a judgement confirmed by staff and parents. They are confident that any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and firmly. Records show incidents of poor behaviour declining, including those connected with racism or homophobia.
- Students know how to keep themselves safe and how to respond to a variety of risks, such as e-safety, including cyber bullying.
- The rate of exclusions is reducing as the result of the effective strategies put in place by the leadership of the academy.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good across the academy to ensure that all students make the best possible progress from their starting points.
- At times, teachers do not use the information available to set suitably challenging work for all their students. Consequently, the most able students are not always challenged and spend time on work that is too easy. This means that these students do not always make the best possible progress.
- Teachers' guidance on how to improve their learning, although effective in some classes, lacks consistency across the school. Where teachers are effectively using the new marking policy and practice, they give students clear guidance about how further to improve their learning. However, not all teachers do so

regularly. They also need to help students reflect upon the advice given to improve their learning.

- Reading, communication and mathematics are being taught in subjects across the academy, with increasing effect in improving student progress.
- Support for disabled students and those with special educational needs is effective as teaching assistants know their students well. This ensures the support provided is effective in supporting the progress of these students.
- The relationship between staff and students is a key aspect in enabling students to make at least good progress. During the inspection this was seen in a number of lessons, including a Year 7 geography lesson where the teacher, in partnership with the teaching assistant, skilfully engaged a student by using the internet to identify the geographical features of Africa with which they were familiar.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because not all groups of students attain as well as others within the school.
- Students join the academy with attainment that is well below the national average. GCSE results in 2014 did not meet the government's minimum standards for the five A* to C grades including English and mathematics.
- The proportion of students making at least expected progress in English and mathematics was below the national average. Projected progress is that students will now make expected progress in both English and mathematics.
- The progress of the most able students is improving in English and mathematics. They are now achieving close to national averages, but their progress slows when their learning is not extended.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the support they receive.
- Disadvantaged students have previously achieved less well than others. The gap between the proportions of disadvantaged students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C and others is closing rapidly. In 2014 the gap between these students and others in English was half a grade, but in mathematics it was a grade. This was an improvement on the 2013 results by half a grade for each subject. Compared to students nationally, the gap in English was over a grade and in mathematics it was two grades.
- The school uses Year 7 catch-up funding effectively to improve students' achievement in English and mathematics. Additional funding is used to fund specialised literacy and numeracy support programmes. As a result, students are making good progress in both English and mathematics.
- The achievement of students attending the academy's own alternative provision is well monitored by the school. As a result, they are placed on appropriate courses that enable them to make good progress.
- The academy entered students early for mathematics in 2014. This was carefully monitored and done so that students had a benchmark from which to judge their progress. They re-sat in the summer and all improved their grades.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- Students enter the sixth form with below average attainment. Their attainment is improving, so that it is moving closer to national averages. The retention rate between Years 12 and 13 in 2014 was below national averages. The retention rate for 2015 is predicted to be above national averages as the result of more effective information, advice and guidance.
- The curriculum in the sixth form has been significantly reviewed and revised by the academy's leaders. As a result, the curriculum that is offered and entry requirements to academic and work-related courses are more effectively monitored. This has contributed to the improvement in the number of students continuing their chosen courses this year.
- Gaps in the progress of students needing additional help and that of others are closing rapidly. In 2014, the gap in average point scores between disadvantaged students and others was significantly smaller than in 2013. This is the result of better teaching and higher expectations from teachers.
- Teaching in the sixth form is now good. Staff changes and allocation of teachers in the sixth form have contributed to the improvement in the quality of teaching.
- The aspirations of students in the sixth form is rising rapidly. In 2013, 10% of the cohort applied to university, but in 2014 45% applied. Students are also applying to the top universities in Britain and

America. Many of these students are the first in their families to go to university.

- All students who leave the sixth form now go into education, training or employment. The academy works hard to ensure that each student follows the most appropriate pathway after leaving the school.
- Students are positive in their attitudes to learning. They recognise and welcome the improvements that the academy has implemented.
- They say teaching has significantly improved and that they are encouraged to question and enquire in depth into issues raised in their subjects. During the inspection, students were observed being guided by their teacher to fully interrogate historical sources about Napoleon's military campaigns.
- Students in the sixth form play an active role in developing the community links with the academy. One notable example of this was the setting up of the dementia café run by students.
- All students follow the 16–19 study programme. All students benefit from work experience. Students who did not achieve a GCSE grade C in English and mathematics follow a course of study alongside their other subjects.
- The leadership of the sixth form has improved under Oasis and the new leadership team. There is a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses. There is a clear plan for further improvement.

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	135721
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	453645

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1863
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	200
Appropriate authority	The proprietor
Chair	Nigel Walker
Headteacher	David Millar
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 March 2013
Telephone number	01795873591
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