

Oasis Academy Skinner Street

Skinner Street, Gillingham, ME7 1LG

Inspection dates 3–4 March 2015 and 23 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Early years provision		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Leaders and governors have an unrealistic view of how well the academy is performing. Leaders do not check weak teaching or underachievement sufficiently strongly to address them promptly.
- In 2014, standards were below average at the end of Year 2 in mathematics and significantly below in reading and writing.
- The most able pupils are not challenged adequately in lessons. Consequently, few pupils achieve the highest levels.
- Teachers do not teach writing skills sufficiently well. Consequently, pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling skills are below those typical for their age.
- Inadequate teaching is preventing pupils from making sufficient progress to catch up from low starting points. This is especially so in Key Stage 1.
- Teachers' expectations for pupils are too low. Teachers do not use information about pupils' achievement well enough to provide challenging activities for all pupils, but especially for the most able.
- Teachers' marking of work is too variable in quality. Most pupils do not receive enough information to allow them to improve or correct their work. Pupils do not always know what to do next or how to get better. Opportunities for pupils to respond to feedback are inconsistent across the classes.
- Pupils quickly lose concentration when they do not understand what they need to do or when the lessons are too easy.
- Teachers do not plan activities for children in the Reception classes well enough to allow them to practise what they have learnt especially in writing, number and phonics (the sounds that letters make). As a result, children do not make good progress from their starting points.
- Plans for improvement are not rigorous enough. A lack of clear measurable steps means success is difficult to judge.
- Attendance is low and persistent absence is high. The too frequent absence of some pupils hinders their learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils say they feel safe in the academy. They are welcoming and polite. They behave well around the academy.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is improving because staff accurately assess their needs.
- The academy promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There are good relationships between pupils and staff.
- Progress in reading and mathematics is beginning to accelerate.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was part of a focused inspection of academies in the Oasis multi-academy trust. Inspectors first visited the academy in March 2015. Through no fault of the academy, the inspection was deemed incomplete. One of Her Majesty’s Inspectors visited the academy in April 2015 to gather more evidence about the academy’s overall effectiveness
- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. Overall, 31 lessons were observed. During the first visit, 20 lessons were jointly observed with members of the senior leadership team. During the second visit, the Principal jointly observed 11 lessons with Her Majesty’s Inspector.
- Inspectors observed an assembly and listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors looked at pupils’ books to establish their progress and the quality of work over time.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils to find out their views about the academy. They also talked informally to pupils during break times and in lessons.
- Inspectors took account of the 14 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke to some parents at the end of the day. They analysed the responses from the 22 staff questionnaires.
- Meetings took place with the Principal and members of the leadership team. Inspectors held discussions with the leaders for special educational needs, early years, Key Stage 1 and mathematics. Two meetings took place with members of the academy council and a regional director of the executive board of Oasis Community Learning.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation. This included external reports on the academy’s effectiveness, and records of the checks on teaching made by leaders. They examined records relating to behaviour, attendance, governance and safeguarding, and the progress and attainment of current groups of pupils in the school.

Inspection team

Penny Spencer, Lead inspector (March)	Additional Inspector
Matthew Klimcke (March)	Additional Inspector
Emma Hickling (March)	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Farr, Lead inspector (April)	Her Majesty’s Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Oasis Academy Skinner Street converted to an academy in September 2013. When its predecessor school, Skinner Street Primary School was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to require improvement.
- The academy is larger than the average-size primary school.
- Approximately half of all pupils are disadvantaged and eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after). This is double the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average, with the largest proportion from African heritage. The majority of pupils, approximately 65%, are White British. Approximately a quarter of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is above average.
- Children in the Reception classes attend full time.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils join or leave the academy throughout the year.
- The academy meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Governance of the academy is organised in two parts. At local level, an academy council acts as a critical friend to the Principal and represents the views of the local community. It oversees the well-being and safety of pupils, including their achievement, attendance and behaviour. The academy's executive board provides national governance, consisting of the Chief Executive Officer and Directors of Education. This board oversees educational policy, teaching standards and the management of financial and human resources. The executive also holds the Principal to account. Representatives of the executive board may also sit on the academy council.
- There have been several changes to teaching staff since the school became an academy.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, including in the early years, so that all pupils make good or better progress and standards rise, by ensuring that:
 - teachers set challenging and engaging work for all pupils, especially the most able
 - feedback to pupils clearly identifies what pupils need to do in order to improve their work
 - teachers consistently build pupils' ability to write in sentences and develop their vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting skills
 - activities in early years are purposeful and clearly linked to developing children's skills
 - the teaching of phonics is more effective in building pupils' early reading skills.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by making sure that:
 - clear targets and measures for evaluating success are set in the academy's action plans
 - actions are checked regularly and thoroughly to confirm they are having a positive impact on standards
 - areas of weakness identified in teaching are followed up thoroughly to ensure they are eradicated quickly
 - leaders rapidly tackle poor attendance and persistent absenteeism with all the means available to them in order to improve the outcomes for all pupils
 - the academy council and executive board challenge the academy's performance more rigorously and hold leaders firmly to account.

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

An external review of the academy's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leaders have not improved teaching sufficiently. As a result, not enough pupils reach the standards expected of them, particularly in writing. While leaders recognise what needs to be done, leadership roles are not always closely aligned to academy improvement priorities. Inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to employ newly qualified teachers.
- Leaders have an overly generous view of how much the academy has improved. Development planning does not set out precise actions or measures for success. Therefore, it is difficult for leaders and governors to judge how well pupils and teachers are doing. Leaders do not always follow up actions and targets rigorously or frequently enough to sustain improvements.
- Systems to manage and measure the performance of staff are in place. However, leaders do not check on the quality of teaching frequently enough to be able to assess the accuracy of their judgements. Targets set for teachers are not rigorous enough to improve teaching or achievement. Leaders do not hold teachers to account firmly enough.
- Leaders do not use information on how well pupils are doing accurately enough to improve pupil outcomes. They take too little account of what pupils need to do to catch up from low starting points. Therefore, whilst pupils may be making expected progress from low starting points, this is doing little to improve their chances of achieving high standards. Subject leaders and those responsible for different year groups are at differing stages of experience. New leaders are benefiting from increased opportunities to work alongside more experienced staff and from consultants provided through Oasis Community Learning. However, the impact they are having on improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement is limited.
- Leaders do not promote equality of opportunity successfully because the quality of teaching fluctuates across the academy. Too many pupils, especially the most able, do not reach the standards they are capable of.
- The curriculum is inadequate because the range of activities planned is not promoting pupils' progress well enough, especially in writing. Recent improvements in the mathematics curriculum are having a positive impact on pupils' ability to solve mental calculations. However, opportunities to apply this mathematical knowledge in other subjects are limited. A review of the general curriculum is underway in order to address these points. However, this is at an early stage and as a result, there has been no impact on pupil progress or standards.
- Checks on the effectiveness of the additional funds for disadvantaged pupils are not rigorous enough. Improvements for this group at the end of Year 6 are not consistently reflected in other year groups.
- All staff strongly promote respect, tolerance, citizenship and positive relationships throughout the academy. Assemblies, lessons and visits from local faith leaders and community figures ensure pupils recognise and understand the diverse nature of the academy and local community. British values are promoted strongly and discrimination of any nature is not tolerated. Pupils have a keen sense of fair play and understand their rights. They are proud to be members of the school council.
- The academy uses the sports premium appropriately to provide a range of physical activities for the pupils. Specialist sports coaches provide additional support for teachers. The wide range of equipment used in the playground has improved behaviour and increased physical activity at break times.
- Safeguarding arrangements are secure. Safeguarding meets statutory requirements.
- Attendance is low and too many pupils arrive at school late. The academy is beginning to take appropriate action to address this. The academy's executive has put in considerable support since the school converted to an academy, including specific consultants for teaching and curriculum development. There are increasing opportunities for teachers and leaders to observe good practice in other schools and training for staff. However, the academy council and executive board do not check and evaluate all their actions with sufficient rigour to make sure they are having the desired effect. Many initiatives are very recent or still at the development stage. As a result, there is limited impact. There has been some success in developing better links with parents and in engaging local community leaders to promote understanding and tolerance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have not contributed to effective improvement. The chair and members of the academy council are resolute and determined to improve the performance of the academy. They are benefiting from training and support through the Oasis Learning Community and the local authority's governor services. However, their efforts have yet to show sustained impact. Governors are not holding leaders

to account sufficiently for pupils' progress. Governors have not been effective in checking whether the academy uses additional funds for disadvantaged pupils appropriately.

- Arrangements to manage teachers' performance are appropriate, and pay links closely to performance. However, the evidence on which leaders base their judgements is inaccurate and overly generous. As a result, the targets set for teachers are having a limited impact on raising standards.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- In lessons, where teachers' expectations are not high enough and work is either too easy or too hard, some pupils lose interest. They do not concentrate as well as they might and their progress slows.
- Staff do not consistently expect pupils to present their work neatly and to develop good handwriting. As a result, work in pupils' books is often scruffy and untidy.
- When teachers set activities that are at the right level and are interesting, pupils respond well. Pupils were observed in a Year 6 class being engaged and motivated to complete tasks and make good progress.
- Most pupils behave well around the academy. They are polite and respond quickly to instructions.
- A few pupils who have difficulty in behaving consistently well are managed very effectively. Systems are clear and well understood by pupils. As a result, any outbursts are quickly resolved.
- Academy records show incidents of poor behaviour and exclusions have decreased considerably over time. The academy has successfully managed pupils with a history of poor behaviour and, as a result, their progress has accelerated.
- The pupils raise funds for local charities as well as the Oasis Academy in Bangladesh. They are proud to represent their academy at local events and wear their uniform smartly.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement.
- Despite the efforts of the academy, attendance remains below average. Better communication and relationships with some hard-to-reach families have improved the level of attendance. However, persistent absenteeism remains above average. The academy follows up any absence and is investing in new technology to tackle punctuality through text messaging.
- Pupils who may be at risk of harm or be subject to child protection care plans are looked after very well. The academy has good relationships with the local authority, and reports and follows-up any concerns thoroughly.
- Pupils say they feel safe. They are aware of different types of bullying and say it is not common. Some pupils referred to instances of name calling, including some racist remarks. Examination of academy documentation showed the events to have taken place some while ago, been thoroughly investigated and recorded. There are no recent incidents.
- Parents feel their children are safe and are happy with the way the academy looks after them.
- The academy promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well. Pupils celebrate the diverse nature of the academy and the community. They get on well together and have a good understanding of each other's beliefs and cultures.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Standards in writing have not improved sufficiently since the school became an academy because teaching is not effective.
- Teachers do not use information about pupils' levels and progress accurately to plan work that addresses the differing abilities of pupils. Consequently, pupils do not develop their basic skills in writing quickly enough. Challenge for the most able pupils is not sufficient and support for disadvantaged pupils is not consistently good enough to help them reach their full potential.
- In the Reception classes, teachers do not plan activities that firmly develop children's ability to complete tasks independently. Tasks lack purpose and challenge. As a result, children do not engage with activities for long and so make slow progress.
- There has been some instability in staffing. This has led to a lack of continuity for pupils.
- Pupils' reading skills are improving slowly. Pupils are more able to decode unfamiliar words because there is a systematic approach to the teaching of reading across the school. However, the level at which the

work is set is low and progress is slow. Pupils who read to inspectors do not enjoy reading for pleasure. The books they read are uninteresting and, as a result, they read with little expression or enjoyment. There is a lack of high quality reading material for pupils to enjoy.

- Opportunities for pupils to hone their writing skills are missed. Consequently, progress is slow and standards are low. Leaders have recognised this and have redesigned the curriculum to address the issue. However, new ways of working are at a very early stage. In some classes, where the intended learning is identified with greater precision, there is evidence of better progress.
- Marking in pupils' books is inconsistent and not all teachers follow the academy's scheme effectively. Comments on how pupils can improve are not clear, so pupils do not know what to do next. Not all classes give pupils regular opportunities to respond to the marking, so progress is limited. Where marking is more effective, pupils' progress is better.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is improving because assessments of their needs are more accurate. Checks are more rigorous and support targeted more effectively. As a result, they are doing better.
- Support for those pupils who join the school during the year is good and, as a result, they make reasonable progress.
- Where teaching is better and teachers use assessment information accurately to plan work, pupils make better progress. However, as this is not consistent across all classes, too many pupils do not catch up and achieve highly.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils' achievement is inadequate. In 2014, standards at the end of Year 2 were below those achieved nationally. Standards in writing were lower than those achieved by pupils nationally at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the higher levels of attainment by the end of Year 6 and Year 2 were below national averages in 2014, for reading, writing and mathematics. The most able pupils do not make enough progress because work is often too easy and does not stretch them to their full potential. Their ability is not always recognised accurately by teachers in order to plan their learning accordingly or set high enough expectations for what they will achieve.
- Pupils' progress is too variable across the different classes. Leaders do not address these inconsistencies rigorously enough to ensure weak teaching is improved and pupils' progress is accelerated.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 in 2014 in reading and mathematics were above average. However, these standards are not reflected consistently in other year groups. Although many pupils make expected progress, this is not sufficient to allow them to catch up from their low starting points. As a result, pupils, particularly those in Key Stage 1, are not well-prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The teaching of phonics, (the sounds letters make) is regular and systematic. However, it is not effective enough. Consequently, in 2014 the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard at the end of Year 1 was below that achieved by pupils nationally. Also, for those pupils who retook the assessment in Year 2, only half were successful second time around.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 were a half a term behind other pupils in the school in mathematics and reading and achieved similar standards in writing. However, compared to other pupils nationally, these pupils were approximately two terms behind in mathematics, a term behind in reading and almost two and a half terms behind in writing. The academy's records of disadvantaged pupils' shows standards for disadvantaged pupils are inconsistent across classes and year groups.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make better progress than their peers in most classes. This is because there is accurate identification of their needs and support is good. Strong links with professional agencies ensure that specific support, such as speech therapy, is available for pupils.
- Good support for pupils who have English as an additional language means they make better progress than their peers in many instances. Standards for pupils who come from the main ethnic groups identified in the academy are closer to the national average.

The early years provision

is inadequate

- Teaching and achievement in the Reception class are inadequate because children do not make the progress of which they are capable. As a result, children are not prepared well enough for entry into Year 1.

- Children enter the academy with skills and understanding below those that are typical for their age. This is especially the case in the areas of speaking, reading and writing. Many children have limited pre-school experience and their social skills are underdeveloped.
- Facilities and resources are not organised efficiently and the classrooms and outside area are not stimulating the imagination. Book corners and role play areas have limited resources and are not inviting. As a result, children do not use them enough to develop their skills in reading and speaking.
- In phonics sessions children are developing their skills at recognising individual sounds. Expectations of what the children are capable of are not high enough and progress is slow. More-able children have to wait for everyone to finish before they can move on, slowing their progress.
- Too many activities do not provide good opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding. Teachers focus intently on small groups of children for long periods and miss opportunities to intervene and develop the skills of children as they play and learn independently
- Children’s writing and mathematical skills do not develop well enough. Teachers do not model writing or numbers sufficiently. Children are unsure how to form letters or numbers correctly.
- Staff check children’s progress and keep useful samples and descriptions of their work, known as ‘learning journeys’. However, teachers do not use this information effectively to plan the next steps and challenge children appropriately.
- Staff ensure that children settle in quickly and effective routines are established. As a result, children make good progress in their social and emotional development. They form good relationships with staff and are happy.
- Academy leaders and the leader of the early years are not demonstrating sufficient capacity to move learning and progress forward. They are not making sure that staff use information about how well children are doing to accelerate progress or challenge the most able children to achieve highly.
- Children are kept safe. Staff ensure the children understand the rules and play safely together. They check equipment carefully and ensure it is safe to use. Parents are confident their children are looked after well.

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	140040
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	450086

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	371
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Yarrow (Regional Academies Director for Oasis)
Principal	Diane Rougvie-Fevrier
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01634 850213
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