

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



10 December 2015

Ms Fiona O'Sullivan
Principal
Oasis Academy MediaCityUK
King William Street
Salford Quays
Manchester
M50 3UQ

Dear Ms O'Sullivan

Special measures monitoring inspection of Oasis Academy MediaCityUK.

Following my visit with Barbara Dutton, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 24 and 25 November 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the academy's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in June 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement, which were identified during that inspection, is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the academy may appoint up to two additional NQTs.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Academy Council, the Chief Executive of Oasis Community Learning and the Director of Children's Services for Salford.

Yours sincerely

David Selby

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2014

- Improve the quality of teaching throughout the academy, but especially in Key Stage 3, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers, including those in the school temporarily, continue to develop their subject knowledge and teaching skills to ensure that they are able to teach their subjects with confidence and engage pupils appropriately
 - teachers focusing in lessons on developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject rather than merely completing tasks
 - ensuring that pupils' work is marked regularly, is of high quality and informs them how they can improve, and checks whether they have acted on previous advice.

- Raise the progress and achievement of all pupils across all subjects, but especially in mathematics and across Key Stage 3, by:
 - making sure, as a matter of urgency, that staffing is stabilised to prevent further delays in driving through improvements in order to ensure that provision for pupils, especially in teaching, is improved
 - making sure that teachers plan opportunities to stretch the most-able pupils and also meet the needs of those who require additional help
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in mathematics and writing, in other subjects
 - giving higher level, more demanding work to the most-able pupils
 - using questioning more effectively to challenge and engage pupils and encourage them to develop their reasoning and extend their thinking
 - ensuring that pupils develop a pride in the presentation and quality of their work.

- Improve the behaviour and safety of pupils by:
 - eradicating poor behaviour in lessons to ensure that pupils' opportunities to learn are not compromised through noisy and persistent disruption
 - ensuring that poor behaviour around the school is challenged and dealt with appropriately according to agreed procedures
 - ensuring that safeguarding procedures are followed to ensure that pupils' safety is not compromised.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, governance and management at all levels by:
 - developing systems to ensure that all aspects of the academy's work are rigorously monitored and evaluated to provide a secure basis for coherent planning, which is firmly focused on making improvements
 - taking swift action to eradicate weak teaching

- developing middle leaders' skills so that they have the knowledge and expertise to be able to offer advice to their colleagues on how to improve their classroom practice
- making sure performance management links teachers' pay progression more closely to improvements in the classroom and to improved outcomes for pupils
- ensuring that the impact of funding, including the pupil premium, is spent wisely and is seen to be improving standards and provision in the academy
- ensuring that there are procedures in place to provide independent checks about the impact of the actions being taken by leaders in the school to improve the academy
- ensuring that statutory reporting and information requirements for the website are put in place.

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

Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 24 to 25 November 2015.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work and scrutinised documents. They held meetings with the Principal and other senior leaders, groups of three middle leaders and other staff, including six teachers and two other members of staff. Inspectors met formally with a group of nine pupils and had informal conversations with others during the academy's day. Meetings were held with a representative of the sponsor and the Chair of the Academy Council, which acts as the local governing body. An inspector spoke by telephone to the sponsor's regional leader for teaching and learning and with a representative of the local authority, who is also a member of the academy council. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons, including two observations conducted jointly with the Principal and the deputy principal. They observed morning tutor time and pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. An inspector visited a session being run jointly by the police and prison service for a small group of pupils. An inspector scrutinised a sample of pupils' books jointly with the deputy principal and inspectors examined other books during visits to lessons. Inspectors visited two staff meetings, one of which included a short training activity.

Context

Since the previous inspection, ten teachers and two non-teaching members of staff have joined the academy. Twelve teachers and two other members of staff have left the academy. Three more teachers are expected to join the academy at the start of next term. At that stage, all teachers will be permanent appointments and teaching their own subject specialism. The academy has not used any short-term supply teachers this term.

Two additional assistant Principals have been appointed. This has added capacity to the senior leadership team and allowed roles to be reorganised.

Classrooms for the same subject have been allocated in the same areas of the academy and the school timetable written so that travel time between lessons is reduced. Building work has been completed to enclose some open-plan areas, either permanently or with movable partitions. A longer academy day has been introduced for all pupils in Key Stage 4, with some compulsory teaching sessions and clubs being offered after the normal school day for those in Key Stage 3. Separate lunchtimes have been very recently introduced for Key Stages 3 and 4.

Outcomes for pupils

Outcomes for pupils in Year 11 in 2015 were not good enough. However, current pupils are making faster progress.

The attainment and progress of pupils in Year 11 in 2015 were lower than leaders and teachers had predicted. While the standards achieved by these pupils increased, they remained below those considered acceptable by the government. The starting points of pupils in Year 11 in 2015 were lower than those in 2014; this indicates that pupils made faster progress overall. However, the increases were not big enough to make up for previous gaps in pupils' learning and, despite the increases, pupils still did not make enough progress in mathematics. Rates of progress in English were broadly the same as those seen in 2014 and below the national average.

Senior leaders and the Academy Council undertook very close review of the results from 2015, with middle leaders, to ensure that lessons have been learned about how to ensure that outcomes rise more quickly in the future. The criteria for predicting that a pupil is likely to achieve particular GCSE grade have been made more stringent. Even though the academy is less generous in its predictions, leaders judge that pupils currently in Years 10 and 11 have made more progress than pupils at a similar stage in previous years.

New systems have been introduced to check that pupils are consistently making the progress they need to allow them to do at least as well as expected nationally. These checks involve leaders and teachers jointly using information from the academy's regular tests on pupils to plan extra teaching for any pupils who are falling behind. In addition, Oasis Community Learning (OCL) is doing more to help all its academies, including Oasis Academy MediaCityUK, to make sure that teachers mark tests and grade work accurately. This includes reviews of examples of pupils' work by teams of subject teachers from different academies within the trust, which are then shared with all teachers. In addition, each subject faculty has at least one teacher who is a trained marker for GCSE examinations. These steps contribute to leaders being more confident that they can accurately judge how well pupils are doing.

Inspectors saw pupils currently in the academy generally working hard and learning well in lessons in all years. There was less variation in this than seen in previous monitoring inspections. Pupils' exercise books also show that their progress is now faster. Pupils recognise that they are making faster progress, although they also reflect that ineffective teaching in the past has left them with gaps they have to fill.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment has increased, and this has helped pupils to learn more. Inspectors saw effective teaching in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 lessons.

The programme of training for all teachers on general teaching approaches and skills has continued. In addition, training that is targeted to help teachers develop specific

aspects of their work has been extended, for example in training provided by OCL to help teachers adjust their teaching when they are working in less familiar subjects. Teachers continue to respond very well to senior leaders' raised expectations. Teachers willingly put in the extra time and effort needed to fully benefit from the training offered. They also continue to support each other by sharing the best aspects of their practice in short training sessions in the regular morning staff meetings.

Leaders have successfully appointed teachers with the skills they need to be effective. Around two thirds of the present teachers were not in post when the academy was judged to require special measures. Inspectors saw teachers new to the academy providing teaching which was interesting and engaging to pupils. For example, in an effective Year 11 mathematics lesson where pupils had the confidence to work on the problems they had been set because they knew that the teacher would support and encourage them. This helped them to learn well. The pupils who talked with inspectors said that teaching has improved a lot and that this has happened over a short time.

Leaders have not had to employ any short-term temporary teachers since the start of this academy year. This has helped to further build pupils' confidence and trust in the quality of teaching because they receive consistent teaching from teachers who know them and how they learn.

Marking has improved. This has resulted from a planned programme of training, checks on each teachers' marking and individual advice from senior leaders on how each teacher can improve their practice. Teachers now provide pupils with 'growth tasks' after they have marked a piece of work. These are additional exercises which are designed to help each pupil practise weaker skills or build extra understanding. Pupils are clear about what is expected but sometimes miss doing the tasks set. Occasionally, teachers fail to check rigorously enough that the tasks have been completed. Leaders intend to continue their monitoring and advice to ensure that marking improves even more.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inspectors saw pupils generally behaving well in lessons and around the academy. They did not witness any swearing or unpleasant comments between pupils. Pupils say that good behaviour has increased and continues to do so.

The improvement in behaviour observed on successive monitoring inspections has been marked. The corridors are calm and pleasant and the small amount of litter seen previously has dropped to almost none. The pupils who spoke to inspectors said that bullying is rare. The academy's work to tackle bullying has been recognised by the academy's recent success in achieving a national Bullying Intervention Group (BIG) award.

Attendance has risen and is above the average for secondary schools. Pupils are very clear of the academy's expectation that their attendance will not fall below 96% and very many are successful in meeting this challenge. This reflects pupils' increasingly positive attitude to the academy and their learning. The improvement to attendance is also illustrated by the falling proportion of pupils who have longer-term absence.

When teaching meets the learning needs of pupils, they show that they can behave very well, which, in turn, further supports their learning. This was particularly evident where teachers gave pupils freedom to discuss and shape their own learning. In the reducing proportion of lessons where teaching is less effective, some pupils lose concentration and, for example, chat to each other. The academy's system for rewarding good behaviour and challenging poor behaviour has been revised. Pupils know the system, where they stand and how it benefits all pupils. Their own expectations are frequently high; an inspector witnessed this during a discussion about whether longer detentions were fair – the simple response from one pupil was, 'Well, they shouldn't get the detention in the first place!'

Instances of very poor behaviour have fallen. There are fewer exclusions from school in response.

The academy's systems to ensure that pupils are properly safeguarded are effective. Staff are kept up to date by regular training so that they know what to do should they have a concern. A new assistant principal has responsibility for the leadership and management of the arrangements to help pupils behave well. This has allowed one of the deputy principals to focus even more on the welfare and safety of pupils. School leaders have taken robust action to protect pupils when this has been necessary.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The determination and commitment of the Principal and other senior leaders have shaped the continuing improvement in the academy. The growth of the senior leadership team has allowed leaders to increase the pace of improvement. They are able to spend more time working on planned change because less time is needed to respond to urgent and difficult issues.

Middle leadership has been strengthened by the appointment of deputy leaders for the largest groups of subjects. Mathematics leadership has been stabilised by the temporary subject leadership work of a new assistant principal. The academy has plans to appoint a subject leader of mathematics in the near future. At that stage, the capacity of the senior leadership team will further increase. Senior leaders ensure that middle leaders are increasingly being held to account for all aspects of their subject area's work.

The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English has increased from roughly one sixth of pupils to a quarter. Senior leaders have recognised the challenges that this brings and have arranged for the teacher in charge of this aspect to have no other subject responsibilities from the start of 2016. Steps have already been taken to increase the support available, for example through training for teachers and better assessment of pupils who may not speak English well as they arrive in the school. However, these are at an early stage and not all teachers are confident in using the strategies which have been suggested. This work is also important because leaders have identified a risk of such pupils becoming isolated from others and of this leading to less good behaviour and attitudes.

The academy has become more confident and self-assured. Its success in a number of aspects has been confirmed in its achievement of a number of awards and grants; in addition to the BIG award, the academy has been recognised in ways as varied as a government sponsored 'Developing Democracy Award' and a grant from the Yorkshire Horticultural Society to support the community gardening group. OCL has identified the academy as its hub academy in the north for a '1000 days of peace project', which is taking place in the period leading up to the hundredth anniversary of the end of the First World War. All these add to the positive and inclusive nature of the academy.

Senior leaders continue to plan the improvement in the academy using a comprehensive plan. The improvement is now at a stage where additional sharpening of the plan is needed to further raise expectations and so ensure development continues at full speed. For example, the plan lacks information to specify exactly how improvement in teaching will lead to better learning or details of exactly what gains in outcomes are expected.

The Academy Council continues to provide careful support and robust challenge to leaders. Its members are well informed about the academy from formal and informal discussion with senior and middle leaders, and first-hand visits to see the academy at work. This enables them to ask more searching questions of leaders and teachers and so probe more deeply about pupils' educational success. The Academy Council is also using all available information to understand what the academy needs in the longer term, for example, in its relationship with Salford local authority. Members are fully aware of the need to ensure that any long-term plans do not deflect leaders from the continuing improvement.

External support

OCL has changed the way it works with all its academies, partly in response to the Ofsted focused inspection across the trust completed at about the same time as the previous visit to the school. New officers appointed within OCL are helping drive improvement in leadership, and in teaching, learning and assessment. OCL continues to complete regular visits to check that the academy's progress remains on track. In

addition, middle leaders are participating in the new networks to support subject leadership across OCL.

The academy still works with two local teaching schools: Oasis Innovation Teaching School alliance and St Patrick's, Salford. However, the academy is less reliant on this work and so it is focused more tightly, for example, on the support of newly qualified teachers.

The academy continues to work well with the local authority (LA). It purchases some services, such as specialist safeguarding advice and training from the LA.

Leaders are active in identifying and using opportunities to work with other external partners when these may help pupils. This was seen, for example, in the positive joint working with the police and prison service on the second day of the inspection.