

Oldbury Academy

Pound Road, Oldbury, West Midlands B68 9NE

Inspection dates

23–24 September 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Leaders have not ensured that their expectations for the quality of teaching are consistently applied across the academy. They have not made sure that all groups of students benefit from good teaching because their monitoring is not detailed enough.
- Although improving, disadvantaged students do not always catch up with other students quickly enough, including in English, mathematics and science.
- The most-able students do not always reach their potential because work is sometimes too easy.
- Some teachers assess students' work inaccurately while others do not use assessment information effectively to plan work which is pitched at the right level for students.
- Students sometimes make mistakes that go unchecked in lessons. Others are not moved on to harder work quickly enough.
- Students do not always show good attitudes to learning, particularly when teaching is not good.
- Some students do not attend regularly enough, particularly disadvantaged students.
- Students do not make consistently good progress in all academic subjects in the sixth form.
- Leaders do not check the impact of the additional pupil premium funding regularly enough and the governing body does not hold leaders to account for this with sufficient rigour.
- Some subject leaders have not received enough training to help them to improve teaching and achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching, learning, assessment and outcomes are improving. Lower-attaining students, in particular, are catching up well.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good.
- Staff have high standards of pastoral care and give students the help and support they need to become happy and confident learners.
- The curriculum helps students to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness as well as prepare for life in modern Britain.
- Sixth form students make good progress in vocational courses.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise achievement so that they are consistently at least good in the main school (Years 7 to 11), particularly for disadvantaged students and those who are the most able, by making sure that all teachers:
 - assess students' work accurately
 - use assessment information to plan activities which are pitched at the right level for students
 - check students' work regularly in lessons so that any mistakes are quickly corrected and students are moved on to harder work as soon as they are ready.

- Improve the impact that all leaders have on the quality of teaching and students' progress by:
 - insisting that all teachers mark students' work and plan lessons in accordance with the academy's policies
 - checking how good teaching is for different groups of students, including those who are disadvantaged and the most able, so that improvements can be made to teaching for any groups who may be falling behind
 - providing subject leaders with the skills to effectively improve teaching and outcomes
 - ensuring that robust systems and procedures are in place to improve and monitor the attendance of groups of students, particularly those who are disadvantaged
 - regularly checking the impact of the academy's plan for improving outcomes for disadvantaged students so that changes can be made if necessary.

- Improve the impact of sixth form leaders so that students make at least consistently good progress across academic subjects by robustly checking any differences between subjects throughout the year.

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

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders have not yet created an academy culture where high expectations are shared among all students and staff. For example, leaders have not ensured that all teachers follow academy policies which relate to the marking of students' work and the planning of lessons. This is an important reason why teaching and students' progress are not always as good as they should be.
- Leaders at all levels, including governors, did not act with sufficient urgency following the last inspection in 2013. Consequently, too many students who have completed Year 11 since then have underachieved, sometimes significantly so. In addition, students who are currently in the academy have not made as much progress since the last inspection as they should have.
- Although improving, not all groups of students have equal opportunities to succeed, including those who are disadvantaged and the most-able students. This is because the checks which are made on the quality of teaching and students' progress do not identify specific aspects of teaching which need improving for particular groups of students.
- While some subject leaders are having a good impact on teaching and students' progress in their areas, including in history and geography, others require training as they are relatively new to their posts and not yet as skilled as they need to be to improve standards in their respective areas. This is a further reason why there is variability in the quality of teaching and achievement.
- Leaders have not had effective strategies for improving attendance in the past, although plans are in place to improve this. As a result, attendance is not improving quickly enough. Leaders do not analyse the attendance of different groups of students with sufficient rigour and, as a result, the attendance of disadvantaged students is too low.
- Leaders do not monitor the impact of the significant additional pupil premium funding regularly enough. As a result, they are unable to make changes and improvements to how the funding is used at timely intervals throughout the year. Although improving, this is an important reason why this group of students do not consistently catch up quickly enough.
- Since the previous inspection, teachers now have challenging student progress targets. This, together with appropriate training, is beginning to lead to improvements in teaching, learning and assessment. Some teachers work with others to share good practice and this is having a good impact which is resulting in students increasingly benefiting from more good teaching.
- The curriculum is well planned and contains a good balance of subjects. In Years 10 and 11, students are able to follow different curriculum pathways which are best suited to their individual interests, skills and abilities. A range of extra-curricular activities are appropriately matched to students' interests and talents. Although the curriculum is well planned and designed, it does not have as much impact on academic outcomes as it could because it is not always taught well enough.
- The curriculum makes a good contribution to students' personal development and well-being, as well as spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and an understanding of British values. For example, regular 'theme days' and assemblies allow students to explore issues such as respect and tolerance for the values and views of others from different backgrounds.
- The leadership of support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good and is resulting in many of these students making good progress across the curriculum. Leaders have made sure that teachers are well informed about the particular needs of individual students and many, though not all, plan lessons which are well matched to the needs of students.
- Leaders, including governors, have successfully communicated a clear sense of direction for the academy, and staff understand the academy's priorities. Leaders have demonstrated that they have the skills to improve the academy because teaching and achievement are improving. Leaders have made sure that the provision which supports students' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders, including governors, are committed to providing an education which promotes physical and emotional well-being as well as academic success. The recent award of the 'Inclusion Quality Mark' is testament to leaders' commitment to this and the good impact that pastoral care has for improving student well-being.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body does not hold leaders to account for the impact of the additional pupil premium

funding well enough. As a result, although improving, the governing body is not securing good value for money because eligible students do not always catch up quickly enough.

- The governing body has a detailed understanding of the academy’s strengths and weaknesses. For example, governors know that teaching is not yet good enough and they know that students are not making as much progress as they should. Governors also have a strong understanding of assessment information.
- The governing body holds subject leaders to account through attendance at governor meetings where they are required to explain strengths and weaknesses in their particular areas. This is an effective strategy which is helping to secure improvements.
- An important reason why the governing body knows the academy well is because specific governors make appropriately regular visits to the academy. This helps them to provide good support as well as challenge to leaders who they work with.
- Governors are appropriately involved in making decisions about whether teachers should receive pay rises, based on their students making good progress. The governing body also has appropriate procedures for managing staff underperformance.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff are vetted and trained as required and students feel safe at the academy. Leaders engage parents through regular forums, and very recently the academy held a safeguarding information event for parents.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement because not enough is good which means that students do not consistently make good or better progress across all subjects and key stages.
- Teachers do not always set work which is at the right level for some students because they do not use assessment information as well as they could. Work is sometimes not challenging enough, particularly for the most-able students. These students do not have enough opportunities across the curriculum to demonstrate higher-level skills and knowledge, appropriate to their age, and demonstrate the highest levels of achievement that they are capable of.
- Students in some subjects, including mathematics and science, do not always know how to improve their work because teachers do not always follow the expectations of leaders with respect to the academy’s marking policy.
- The accuracy of teachers’ assessments is too variable. This is a further reason why work is sometimes not at the right level for students. In the past, the wrong students have been identified for additional support because of this weakness and academy predictions for Year 11 outcomes have been inaccurate. However, this is improving as a result of leaders’ actions to support teachers through shared assessment activities, for example. As a result, students are increasingly receiving accurate assessments.
- Students do not always have their work checked by teachers during lessons. This means that sometimes lessons proceed when students have not completed activities or have completed them inaccurately. At other times, students complete work quickly and accurately but are not moved on to harder work when they show that they are ready.
- Training for teachers is leading to improvements, particularly in Key Stage 3 in history, geography, information technology, English, mathematics and physical education. However, the impact of training has not yet had time to have a significant and consistent impact across the whole academy.
- Teaching for disabled students and those who have special educational needs is improving strongly because leaders have provided a good level of support for teachers. In addition to the usual timetabled lessons, some of these students also benefit from precisely targeted support in small groups.
- Teaching for lower-attaining students is good. These students are catching up with others because they receive work which is appropriately challenging, including in English and mathematics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare require improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The academy’s work to promote students’ personal development and welfare is good.
- The vast majority of students are confident learners who value the opportunities that the academy has to

offer them. The students know that leaders are working to improve the academy and most are keen to see greater consistency in their lessons. Students know the importance of achieving their personal best, both academically and personally.

- Students appreciate the good pastoral support that the academy offers. They know that they can talk to a member of staff about personal issues and they are confident that the academy will help them.
- Students understand the importance of physical and emotional well-being, because the academy provides many opportunities for students to engage in physical and sporting activities as well as opportunities for reflection through assemblies and 'theme' days.
- Students have a good understanding of safety matters, including how to stay safe when working online. They know about the risks associated with drugs and alcohol. They also learn about the risks related to radicalisation and extremism.
- Bullying is rare at the academy. Students are confident that when it does happen staff will deal with matters quickly and effectively. As a result, students feel overwhelmingly safe at the academy. Students also have a strong understanding of the different types of bullying, including homophobic.
- The students who attend 'Impact' (an alternative provision) and 'ALTOA' (an off-site vocational construction course) are making strong progress, both academically and personally. Leaders make appropriate checks to ensure that these students are safe when attending alternative provision.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement.
- A significant minority of students do not always behave as well as they should in some lessons, particularly when teaching is not challenging enough. Students' attitudes to learning are not as good as they could be in these circumstances and some become bored, begin to lose concentration and stop applying themselves to the activities. In addition, students do not always behave well when they are taught by temporary teachers.
- Too many students miss too much school. While there are signs that attendance is improving, it is too low for disadvantaged students. This is a very important reason why these students do not always catch up with others quickly enough.
- The number of students who persistently miss school has improved over the past year.
- The proportion of students who get excluded from school is reducing. This is because the academy makes sure that students who would have been excluded in the past are kept in school to work separately from their usual classes for a period of time.
- The vast majority of students behave well at break and lunchtimes. Students conduct themselves well when moving around the academy, showing good levels of respect for each other as well as the environment, which is stimulating and free from litter. Students dress smartly, make sure that they are on time for lessons and most are prepared with the correct equipment.
- Students who attend the alternative provision behave well, because those who attend 'Impact' value the support that they receive and those who study the construction course at 'ALTOA' value the work-related approach to learning.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes for students completing Year 11 have not been good enough since the previous inspection. Students who are currently in the academy are making better progress than they have in the past, particularly in Years 7 and 8. However, the progress that students are making in older year groups is not as strong, although it is improving.
- An important reason why outcomes are not yet good is because the differences between the progress of groups of students are too wide, though these gaps are narrowing. For example, disadvantaged students, particularly those of average and above-average ability, do not consistently catch up with their classmates of similar ability in some subjects, including English, mathematics and science. The group of disadvantaged students who were in Year 11 in 2015 significantly underachieved, according to the academy's own data. They also made poor progress, overall, in 2014.
- The most-able students do not always reach the high levels of attainment that they are capable of. The progress that some of these students make is not as fast as it should be in many subjects because teaching is not consistently effective in challenging these students. However, the progress of this group of

students is improving, particularly in Key Stage 3.

- Too many students have made slow progress in science for the past few years. However, new leadership is making sure that students who are currently in the academy are making better progress because teaching is improving. The academy's own data for Year 11 outcomes in 2015 indicate a significant improvement in the additional and further science GCSE courses. However, there remains much to do in this subject.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are making good progress and many are making the same or better progress as others of similar ability, including in mathematics, English and practical subjects such as construction. Strong leadership is ensuring that provision for these students is good and improving.
- Lower-attaining students, including those who benefit from the Year 7 catch-up programme (which is additional funding given to schools to support those who join with attainment in English and mathematics below what is expected), are catching up well, although it is better in English than it is in mathematics. This group of students typically make at least the progress that is expected nationally by the end of Year 11 in English and mathematics. Many of these students also make good progress in the creative arts subjects.
- Students who attend 'Impact' are improving academically because they are developing strategies to manage their behaviour. Those students who attended 'ALTOA' to study GCSE construction attained standards in 2014 (the most recent published data) which were similar to the national average. This represented good progress.

16 to 19 study programmes

require improvement

- The sixth form requires improvement because there is too much variability in outcomes between different academic courses and subjects. As a result, students do not always achieve grades that are as good as they are capable of achieving and progress, overall, is no better than average. Consequently, outcomes require improvement.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form requires improvement. Leaders do not monitor the variability between students' progress in academic courses as rigorously as they should at each assessment point. As a result, leaders do not have enough impact on continuously improving teaching and outcomes in these courses.
- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. While much teaching is good in the sixth form, particularly in vocational subjects, there are inconsistencies, particularly in teaching of academic courses, in the quality of assessment and feedback that some students receive.
- Outcomes in vocational subjects are good. Students make good progress in these courses. Teachers have strong knowledge of the subjects that they teach as well as a good understanding of examination specifications. This helps teachers to set work which is well matched to helping students progress to higher grades.
- Outcomes for those students who are required to retake GCSE English are broadly in line with what is usually seen nationally. However, outcomes in GCSE mathematics are not as good. The academy is introducing different courses this year which comply with government requirements for those students who need more practice before they take GCSE.
- All students are following appropriate study programmes which are well planned and based on students' individual needs. Students benefit from wider opportunities to develop their leadership and employability skills, for example, by taking part in work experience and community work. Students value the good-quality impartial careers advice and guidance which they receive prior to joining the sixth form and which they are able to access while studying their sixth form courses.
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Sixth form students act as strong role models for younger students. They enjoy studying in the sixth form and they dress smartly and look professional. They receive similarly good support for their personal development and welfare as younger students and their behaviour is good. Students have a good understanding of safety matters.
- Retention rates are good from Year 12 to Year 13. The vast majority of students stay in the sixth form for the full two years. In recent years, the academy has successfully made sure that all students move on to education, employment or training. Most go on to higher education and some progress to apprenticeships or employment with training.

School details

Unique reference number	137701
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10002506

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1620
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	113
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Harvey
Headteacher	John Martin
Telephone number	0121 533 3750
Website	www.oldburyacademy.co.uk
Email address	admin@oldburyacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 September 2013

Information about this school

- Oldbury Academy is much larger than most secondary schools.
- Almost half of the students are of minority ethnic heritage.
- One in five students speaks English as an additional language, which is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is a little above average.
- The pupil premium, which is additional funding given to schools for looked after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals, provides support for four in 10 students. This is an above-average proportion.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- Up to 50 students in Years 10 and 11 attend the academy's off-site provision called 'ALTOA' to study a vocational construction course as part of their normal timetable. A very small number of students attend alternative provision called 'Impact'. Some attend full time and others attend part time. Students receive specialist support to help them improve their behaviour.
- The academy is led by the headteacher for the equivalent of three days each week and by the acting headteacher, who is also a deputy headteacher, for two days each week.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 36 lessons, 18 of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. The inspection team made several short visits to other lessons with senior leaders to check on the progress and behaviour of different groups of students. Inspectors also looked at a wide range of work in students' books and listened to some students reading.
- Meetings were held with five groups of students from all year groups. Other meetings were held with members of the governing body and with senior leaders and staff, including those responsible for leading subjects.
- Inspectors analysed the 176 responses to Ofsted's online parental questionnaire, Parent View. They also analysed responses to a questionnaire that the academy uses which had been completed recently by 434 parents.
- Inspectors observed the work of the academy and looked at a number of documents, including those relating to the monitoring of teaching and the targets set for teachers to improve their work. They also looked at records relating to attendance, behaviour, bullying and safeguarding, the academy's development plan and a wide range of assessment information.

Inspection team

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Gwendoline Onyon	Ofsted Inspector

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