

# Oasis Academy Oldham

Hollins Road, Hollinwood, Oldham, Greater Manchester OL8 4JZ

## Inspection dates

4–5 May 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Requires improvement**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies too much. Some pupils, including the most able, the disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs or disability, are not set challenging work, leading to low-level disruption in lessons.
- Some teachers have low expectations of pupils and do not move them on quickly to the next stage in their learning.
- Teachers do not all comply with the school's behaviour policy. Pupils do not know what is expected of their conduct in different lessons.
- Academy councillors have not, until recently, kept a close enough eye on the impact of the pupil premium funding on the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Not enough teaching is exciting or challenging enough to inspire pupils and develop their resilience to work without support.
- Teachers do not use the school's guidance on promoting reading and writing to improve pupils' basic skills quickly enough.
- The school does not share existing good practice widely enough to make teaching good.
- New senior leaders do not have enough opportunities to observe best practice in leading and managing good and outstanding schools.
- Pupils' attendance is not improving quickly enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- The principal and senior leaders share a strong vision of improvement for the school. The school's self-evaluation is honest and accurate.
- Good leadership and management have improved teaching this year. As a result, most current pupils are making better progress.
- Many new systems are now holding staff to account more effectively for pupils' progress.
- The principal has made new senior appointments that strengthen leadership and management, for example, in checking pupils' progress more accurately.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the quality of teaching rapidly improves, especially in science, so that it is good and leads to at least good outcomes for all, by:
  - raising teachers' expectations and ensuring that they use the school's improved assessment systems effectively to secure appropriately challenging work for pupils that moves them on quickly from their starting points
  - spreading more systematically the already good aspects of teaching in the school to enable more teachers to provide exciting and challenging teaching that enthuses and inspires pupils to learn
  - making sure that all teachers comply consistently with the school's literacy policy, so that pupils' basic skills in reading and writing swiftly improve in all subjects
  - insisting that all teachers make fair and consistent use of the school's behaviour policy to eradicate the low-level disruption to pupils' learning in some lessons.
  
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - academy councillors check more frequently the impact of pupil premium spending on the progress of disadvantaged pupils
  - new senior leaders have more opportunities to observe best practice in leading and managing good and outstanding schools.
  
- Build on and intensify the school's already successful initiatives to improve attendance so that it swiftly improves for all pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The principal has a very clear vision, shared by senior leaders and academy councillors, for the school's improvement. This is based on an accurate and honest self-evaluation of the school's work. In the nine months since his appointment in September 2015, after very poor outcomes for most pupils in both the 2014 and 2015 GCSE examinations, the principal has led the school with determination and resilience. During that time, the principal has made many necessary changes, not all of them popular with staff or parents, including restructuring the senior and middle leadership teams and strengthening them with new appointments that have increased the school's capacity to improve from a low base.
- The principal and energetic new senior leadership team have also tightened processes for holding staff to account and raised expectations of both pupils and staff. They have worked productively together to put in place a wide range of effective systems to hold staff increasingly to account for pupils' progress. Leaders have also invested strongly in the development of strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning, which have begun to make a difference.
- Senior leaders and academy councillors now have a clear knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Teachers appreciate the many opportunities that they have to improve their practice through more training. The school's new, robust tracking systems, put in place by senior leaders, show that most pupils are now beginning to make better progress in most subjects.
- There were no responses to the online inspection questionnaire for pupils, but formal and informal conversations with pupils showed mixed feelings about the school, notably the low-level disruption that occurs when teaching is not engaging, and frequent changes in staffing. Older pupils were more positive and felt that the school had improved this year.
- Parents who responded to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, mostly agreed that their children felt happy and safe and were well looked after in school. They were less positive about behaviour-related issues and communication with the school. Most responses from the staff survey showed most staff to feel that the school had improved over the last year. The principal and other leaders have established an ambitious culture based on a 'rich and balanced educational environment nurturing the whole student – academically, vocationally, socially, morally, spiritually, emotionally and environmentally'. This culture is seen in displays around the school and promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development strongly, for example, through themed assemblies and the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum.
- Pupils have access to impartial careers information, advice and guidance from Year 9 onwards. It becomes increasingly individualised as pupils progress through the school.
- Leaders have made effective use of more robust performance management systems to raise the expectations of what pupils and teachers can achieve. Teachers' targets are now firmly linked to pupils' progress and, as a result of the poor outcomes for pupils in 2015, a number of teachers and leaders who were eligible for salary progression did not receive it.
- Middle leaders have embraced the strong drive of the principal and senior leaders to improve the school. They check progress in the aspects of the school's work for which they are responsible and plan improvements effectively. The tighter systems in place this year to ensure that information about pupils' progress is accurate and reliable demonstrate the positive impact of their work. A number of senior and middle leaders are recently appointed and others are new to their current roles. While capable and enthusiastic, senior leaders, in particular, need time and wider understanding of the very best practice in leadership and management in good and outstanding schools in order for their work to show full impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Despite the greater accuracy of assessment information, inspectors found that it did not routinely correlate with the standard of pupils' work seen in their books. School leaders know that examination results last year were well below expectations. Not enough has been done to secure accurate assessment information in all areas of the school.
- Senior leaders have reorganised the school's curriculum, so that it meets the needs and aspirations of all pupils more effectively and provides pathways that lead to meaningful qualifications. Work has been completed on a new curriculum for Year 11 and reviews of provision for other year groups are under way. The school knows that further work needs to be done to secure a more coherent response to national changes to assessment in Years 7 to 9.

- The range of strategies provided by the Year 7 catch-up funding is effective in quickly improving the reading skills of pupils who have fallen behind.
- Historically, the school's records of the use and impact of the pupil premium on the attainment of disadvantaged pupils have not been robust. Consequently, the school's actions have not led to improved progress for disadvantaged pupils. An experienced assistant principal now has dedicated responsibility for the pupil premium within the newly established achievement and progress team, to focus on the progress of this group.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The Oasis Trust's regional academies director fulfils many of the statutory functions of governance, holding the principal to account effectively. The local academy councillors are committed to the school's improvement. They have undergone a thorough review of their practice by the Oasis Trust and carried out a full audit of their skills. In particular, their roles and responsibilities are now much more clearly defined. Minutes of their meetings show their consistently probing questioning of senior leaders.
  - The school is now subject to regular monitoring by the trust and councillors have ready access to a range of assessment and other information. This enables them to hold the school to account effectively. Councillors therefore have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the actions they need to take to improve the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school takes its responsibilities for keeping pupils safe very seriously. Staff are appropriately trained in child protection and policies are up to date. Staff make regular checks on alternative providers to ensure that pupils are safe and secure, and attend regularly.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across Years 7 to 11, while improving, remains too variable to support good outcomes for pupils. While most teachers give pupils effective advice and guidance in line with the school's new marking policy, some pupils are confused by the variety of older systems in use in different subjects. In addition, some teachers do not ensure that the work they set provides enough challenge to stretch all pupils, especially the most able. Some pupils who have special educational needs or disability do not make the progress that they could, because activities are not matched to their learning needs.
- Frequent changes in staffing, in some subjects, have had a negative impact on pupils' progress and enthusiasm for learning, especially in science where some classes have had a number of different temporary teachers across the year. The school has struggled to recruit high-quality, permanent teachers in this subject.
- The lack of stability in staffing causes concepts and methods to be repeated, so that pupils do not feel confident that they are moving on in their learning. Teachers do not routinely prepare pupils for working without support, so that as they approach external examinations they lack the resilience to tackle the most challenging questions. This prevents pupils, especially the most able, from reaching the highest levels.
- Inspectors saw examples of strong, purposeful teaching that challenges pupils to think deeply. For example, in art and design in Year 9, work on 'multicultural patterns' clearly absorbed pupils in the sophisticated results they were producing. Evidence in their sketchbooks showed the rapid progress they were making. Pupils relished the responsibility for finding original and creative ways of working.
- Strengths noted in some mathematics teaching include teachers' strong subject knowledge, especially of GCSE assessment and effective questioning to clear gaps in pupils' understanding. Relationships in mathematics lessons are generally positive but pupils do not have frequent opportunities to practise reasoning skills.
- Strengths in English teaching include teachers' enthusiasm for their subject and the positive relationships they form with pupils. Most English teaching, notably questioning, engages pupils in appropriately challenging work. Areas requiring improvement include a stronger focus on the accurate use of subject-specific terms and on improving the presentation of pupils' work.
- Evidence from pupils' written work across subjects confirms that the new systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are beginning to improve achievement. Nevertheless, these systems are not yet fully established across all subjects, so that some pupils are not clear about their targets and how to improve their work.
- Homework is usually set according to the school's policy, but some pupils feel that it is unevenly distributed through the week, making it difficult to plan their time effectively.

- Teaching assistants are well qualified and make an effective contribution to pupils' progress.
- The school has developed a range of strategies to improve pupils' reading and writing. Formal programmes to speed up the progress of specific pupils in reading are effective. Pupils have many opportunities for extra practise in reading and writing during morning 'progress time' and extra library lessons for some pupils. The school recognises that not enough has been done to ensure that the school's policy for the development of writing is well established in all subjects.
- Inspectors found little evidence of opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical skills across the range of subjects.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** requires improvement

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare, while effective, are not yet good, because they do not lead to good outcomes for all pupils. This is because pupils do not routinely display positive attitudes to their learning. Some pupils do not take enough pride in their written work, leaving it untidy, poorly presented or unfinished. When teaching is unengaging, pupils do not have the self-discipline to persevere with their learning.
- Procedures and policies for pupils' health, safety and safeguarding are fully in place and reviewed regularly by senior leaders and the regional director for academies in the North. Staff receive regular and appropriate training in managing pupils' behaviour and in safeguarding, including child protection and the government's 'Prevent' duty to combat extremism and radicalisation.
- Members of the pastoral team work effectively with a wide range of external partners to keep pupils safe and promote their physical, mental and emotional well-being effectively. Procedures for the referral of safeguarding cases are well established.
- Most pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe in and around the school and while using the internet, but older pupils were more confident than younger ones of finding an adult to whom they could speak if they needed support.
- Pupils have regular assemblies and PSHE days that remind them of the variety of strategies for reporting any bullying safely and securely. The school recognises the need to maintain pupils' awareness of the help available if they have concerns. Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take and most were confident that prejudice-based bullying is very rare.
- Pupils form positive relationships with their teachers and each other. Displays around the school promote its core values and the curriculum reinforces the need for respect and tolerance towards others. In this way, the school prepares pupils effectively for life in modern Britain.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Despite the many systems and strategies and more accurate analysis put in place since the last inspection, including a new behaviour policy, attendance remains too low. It is especially poor for disadvantaged pupils and some of those who have special educational needs or disability. This absence is affecting the progress of these pupils. Attendance is improving slightly in Years 7 to 9, but a continuing legacy of poor attendance among older pupils persists.
- There were very few incidents of lateness to lessons during the inspection. Lateness to school is reducing because of new systems put in place this year. Nevertheless, too many pupils are late for morning school, especially older pupils.
- Inspectors saw no graffiti and very little litter in or around the school during the inspection. Pupils wear their uniform smartly.
- Many pupils behave well in and around the school and are polite and cooperative. Where teaching is weak and unengaging, pupils told inspectors that poor behaviour can disrupt their learning.
- Levels of fixed-term and permanent exclusion have risen this year because of the determination of senior leaders to take a firm stance on poor behaviour.

## Outcomes for pupils

## require improvement

- Pupils enter the school with standards that are significantly below average for all year groups. Outcomes for pupils completing Year 11 have not been good enough since the last inspection. This is at least in part because the school has lacked systems for ensuring robust and reliable assessment information on which to base expectations of pupils' outcomes. Achievement is starting to rise, but has a long way to go.
- New, more rigorous systems are now in place, more securely in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9, although the school has made an effective response to national changes to assessment for younger pupils. Variations in the quality of teaching have, over time, led to pupils' outcomes requiring improvement across the school.
- In both 2014 and 2015, those pupils leaving the school at the end of Year 11 had made too little progress in many subjects, and particularly in English and mathematics. The progress of pupils in science was also weak. In 2015, the proportion of pupils who gained five A\* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, declined further. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and others equally declined.
- Current information held by the school points to improving attainment for disadvantaged pupils and others, but the gap may not narrow in the 2016 examinations. In Years 7 to 9, assessment information points to variable progress across subjects for disadvantaged pupils.
- The school knows that pupils who have special educational needs or disability do not make as much progress as they could. An action plan and a review of how effectively teachers work with teaching assistants have swiftly been put in place.
- The school recognises that the most-able pupils have not achieved as well as they could, as a result of previous weaknesses in tracking pupils' progress, leading to the low expectations and levels of challenge that inspectors saw in books during the inspection. These pupils do not achieve the A\* or A grades of which they are capable in a wide range of subjects.
- The school has begun to provide a variety of visits and other experiences to raise the aspirations and ambitions of the most able. Assessment information for current pupils suggests that their progress is improving in mathematics more quickly than in English. The school knows that it is only through consistently high-quality teaching in all subjects that they will make real and rapid progress.
- A relatively low number of pupils have a statement of special educational need or an education, health and care plan. As a result, conclusions about their attainment and progress year on year, or comparisons between the progress of those who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan and those who do not must be approached with caution. The progress of both groups declined in 2015 and their current progress varies between subjects. A full review of provision for this group of pupils and an action plan are in place to secure at least the progress expected of them.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136027
<b>Local authority</b>	Oldham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10012205

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,360
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Oasis Community Learning
<b>Chair</b>	Craig Dean
<b>Principal</b>	Nigel Whittle
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 624 9630
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.oasisacademyoldham.org">www.oasisacademyoldham.org</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office@oasisoldham.org">office@oasisoldham.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	29 May 2014

## Information about this school

- Oasis Academy Oldham is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most pupils are of White British origin, although the proportion of pupils from other backgrounds is rising.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or for children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- Small numbers of pupils from all year groups attend alternative provision at Harpurhey AP Centre, the Mahdlo Youth Zone, The Kingsland Pupil Referral Unit or Skill Force. Pupils are supported for varying lengths of time with emotional, behavioural or attendance issues.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set out minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a wide range of classrooms. Some joint observations were carried out with senior leaders. Inspectors also spoke with pupils in lessons and looked at their work. A further sample of pupils' written work in different subjects from across the age and ability range of the school was considered.
- Inspectors also spoke informally with pupils in the school and its grounds. Additionally, inspectors held formal interviews with six groups of pupils from all year groups in the school, to listen to their views about the school. Inspectors also took account of seven responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, as well as 31 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire, but inspectors considered a sample of the school's own records of pupils' views.
- A wide variety of documentation related to the school's work was also considered by the inspectors.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, senior leaders and leaders in charge of subjects and of other aspects of the school's work. They also spoke with other members of the school staff.
- Inspectors met the vice-chair of the academy council and the chair of the school's raising attainment board. A meeting was also held with the Oasis Trust's regional academies director for the North and with the Oasis Trust's national director for monitoring and standards.

## Inspection team

Susan Wareing, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alyson Middlemass	Ofsted Inspector
Annette Patterson	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Gregory	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Ruddy	Ofsted Inspector



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