

Oasis Academy South Bank

75 Westminster Bridge Road, London, SE1 7HS

Inspection dates 24–25 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of students	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Achievement of students	Outstanding	1

This is an outstanding school.

- The leadership of the academy is exceptional at all levels. Leaders have diligently implemented a straightforward and uncompromising vision for students to achieve 'greatness, through nurture and a rigorous academic focus'.
- Leaders have worked very closely with the local community to establish the academy in the heart of the city. Students and their parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the academy's culture and motto.
- The strong emphasis on the academy's values, 'scholarship, transformation, aspiration, inclusion, resilience and social responsibility' (STAIRS), has changed students' views about their future lives. They are inspired to climb the STAIRS to achieve very well.
- The academy has outstanding systems for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of its work, particularly students' attainment and progress.
- The academy council and the Oasis Board are vigilant. They contribute extremely well to maintaining outstanding teaching and achievement.
- The curriculum is outstanding. It is underpinned by innovative enrichment activities which contribute to boosting students' confidence and goals. Physical education is taught effectively off site because the academy does not have the facilities.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Students have a strong work ethic; their social responsibility and pride in the Oasis community are particular strengths.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Expectations of work and behaviour are high and lead to students achieving extremely well.
- Achievement is outstanding and students make rapid progress from below average starting points.
- The strong emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills is a key factor to students exceeding the rates of progress expected for their age group. Support is highly effective.
- The most able are extended very well, with excellent opportunities to experience GCSE and A-level work. The academy uses outstanding practices to help students excel.
- Pupil premium funding is used very well to support disadvantaged students achieve as well as their peers. Similarly, the support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs is highly effective. Responses to potential failure are rapid. Minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language achieve equally well.
- Partnership with University College London (UCL), King's College London Maths School, Russell Group universities and renowned businesses in the City are outstanding. They are contributing very well to raising students' aspirations.
- Numerous opportunities are provided for students to develop exceptionally well through the promotion of British values and their spiritual, moral social and cultural development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, four of them jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Observations of teaching also included short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Academy Council, three groups of students, the Waterloo Hub Leader and two representatives from the Oasis Community Learning Board of Trustees, including the Regional Academy Director and the National Academy Director.
- Inspectors considered 34 responses to Ofsted’s online parent questionnaire, Parent View, and met with a group of eight parents to discuss their children’s education at the academy. The inspectors also took into consideration 24 Ofsted questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors observed the academy’s work and looked at a number of documents. These included records of students’ attainment and progress, the academy’s self-evaluation and development plan, planning and monitoring documentation and records, and information relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. Other documents reviewed included minutes of the Academy Council’s meetings, and policies and systems for safeguarding students, the curriculum, provision for disabled students or students with special educational needs, and equality.

Inspection team

Carmen Rodney, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Christopher Lee

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy opened in September 2013, with the first cohort of 120 students entering Year 7. There are now two year groups in the academy, Year 7 and Year 8. A new cohort will join the academy each year until it enrolls all students from Year 7 through to Year 11. The academy expects to have 600 students on roll when full.
- Senior leaders, including the Academy Council and Oasis Community Learning Board of Trustees, are in the process of meeting the Department for Education to finalise the opening of a sixth form centre. If permission is granted, the sixth form centre is expected to enrol 240 students.
- The academy operates an extended school day. The first part of the day runs from 8.00am to 3.00pm, when students are taught the English Baccalaureate core subjects which include English, mathematics, science, humanities and languages. The second session, from 3.00pm to 5.00pm, focuses on all students taking part in compulsory enrichment activities.
- The proportion of students who are of a minority ethnic heritage is high, as is the proportion of those who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is well above the national average.
- The proportion of students supported by pupil premium funding is well above average. This is additional government funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The academy does not use or have any alternative provision.
- The academy is sponsored by Oasis, a multi academy trust. Oasis is a Christian organisation which sets out to serve all, regardless of faith.
- The academy has all key staff in place and further appointments will be made each year as the number of students on roll increases.
- The academy is new, with the first cohorts in Key Stage 3. The first cohort will take the GCSE examinations in three years time when the results will be reported.
- Most physical education is taught off site because the academy does not currently have a sports hall and playground. The auditorium, dining room and break out spaces are used for recreation. Lambeth local authority have given planning permission for the Academy Council to build a sports hall. A grant has been secured for the proposed sports hall; the Academy Council also expects to have two to three terraced play areas for students. Additional funding is, however, required to develop the building project.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sustain the vision of high aspiration and outstanding teaching through continued training, and develop this as the academy expands over the next three years.
- Ensure that the sports hall and play areas are developed in the central court yard without delay. Secure additional funding and planning permission for the further two or three roof top play spaces to accommodate the increasing number of students who will join the academy over the next three years.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The Principal, other leaders, the Academy Council and Oasis Community Learning Board are passionate about students achieving very well. Expectations are high. In all of the academy's work, there is a continuous focus on raising achievement and improving the quality of education to support students achieving excellence and becoming model citizens.
- The Principal is an inspirational leader, who is very well supported by other highly skilled senior and middle leaders. All are committed to the vision of transforming the lives of inner-city students to access the best universities in the country.
- The leaders have created a culture of high achievement in which teachers are successfully using their

expertise to help students succeed extremely well. Middle leaders initiate very good opportunities to develop ideas and work as part of the extended leadership team.

- Parents and the community are overwhelmingly supportive of the academy's work. They know about the Oasis tradition and zeal about making a difference to every child's personal and academic development.
- Leaders know students' starting points on entry. Consequently, there is a sharp focus on developing students' literacy and numeracy skills and providing opportunities for them to develop their social and cultural skills. For example, on entry to the academy, 60% of Year 8 students were two years or more below their chronological reading age; a small minority were below the level of functional reading skills. Within a short time, intensive support using of a range of literacy strategies contributed to these students making rapid progress to access the subjects taught. The academy ensures students are prepared to achieve well by giving them a strong foundation in literacy and numeracy skills.
- The academy is highly successfully in supporting students to achieve very well because of the following reasons.
 - Policies and systems for tracking and monitoring students' attainment and progress are thorough. Information on students' achievement is analysed forensically to identify their rates of progress. Staff can quickly identify those at risk of underachieving and provide additional support, for example boys in science. Similarly, early morning tuition in English and mathematics is available for the most-able students. Regular reviews of how well students are achieving mean that accountability for students' achievement is a strength of the academy's work; at all times, the quality of teaching is under scrutiny.
 - Leaders are unrelenting in developing and monitoring teaching. The quality of teaching is linked to staff appraisal and professional development. These take into consideration the needs of the individual, the subject department and the corporate needs of the academy. Teaching is not static because good practice is consistently shared every week. This provides many opportunities for staff to develop their subject and leadership skills and sharpen their practice. Furthermore, extremely good support is provided on the very rare occasions when teaching is not good enough.
 - Systems for performance management are comprehensive. The criteria to achieve a pay award are demanding; they are linked to the academy's values. A pay award is only given when applicants make a presentation to their line manager and an academy council member and can demonstrate they have successfully met the goals for each hurdle.
- The Key Stage 3 curriculum is very well designed around the academy's vision to give all students the opportunity to succeed. The core curriculum, based on the EBacc subjects and compulsory enrichment activities, is very well balanced; it is innovative and varied. The long academy day makes a difference to developing students' learning; students have more time to learn and know they are being prepared for the world of work. Students are offered very good opportunities to immerse themselves in academic, creative and environmental activities. For example, students can be involved in learning Latin to working on the Oasis farm or taking part in the Brilliant Club which includes completing challenging pre-university dissertations of 1,500 words on, for example, the Holocaust. Arrangements to ensure good links between key stages are very well planned.
- The Key Stage 4 curriculum, based on the EBacc, is ambitious and offered to all students. This begins in Year 9. The setting arrangements are flexible and students are frequently moved to a higher band. Planning reflects the needs of all students and all follow the same curriculum. Leaders ensure that equality by ethnicity, faith, gender and disability is met very well.
- The academy provides students with exceptionally good opportunities to experience a wide field of careers advice and guidance in the corporate world of business, law and hospitality. Excellent links with Russell Group universities have resulted in students plotting their future goals to enter some of these citadels. Their aspirations are high. For example, the most able Year 8 students have attempted the pre-Cambridge University examination paper in mathematics. One student successfully cracked the problem posed.
- Although students are at the start of their secondary education, they are confident about their future. They are consistently provided with opportunities to work with PhD students from UCL and sixth form students from King's College London Maths School. Students reported that their mentors have helped to increase their confidence and sharpened their mathematical skills. Students also take part in other mathematical projects.
- Students' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is outstanding. The academy has created an environment where students are confident and know they belong to a community that fosters their growth. Assemblies and religious education are used extremely well to increase their reflectiveness. For example, work on the Holocaust and civil rights movement lead students to think about the concept of evil, while their study of music, gastronomy, and great British writers and world literature help them to understand different art forms. The academy promotes British values very well; they are the principles on

which Oasis is founded. Topics such as tolerance and inclusion and awareness of institutions and democracy permeate the curriculum.

- Safeguarding procedures to protect students are comprehensive and statutory requirements are met. Actions to safeguard students are timely and rigorous. Staff are persistent and vigilant when working with the local authority and other agencies where students are at possible risk. Vetting checks are thorough. Training on all safeguarding matters is up to date. For example, the academy has worked closely with agencies on national priorities such as radicalisation, female genital mutilation and extremism.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Academy Council is an astute and challenging body with extensive knowledge of education, government and business. It ensures that the vision for high achievement is never lost. Councillors made an excellent contribution to the academy's development.
 - Accountability is strong because councillors use their extensive knowledge to scrutinise students' performance. They seek immediate answers when there is any sign of underperformance. They know about the performance of all groups of students. For example, they are knowledgeable about the impact of the funding for disadvantaged students and the progress of disabled students or students with special educational needs.
 - The Oasis national team is highly effective in ensuring that strategic management is fully in place and work closely with senior leaders on, for example, human resources, budgeting and policies. This provides the local councillors and Regional Director with a sharper focus on the academy's business of teaching and learning. Councillors know the academy very well and do not avoid providing hard-hitting messages when reviews take place; they routinely present their reports after a focus visit.
 - Councillors are equally well informed about the quality of teaching. They use their combined reviews with the National Academy Director to challenge leaders to make rapid improvement. Councillors ensure that the appraisal systems are robust and only reward the best practice. Underperformance is not tolerated.
 - There is a clear vision for the future of the academy, including the building of the hall and play area for students. The Academy Councillors make sure that all statutory requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of students are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. Parents and residents in the area praise the academy for the mature, warm and respectful behaviour of students. Visitors are welcomed with the unique Oasis handshake. They are positive in their feedback about students' behaviour and attitudes.
- Students move purposefully around the academy in an orderly manner and use the limited space very well. Relationships with each other and staff are extremely good, and there are no known barriers in relation to ethnicity, gender or faith. Students show good responsibility towards one another and strongly support the values of inclusion. Students told inspectors that backgrounds do not define their relationships with each other. This profound explanation was evident during the family dining, which students say brings them together as a family. Inspectors agree with their views.
- Students are confident and highly motivated to learn. Their passion to achieve extremely well is demonstrated in their well-above-average attendance, punctuality, and their readiness to begin learning.
- Despite the long day, and the length of journey that some students make daily, they remain focused on their learning; nothing is too hard. Students know their ultimate goal is to perform very well in the GCSE examinations and emulate their teachers and external mentors.
- The academy has had only four students temporarily excluded since opening in 2013; no student has been permanently excluded.
- While the academy council and ambassadors represent the academy in official meetings, students know they are all ambassadors with responsibility for representing the academy. All wear the uniform with great pride.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Students feel secure because the academy has well-established routines which reassure them that staff are vigilant and responsive to their calls for help. For example, staff meet and greet students when they enter the building and are always present when they cross the high street and travel home.
- Parents who took part in the online questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about their children being

safe in the academy.

- Students have received a good range of advice on how to keep themselves safe. Assemblies, health days and the personal and health education work are a few of the approaches used to educate students about safety. They are increasingly aware of issues on gangs and knife crime, extremism, female genital mutilation and different forms of bullying.
- Students trust their teachers whom the student council described as 'mother hens'. This description befits students' views about the staff at the academy. They know they can turn to staff for help and advice. Support is also provided during instructional time at the Place2Be and from dedicated mentors.
- Students indicated that bullying of any nature is not tolerated and, because they work together as an Oasis family, bullying is rare. Should bullying occur, it is dealt with immediately and decisively.
- Staff assess the risks associated with low attendance. Persistent absence is very low and, when it occurs, staff work very well with external agencies to keep students safe.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- High quality teaching is the norm because there is an unrelenting focus on supporting students to exceed expectations. As a result, teachers use their very good subject knowledge and expertise very well to develop students' learning.
- Schemes of work are well structured and linked to students' needs and carefully crafted success criteria. All students receive the same curriculum because extensive planning is linked to carefully selected resources. These ensure that all students can understand the concepts taught.
- Teachers have specific information about each student's needs and use this to set individual targets in every subject. Activities are carefully planned in each subject so that staff can motivate students' learning and promote the achievement of different sets and groups.
- A particularly good feature of teaching is the peer and self-assessments which students routinely follow. As a result, students' marking and note taking are consistent, primarily as they update their notes to keep abreast of 'make a difference' points they have missed during discussions and when responding to their teachers' marking.
- The quality of marking is detailed. Teachers are attentive to technical mistakes and challenge students to stretch themselves further with comments. Students are never less than responsive to developing the make a difference points (MAD). This helps them to recognise how they can become better in each subject. Their comments are often detailed and deliberated.
- Teachers' high expectations of work and behaviour mean that lessons run smoothly. Behaviour management techniques are rarely needed, primarily because students know that the academy does not accept any form of misbehaviour and their learning is given the highest priority. Lessons begin on time in a positive learning environment. Students are, therefore, studious and ready to begin learning.
- Some of the best features of teaching were evident during the inspection when, for example, a low-attaining Year 7 group had to differentiate between genes and the environment. Students understood the concepts and began to form hypotheses about each topic. This was a result of effective questioning combined with practical work, and they were given time to think and explain their ideas. The teaching assistants echoed the teacher's questions and dropped in useful pointers to increase their thinking.
- The teaching of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is of excellent quality. This is because teachers and teaching assistants work alongside students, questioning and challenging them to think about how they can improve their work. Very good learning was observed when adults worked with students.

The achievement of students

is outstanding

- Attainment on entry is below average. It is, however, slightly better than the national average in mathematics in Year 7.
- Systems for assessing students' attainment in literacy are thorough. They account for discrepancies between Key Stage 2 results and the academy's initial baseline assessments of students' skills in reading and writing, which are significantly lower.
- Support strategies are used very well to promote reading. This established daily routine is a contributory factor to students making rapid progress. They read prolifically, as a pastime activity and when exploring a class reader. This develops their critiquing skills and knowledge about different genres.
- Assessment information on students' progress through the academy is equally thorough. Staff test and

record students' progress at the start and end of each unit of work. Testing is regular and robust. These records provide students, staff, parents and the Academy Council with a bank of data that enables them to keep a detailed check on how well all groups are performing.

- The academy's records of students' progress are monitored and validated externally by experienced and professional markers to ensure accuracy and reliability. Rigorous checking within the Oasis family of schools and by the academy are used as a further measure.
- Assessment records indicate that students are well ahead of expectations typical for their age group. Detailed analyses of results show that all groups, irrespective of their starting points, make consistently good or better progress, that is, over time, outstanding. Rates of progress are twice the expected average expected in English and mathematics.
- The performance of Year 8 students in the English and mathematics GCSE examination papers confirmed that they are all making rapid progress. The majority of students achieved GCSE grade C or above. Examination of the marking of these papers by professionals, and the reported outcomes, indicate that students are exceeding expectations and meeting the academy's vision for high achievement.
- The most-able students make outstanding progress. They are stretched and those spoken to indicated that they are exercised to do well. Internal test results and scrutiny of their work show that in lessons and enrichment activities, such as the Brilliant Club, these students are competently completing work beyond that typical for their age group. In English, they read texts normally reserved for GCSE English, for example, *Macbeth* and Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. Students' writing shows control and most write critically, embedding and commenting on the writer's use of language. In mathematics, students work on trigonometry and quadratic equations completing GCSE and A-level examination questions. Work and examination papers provide compelling evidence that students are making outstanding progress.
- The achievement of disadvantaged students is equally outstanding. Pupil premium funding is used very well to ensure that they are making the same rate of progress as their peers.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make rapid progress. The academy has been responsive to a few students supported by the school whose results were below their peers. Well-selected and intensive support, including tracking and monitoring, contributes to this group of students thriving very well.
- The academy prepares all students very well for the next stage of their learning. Consequently, no group is underachieving or significantly behind their peers in the academy. All different minority ethnic groups are achieving very well. Students new to the academy and those with English as an additional language make similar progress as their peers. The academy is a school where no child is left behind.

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 students' needs. This ensures that students 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 students' needs. Students 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 students 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	139659
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	450028

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of students	11–16
Gender of students	Mixed
Number of students on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Hilary Spencer
Headteacher	Ms Carly Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
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