

Oldknow Academy

Oldknow Road, Small Heath, Birmingham, B10 0HU

Inspection dates 11–12 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Since the last inspection, improvements have not been quick enough and some aspects have declined further.
- The academy's procedures to safeguard pupils are inadequate. Leaders have not ensured that all staff have received appropriate safeguarding training. As a result, some staff are unaware of procedures and some do not know who the lead professional in the academy is.
- Governors are unclear about their roles and responsibilities. Some governors have too little understanding for the academy's current position.
- Too much of the leadership structure is either temporary or very new. As a result, the leadership is insecure and untested. The leadership of the academy will change in September, with a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and governing body.
- The academy has been dependent upon external support in the recent past. There have been five Principals leading the academy in the last year.
- Achievement requires improvement. Pupils' achievement in writing is not consistently good across the academy. Standards in writing in 2014 were much weaker than in reading and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do not make good progress.
- Some of the most-able pupils do not make as much progress as they should.
- Teaching requires improvement. The quality of teaching is too variable. Pupils' different starting points are not always taken into account. Insufficient regard is given to what pupils already know and what they need to learn next.

The school has the following strengths

- The teaching of reading over time is a strength of the academy.
- Pupils are taught a range of subjects which provide them with a balanced view of society. The religious education syllabus, personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme and spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) curriculum allow pupils to reflect and develop their own opinions.
- Attendance is above the national average.
- The external support provided by the two Associate Principals has been instrumental in improving the culture and climate of the academy. Staff are more trusting of the new leadership.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and generally show good attitudes to learning.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection took place under Section 5 of the Education Act at the request of the Department for Education, in line with the Secretary of State's powers. The request was related to the planned re-brokering of Oldknow Academy to the Ark Foundation on 1 September 2015.
- Oldknow Academy was judged to require special measures in April 2014. Since then, it has received regular monitoring visits by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI). At the last visit, the academy was making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation including the academy's improvement plans; minutes of governing body and trustees' meetings; pupils' work; curriculum plans; and procedures and policies to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors met with academy staff, including senior and middle leaders. They also met with groups of pupils, trustees, parent governors, the two Associate Principals, members of the ARK Foundation and the headteacher-designate.
- Inspectors observed 29 lessons and parts of lessons and an assembly.
- Forty staff questionnaires were analysed.
- Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, was used to consider the views of parents. Twelve responses were registered.

Inspection team

Jane Millward, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Rachel Howie	Her Majesty's Inspector
Michael Onyon	Additional Inspector
Patrick Walsh	Additional 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

- Oldknow Academy is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all of the pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. Almost half of the pupils are of Pakistani heritage. The next largest group of pupils is of Bangladeshi heritage.
- The majority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.
- Approximately half of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in public care).
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise the attainment and progress of pupils, especially in writing, by ensuring that:
 - work is matched to pupils' different abilities and takes into account their starting points
 - pupils are given more opportunities to write at length across a range of subjects
 - the most-able pupils are provided with appropriate challenge and the less able are given the support they need
 - disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are given the guidance they need to make good progress
 - the feedback teachers give to pupils consistently guides them on what they need to do to improve their work
 - the academy is less dependent on temporary supply teachers.
- Improve safeguarding procedures by:
 - providing training for all staff in safeguarding, child protection and the potential risks of radicalisation and extremism
 - ensuring that all staff are appropriately trained in issues of health and safety
 - ensuring that all staff and leaders are fully aware of child protection procedures
 - improving the links between the academy's designated lead for safeguarding and the governing body.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - providing training and support for leaders to develop and fulfil their roles
 - clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the governing body and ensuring it holds leaders to account for their actions
 - effectively monitoring the impact of the pupil premium funding to ensure it provides good value for money
 - ensuring that the academy has a stable and sustainable leadership team which is not reliant on external support
 - ensuring that the academy has a realistic view of its strengths and weaknesses and devises plans to address its priorities for improvement.

An external review of governance, including the use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not meet statutory requirements, giving serious cause for concern. As a result, leaders cannot be sure pupils are kept safe.
- Leaders are over-optimistic about the effectiveness of the academy. They do not have a realistic view of its weaknesses and, as a result, the academy's improvement plan lacks detail about what needs to be achieved.
- Two Associate Principals, who are providing external support to the academy, have made a considerable difference in a few weeks. The atmosphere in the academy has changed. Some staff report that the academy is now 'normal' again and the culture has improved. Staff are far more positive about the future. The anxiety and lack of trust staff held in the past is no longer apparent. However, this external support, which is currently propping up the academy, will cease at the end of the term. In September, a new and untested senior leadership team will be leading this academy.
- The acting Vice Principal has been instrumental in putting procedures and systems in place across the academy and she leads on many aspects of the academy's work. She shows commitment and drive, and has worked tirelessly in an attempt to improve outcomes. However, due to high staff turnover, this work has not had sufficient impact. She is leaving the academy at the end of this term.
- Middle leaders and the wider leadership team are very new to their roles. They demonstrate an understanding of what needs to be done and are keen to make a difference. They acknowledge there is still much more that needs to improve and that their roles are still developing.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. This area of work has been a priority for the academy and, as a result, many aspects of the curriculum are now strong. For example, pupils have the opportunity to discuss democracy, manifestos, voting and peer pressure. The teaching of fundamental British values is included in many subjects and pupils demonstrate qualities such as mutual respect and tolerance. However, not enough is done to warn pupils of the dangers or radicalisation and extremism.
- The taught religious education syllabus has improved and is now varied, giving pupils the chance to reflect and voice their opinions. A range of religions are covered, and comparisons are made between religions and the secular world. Pupils engage in a variety of stimulating activities that motivate and interest them.
- Leaders are quick to tackle discrimination and they foster good relationships. This focus is contributing to pupils' good behaviour. Leaders promote equality of opportunity. They have recently improved the ways in which all pupils contribute to the life of the academy. For example, pupils helped to develop the new behaviour system.
- The systems to track pupils' attainment and progress show how all groups of students are performing. However, leaders do not evaluate the use of the pupil premium funding well enough to be sure of the impact of the spending. Consequently, there is a lack of clarity about which strategies are successful in improving outcomes.
- The primary sport funding has been used to purchase external coaching. However, to date, the effectiveness of the additional support has not been monitored or evaluated. As a result, leaders do not know whether or not this funding is well spent.
- Trustees have been highly influential in brokering external support, leading to noticeable improvements, such as, temporarily appointing new Principals to lead the academy. However, this is very recent and will cease at the end of term.
- Performance management targets based on the *Teachers' Standards* have been set for staff. However, due to the high turnover of senior leaders who oversee staff performance, there is some lack of clarity on

how successful staff have been in achieving their targets.

- Inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

■ The governance of the school:

- There is confusion about the governance of the academy. This lack of clarity has led to a disparity of opinions about the legal identity of the governing body and, as a result, it is unclear what the governors' functions entail. The local governing body has been side-lined and parent governors have not met as part of the governing body since January 2015. A lack of trust between governors has developed.
- Governors have not sufficiently held leaders to account for their work. For example, there is a lack of understanding by governors of current child protection procedures.
- While some governors (who are also trustees) are highly knowledgeable about the academy, others lack information because they have not been updated about developments. As a result, the governing body do not know enough about the quality of teaching, performance data or performance management.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are inadequate

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite, courteous and friendly. They show good attitudes to learning and are keen to please their teacher. They are respectful to one another and to adults.
- A new behaviour system has very recently been implemented. It provides detailed information about behaviour, which is shared with staff so they can monitor and analyse it for patterns or trends. Information collected show that incidents of poor behaviour are reducing. Pupils are positive about these changes and feel they are contributing to the good behaviour exhibited around the school and in classrooms.
- There have been no exclusions this year.
- Attendance is above the national average.
- Occasionally, when pupils are left unsupervised, for example, when moving around the academy, behaviour declines and a few pupils are boisterous.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is inadequate. Systems and procedures to keep pupils safe are weak and do not ensure they are safe all of the time.
- Not all staff have been trained to an appropriate level in safeguarding procedures. Senior leaders have not ensured that new staff appointed to the academy or staff who have been absent have received appropriate training to protect pupils from the potential risks of radicalisation and extremism.
- The recent records maintained by the academy about child protection lack detail and, in some cases, vital information is missing. As a result, leaders cannot ensure that some of the most vulnerable pupils are kept safe.
- Leaders have not ensured that staff have read the latest guidance about keeping children safe in education. This guidance is not referred to in the recently updated academy safeguarding policy. Worryingly, some staff did not know who the designated safeguarding lead professional was in the academy and so do not know who they should report to if they have a safeguarding concern.
- Some staff who hold responsibility for important health and safety aspects have not received training to fulfil their role.

- The governor who has responsibility for child protection has not met with the current lead professional to check the academy's procedures and was unaware of any potential risks to vulnerable pupils.
- Procedures to check on the safety of pupils who are absent from education are robust. When there are concerns about any pupil's absence appropriate action is taken and the local authority is informed. However, following a referral, the academy receives little information from the local authority about what has been done to ensure that missing pupils are safe.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in the academy.
- Pupils report that incidents of bullying are rare. They say they know who to turn to if a problem occurs. Inspectors saw pupils playing well together in a harmonious atmosphere.
- Pupils understand different types of bullying, including cyber- and prejudice-based bullying.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it does not consistently lead to good progress for all pupils, particularly disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Not all teachers use pupils' assessment well enough to tailor learning according to what pupils already know and what they need to learn next. The work set does not always stretch pupils appropriately. Sometimes, pupils are set work that is too hard. At other times, the most-able pupils find work too easy and as a consequence, their progress is hindered.
- The teaching of writing requires improvement because too many pupils are not making enough progress. Teachers' expectations are sometimes not high enough and pupils are not given enough opportunities to write at length across a range of subjects.
- Due to high staff turnover, the academy has become reliant on temporary supply staff. As a result, pupils in some year groups, who have had several changes in teacher, make inconsistent progress over time.
- The ways teachers help pupils to improve through feedback vary considerably. Some advice by teachers is helpful and identifies next steps in pupils' learning. Where guidance is too general it is given little regard by pupils and leads to little or no improvement.
- The teaching of reading is a strength of the academy. To raise the profile of reading, every pupil is a member of the Birmingham Library. Boys' reading has been a priority, and strategies to engage boys are beginning to be explored. Pupils are taught phonics (the sounds letters make) if they find reading difficult. As a result, standards in reading are high.
- Where learning is more effective, teachers use well-considered questions to deepen pupils' understanding and pupils are given time to reflect on their responses. Teachers provide a clear structure to learning and pupils are supported well in order to make progress. However, this is not always the case and some learning is not rapid enough. Strong teaching over time was evident in Year 6.
- Where learning is less effective, pupils are not challenged sufficiently and teachers' expectations are not high enough. Low-level tasks and responses are accepted. On these occasions, some pupils lose focus and do not complete enough work.
- Usually, there is a positive climate for learning and a purposeful atmosphere. Pupils are keen to learn and show enthusiasm for their lessons.

The achievement of pupils**requires improvement**

- Achievement requires improvement because the performance across subjects and groups of pupils is not consistent. Although attainment in Year 6 in 2014 was above the national average in reading and mathematics, it was considerably below in writing. Progress, from pupils' starting points, was above the national average in mathematics, in line in reading and well below the national average in writing.
- In 2014, in reading, disadvantaged pupils were less than one term behind pupils nationally; they were a term behind in mathematics and two terms behind in writing. There was no significant attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates. However, current data held by the academy indicates that the gap between disadvantaged students and their classmates is widening this year in writing. Although disadvantaged pupils made similar progress to other pupils in reading and mathematics, fewer made the progress they should in writing.
- In 2014, not enough of the most-able pupils achieved the higher level in writing, or made enough progress. Their achievement in reading and mathematics was broadly in line with what is expected nationally. Current data shows that too few of the most-able pupils make more than expected progress. This is because the most-able pupils are not challenged enough in lessons and so do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Not all disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make enough progress. Although they receive extra support, leaders are unclear how effective this support is in helping pupils to make good progress. In lessons, activities do not always meet their individual learning needs well enough and they cannot always access their learning as well as they might.
- Currently, pupils who speak English as an additional language are grouped with those who are disabled or have special educational needs. As a result, staff are not able to demonstrate the progress that these different groups make.
- Pupils from a Pakistani heritage achieve well in reading and mathematics but their achievement in writing is less strong.
- Leaders acknowledge that boys achieve less well than girls. Although not explicit in the improvement plan, leaders are providing strategies to help boys catch up with the girls.

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	138052
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	455899

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	600
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Gould
Principal	Avril Dyson & Lisa Campbell (Associate Principals)
Date of previous school inspection	8 April 2014
Telephone number	0121 464 8771
Fax number	0121 464 8771
Email address	a.dyson@oldknowacademy.co.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone [0300 123 4234](tel:03001234234), or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and *inspects* to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2015

